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HR directory

:: Career development

:: Consultants

:: Employment law / OHS

:: HR management & strategy

:: International HR

:: Leadership development

:: Learning & development

:: Organisational change & Development

:: Psychological services

:: Recruitment

:: Recruitment by sector

:: Remuneration & benefits

:: Technology

Women at Work

September 3, 2008

## Women need to connect with each other

In order to successfully achieve results with retaining and attracting female employees we have to be successful 'marketers' to women. So what are we trying to sell? We are trying to 'sell' to our existing and potential female employees the concept that they really, really want to work for your organisation. So how on earth can we do that?

Why not try applying some of the principles associated with 'marketing to women' generally? So, what are the rules of marketing to women and how can they be applied to your female retention and attraction strategies?

The first rule to understand is – connecting your female customers to each other connects them to your brand. Women need a "backyard fence" to talk to each other. If your brand is marketed in such a way that it connects women to each other as a community, a group, sisters, mothers and daughters and friends, they will embrace your brand into their everyday lives.

Connecting is natural for a woman! Making their nylons stretch between people; looking for the threads that weave us together. Women cross-pollinate. They take the powdery fine residue from one story and dust it on the next.

So, to anyone in the business of marketing to women – and as organisations facing skill shortages and the huge dilemma of retaining their female employees (we all are) – in truth you must rethink what women want from brands. Your brand must be differentiated not in the way you bring the components together, but in the way you bring women together.

The world has changed – women need a new source of connectivity. The connection desire has grown explosively – most of the traditional connection conduits for women have either been transformed drastically or have disappeared completely.

So how does this apply to your product – your organisation? Wouldn't it be interesting to see the results of creating a 'club' of past and present female employees – perhaps its internet-based, perhaps it's physical? One thing is for sure – it's serious business and not about tea and biscuits. What do your female staff want to connect about and how? Have you asked them?

In my experience as a former senior executive for a multinational, I craved connection with other women within the organisation. The organisation I worked for did nothing to connect its women. The consequence was a strong feeling of isolation and ultimately a disconnection from the business. My 'connectors' had become other women in other organisations who had become part of my very strong network of female supporters.

So how might this work for you?

This is not about creating a definitive method for applying this rule in your organisation as many factors need to be taken into account, such as what your female staff want, geography, technology, budgets, culture, be creative!).

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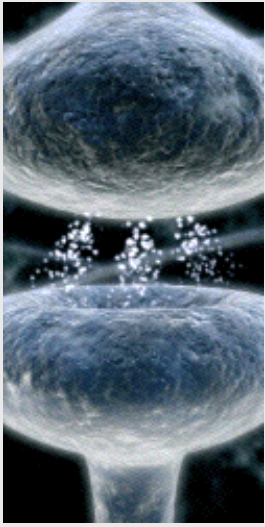
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What I want to do is get you to think creatively about how this may apply; hold some workshops, do some research, investigate the customer connection. Most importantly, if you do nothing a general feeling among your female staff of lack of connectivity is not a good omen if you are serious about wanting to attract and retain female staff.

By Maureen Frank, managing director, Emberin

18 March 2008

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