

every
woman

5 Brilliant Activities For Your Women's Network

Employee Resource Groups are found in 90% of Fortune 500 Companies as well as in increasing numbers of small and mid-size businesses. An effective women's network is integral to female inclusion in the workplace. The challenge for these committees? To create an agenda that fulfils a purpose, creates value and draws in the crowds. Our everywomanChampions share the events and activities that saw their member engagement soar...



5 IDEAS FOR YOUR WOMEN'S NETWORK

Research has found that when employees feel connected to others in their workplace, they are more productive, and more likely to stay and grow their careers at your organisation.

NETWORKING

- Connection circles
- Needs cards
- Skills/information share

CONTENT

- Podcasts
- Career stories
- Role model video interviews

Research shows that role models represent and expand what is possible, inspire women to be more ambitious and aim higher, and demonstrate the mindsets and behaviors of how to rise.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of employers have seen a demand for menopause support increase in the past five years.

SUPPORT GROUPS

- Parental buddy systems
- Speed mentoring
- Menopause cafes

CLUBS & GROUPS

- Book/film club
- Craft club
- Debating society

Best-selling author Gretchen Rubin believes that creating habits in a group leads to the highest success rate of compliance in the future, so creating an employee book club can help foster a lifetime of mind-enhancing reading.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Open mic sessions
- Guest speakers
- Free everywoman workshops-in-a-box

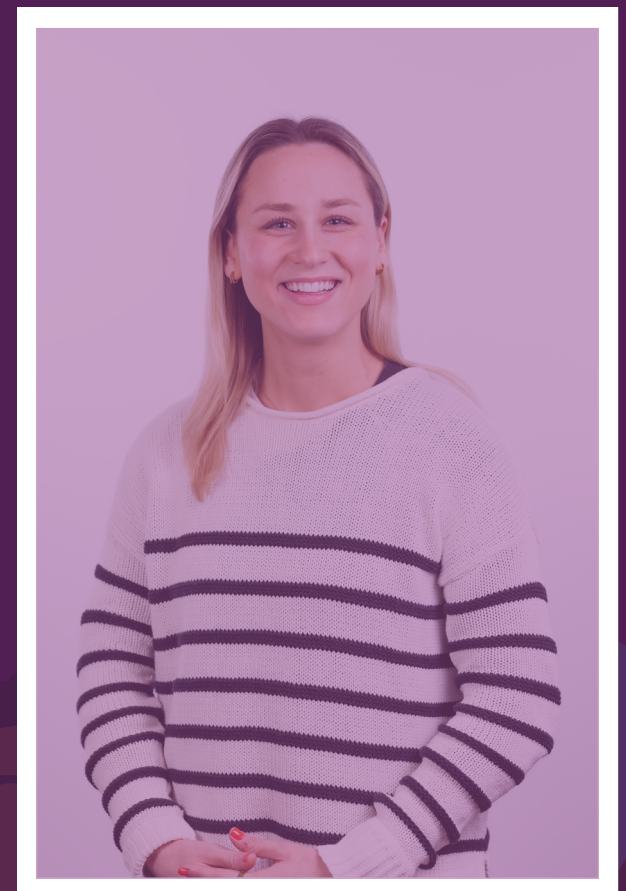
Our workshop-in-a-box series is used by everywoman members including Samsung, Deutsche Telekom, Centrica, Booking.com and Lenovo.

1. CLUBS & GROUPS

A group themed around members' interests outside work is a great way to build an organic community. A book or film club, in particular, can be an enjoyable and useful way to embrace new perspectives in a relaxed and stimulating environment while creating a sense of belonging. It can also act as a vessel to introduce courageous conversations into your network by spotlighting books and films inspired by hot topics related to female participation and broader inclusion issues. A debating club is another vehicle for inclusive conversations, encouraging the development of career-boosting skills that benefit your workplace such as; active listening, analysing the position of others with respect and empathy, organising ideas into structured arguments and helping to communicate a vision through public speaking.

