

BUSINESS SKILLS I LEARNED THROUGH ABWA

POWERING UP YOUR NETWORK

Did you know networking can actually help you live a longer, happier and healthier life? Not only is networking important to your career development, it also helps you build strong emotional and social ties. And those ties can improve the quality and length of your life, says ABWA member Donna Fisher, author of *People Power* (Bard & Stephen, 1995).



People Power is a step-by-step guide for generating your networking style. Donna offers 12 power principles for starting, building and enriching your network.

Donna, who'll speak at several 1996 Spring Conferences, explains how to change your attitude from independent to interdependent. Getting others involved in your success also means giving. Discover the goals and needs of people in your network so you can support them. When valuable information or an opportunity comes across your desk, share it with those who could benefit.

Your connection to other people is only a phone call away. When you make an "asking for support" call, be clear about what you want and how your contact can help. This type of call can provide information, a recommendation, a referral, an appointment, words of encouragement, new ideas or opportunities.

Donna also offers tips on speaking words of praise, being a better listener and staying committed to your goals. To order *People Power* at the member discount of \$13.45 plus \$3 shipping, call the ABWA Bookstore at (816) 361-6621.

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Self-Confidence Pays

BY JESSIE EISENSTEIN

When the company where Catherine Childow works was sold, she was told to look for a new job. But she didn't panic. Instead, Catherine tapped the self-confidence she'd gained in ABWA. Two weeks later, she was asked to stay.

"Although I thought I was leaving, I did the best work I could," Catherine says. "I think my positive attitude caught their attention."

When Catherine worked an earlier job as an administrative assistant to Rebecca Buckley at the Florida Association of Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Inc., Rebecca saw her potential. Three years ago she invited Catherine to a Sunset Chapter meeting in Sarasota, Fla.

"I tend not to join groups because they don't have a lot to offer, but ABWA did," says Catherine. "I joined ABWA because networking and interacting with other women appealed to me."

Thanks to ABWA and her mentor Rebecca, Catherine had the confidence to leave her job as an administrative assistant last year and land a job as office manager at Chadsey, a commercial laundry equipment wholesale, service and consulting business. Now, Catherine has more responsibilities and commands a higher salary.

"If it hadn't been for ABWA I would never have taken such a risk," she says. "But I knew for



Catherine Childow

more growth opportunities, I had to leave that job."

As office manager, Catherine has multiple roles as problem solver, customer service representative, bookkeeper and accountant.

"Before I joined Chadsey, they were

losing money and had no cost accounting," says Catherine. "But I've implemented programs on customer service and teamwork, turning a mess into something profitable."

As chairman of her chapter's newsletter committee, she learned customer relations and diplomacy interacting with ABWA's diverse women. "With a large group, there are lots of opinions," she says. "But I've learned that everyone has something valuable to contribute regardless of their position or education level."

ABWA also taught her time management. She juggles work, family, ABWA activities and volunteering at a children's theater. This year Catherine will co-chair the Women Winning in the '90s luncheon, a seminar organized by the Gulf Coast Council to celebrate ABWA's founding. Plus, she's considering running for chapter treasurer to fine-tune her accounting skills.

But despite her busy schedule, Catherine is enthusiastic about all her responsibilities. "It's a wonderful feeling to be in charge of my life," she says.