

President Blount Delivers Message of Strong Chapters – Successful Members

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Delivering her first presentation at the recent 2010 Winter Leadership Summit & Council Meeting in Tampa, Florida as 2010 CREW Network President, Kristin Blount, Senior Vice President / Partner of Colliers Meredith & Grew, unveiled CREW Network's platform for 2010: Strong Chapters – Successful Members.

As the commercial real estate community moves into another year of market volatility and uncertainty, it becomes increasingly important to the overall health of the CREW Network organization that its chapters remain strong, healthy and supported. CREW Network works as a community. To that end, President Blount is committing additional CREW Network resources to provide chapters with board visits, create additional playbooks and other resources to support chapter practices, create brand standards that elevate the status of chapters within their local communities, and enhance leadership training offerings to insure chapters maintain strong infrastructures.

Supporting President Blount's 2010 initiative, delegates voted to approve the applications of four new chapters, increasing the Network's reach to 71 markets across North America. Welcomed into the CREW Network organization were Edmonton CREW, CREW Omaha Metro, CREW Charleston, Inc. and CREW Upstate South Carolina.

Several exciting new resources, programs and business tools will be introduced to chapters and members throughout 2010. Among them, CREW Network retained the services of Clarke Communication Group to help articulate the CREW Network brand. Once this messaging is completed, CREW Network will provide materials and communications to chapters to begin implementing. Adhering to brand standards across the Network will enhance our organization's awareness throughout the industry. To demonstrate the importance of branding, delegates were engaged in a small group exercise where they were asked to discuss what they believed the CREW Network brand to be, the most important value CREW Network brings to the industry, what motivates individuals to join and renew their CREW Network memberships, and what CREW Network can do to strengthen its brand. The exercise served as an important demonstration as to why brand development and consistency are crucial to the success of any organization. While some common themes occurred, it was clear that the CREW Network brand meant many things to many people.

Plans are currently underway for the development of two new chapter playbooks. The first to be developed is the Chapter Administration Playbook, which will be released in June and a second playbook addressing career outreach will be delivered later this year. Additionally, CREW Network's research partner Cornell University Program in Real Estate, is currently analyzing the data from CREW Network's benchmark survey sent to 13 commercial real estate organizations in November 2009. The report will be released to chapters, members and the industry at large later this year.

Delegates were given a sneak peek at CREW Network's Web site redesign currently in the works as well as CREWbiz, CREW Network's newest online business networking tool. CREWbiz, scheduled for rollout in late March, provides members the opportunity to create personal profile pages promoting their business expertise. Additionally, this unique member benefit provides a communications tool whereby members can post business wants and needs, and share business news with other CREW Network members who subscribe to their postings – all managed from their online CREWbiz page. CREW Network will host training sessions to help members get started using this exciting new tool.

CREW Network kicked-off its 2010 Leadership Series, funded by Studley, with its first Leadership Summit held in conjunction with the Winter Council Meeting. Clark Robinson of Grid International, Inc. presented delegates with a half-day leadership development workshop titled "The Power to Change." As chapter leaders, it is extremely important to know how to lead in volunteer groups and the Grid exercise provided critical training for this. Understanding and responding to the various leadership styles within each of us is key to working more effectively. This high-level training taught chapter leaders to identify their leadership styles and took them through exercises that encouraged self-awareness as to how their particular leadership style impacted their group's progress. Finally, the training provided strategies for correcting potentially damaging behavior in favor of more productive leadership qualities.

In addition to providing high-level leadership training at three in-person meetings throughout the year, the 2010 Leadership Series will deliver six teleconferences providing chapter leadership training. The first teleconference took place on February 26 on the subject of Effective Committees for Strategic Boards. Additionally, the 2010 series will include a University Series delivered in April and May where professors from prestigious universities across the country will deliver eight commercial real estate-focused, content-rich programs on such topics as Urban Public Policy & Private Economic Development, Fundamentals of Real Estate Finance, Real Estate Transactions & Deal Structures and more. Members will be notified via email of all upcoming events.

Driving home the importance of leadership training, CREW Atlanta member and CREW Network Past President Sally French Tyler, executive vice president and divisional president of National Commercial Services for First American Title Insurance, spoke to delegates during the Friday luncheon about the leadership lessons she learned along the way to the executive suite. Crediting much of her success to the training and leadership opportunities she received through CREW Network, Tyler believes that leaders are both born and made; encouraging delegates to observe those leaders they admire most to find out what makes them successful, and then incorporating those best practices into their own leadership styles. Tyler made a big impression on her audience by sharing her personal "leadership life lessons" listed below.

- Observe leaders (male or female) that you respect and emulate their approach
- Leadership by intimidation is SO yesteryear. Learn to be a consensus leader
- Don't focus on Gender: You're a woman in a male dominated industry – it's a fact; so what? Don't forget, they are LOOKING for good female leaders!
- Do not respond to business challenges with emotional decisions; think before you act.
- Don't waste your time trying to be someone else; be who you are and be the best at it; You can't lead as you are until you know who you are; don't try to be someone else, it's unauthentic!

- Leadership is not self appointed or self anointed; it is an honor and a privilege entrusted to you by others
- Be self aware – know your strengths and capitalize on them
- Leadership is about sacrifice; women tend to be more dedicated but less willing to make sacrifices
- It's not about looking for the next job; it's about doing the one you have well
- Network well and do not burn bridges
- Be willing to take risks
- Be willing to take a step back if it means helping the team or expanding your value proposition
- Dress appropriately;
- Make business decisions as if you are the CEO and ultimately accountable
- Listen, assess, and be decisive!
- Own your decisions, own your mistakes
- When opportunity knocks – answer!
- When I hire or promote leaders, I am looking for:
 - a. Integrity and ability to hold confidences
 - b. Vision and ability to execute on that vision
 - c. Plays well with others
 - d. Positive attitude and pleasant to be around
 - e. Has earned the respect of others
- Don't manage up; typically, people get fired from below

The spirit of community that exists among CREW Network and its 71 chapters across North America is what drives the success of its members. Look to CREW Network to serve this community by providing strong support to every chapter through the delivery of services, resources and programs that ensure the collective health and vitality of this organization. Strong Chapters – Successful Members, that's the CREW Network commitment.