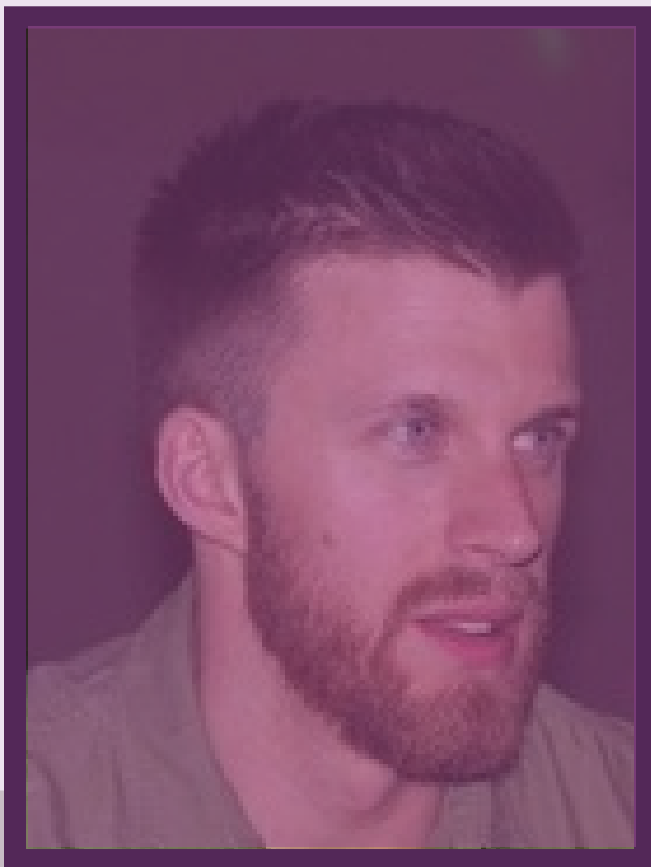
'Our monthly book club gives people an opportunity to come together online to talk about an interesting book and the ideas within it. They can also do this in person once a quarter in a particular UK location, and it's something we are looking at expanding. Something like a book club can help to build community in a different and more informal way.'

**Brogan O'Neill,
Internal Comms Executive,
Bupa International**



2. NETWORKING

Connection circles can create valuable spaces for honest sharing, particularly when enhanced by activities such as ‘needs cards’ — which prompt discussion between participants around particular support or expertise they’re seeking, be it ‘creativity’, ‘mentorship’ or ‘work/life balance. Of course, the objective is for the person needing skills or advice in the room, but the magic lies in the connections fostered through these transactions.



‘Connection circles are partly networking, partly a safe space for people to talk about what’s going on in their lives at the moment and what they feel they need — all among people who aren’t their managers or necessarily even in their team. Since we started running these last year, we’ve seen a massive uptake in the number of attendees and calls for us to do many more.’

Scott Elliott,
Risk & Security Culture Manager,
Bupa International

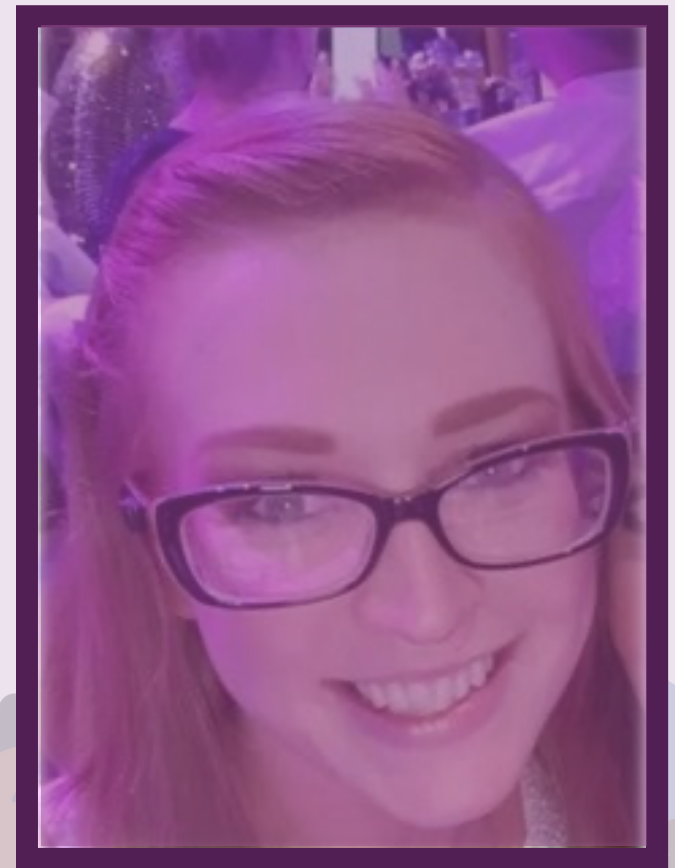


2. NETWORKING

Skills and knowledge-sharing can also be free of a monthly or quarterly event. Think about creating a searchable online buddy system of people/resources within your network, where members can showcase their critical skills — anything from insight on the interview process to PowerPoint expertise or point at resources that have helped them. This offers tangible and accessible value to your whole network and, importantly, encourages members to think about their own unique talents — and get comfortable with promoting them to their peers.

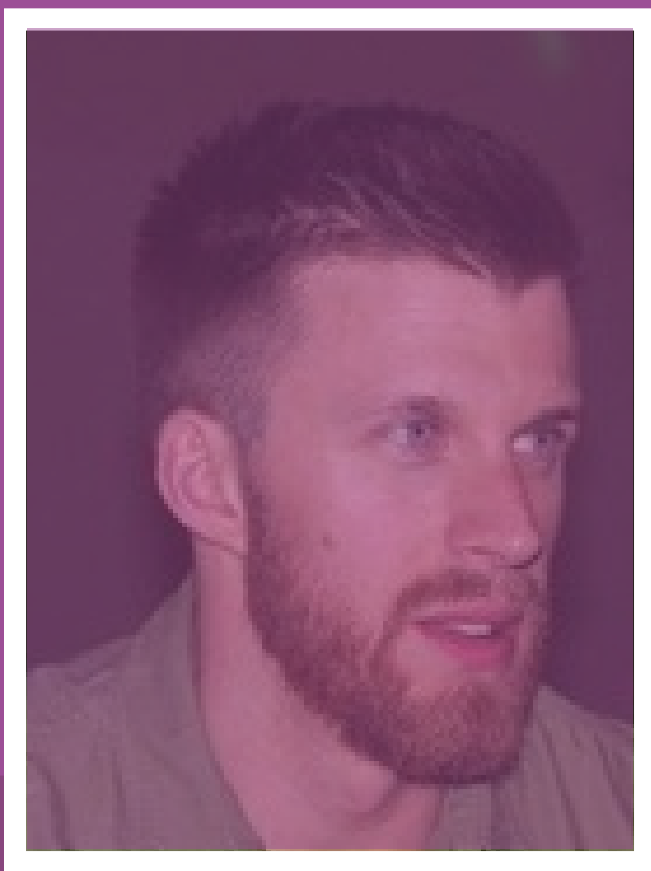
'We have an online library where you can recommend or offer to loan a book. This is broken down into key areas: we have sections on menopause, confidence, and managing people, to name a few. If it's an online resource, people can include a link to a podcast, book or TED Talk; if it's a physical item, they can share their contact details and arrange to pass it on.'

Sarah Mercer,
Continuous Improvement Lead,
FedEx



3. CONTENT

A podcast series can be an excellent channel for messaging, discussion, and profiling role models within your organisation or industry. For example, an episode could focus on a particular senior leader and their career journey or invite speakers on critical topics like challenging bias, allowing people to tap into organisational thought leadership at a time that suits them.



'We've tried different formats, but our podcasts now tend to be from 15-30 minutes long because we've learned through feedback that the most effective way of reaching people is in shorter audio snippets that they can listen to while they're having breakfast, on their way to work or whenever it might be that they have space.'

Scott Elliott,
Risk & Security Culture Manager,
Bupa International



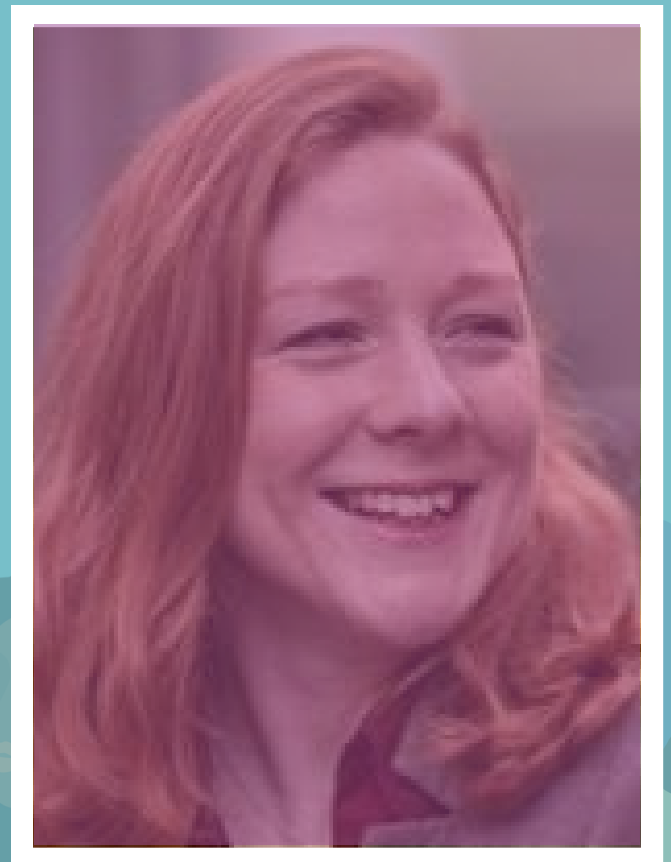
4. SUPPORT GROUPS

Women's networks have the potential to become ecosystems of inter-connected groups that offer support to those experiencing challenges and can benefit from the wisdom and life lessons of those who've been there before.

A parental buddy scheme, open to men and women, is a powerful way of championing gender equality through your networks. This may include assigning people a mentor, both to help and inform them of valuable things they need to know or do before they leave for maternity or paternity leave, updating them while away to keep them connected with the company, and helping them to reorient when they return — all from the friendly and empathetic perspective of someone who's trodden the path before. Such an initiative has been proven to impact female participation goals by retaining in the workplace those employees who may otherwise struggle to the point of leaving.

'When they come back to work after maternity leave, a lot of new mums – and I've experienced this too – can feel their brains have turned to 'mush' while they've been away, and they need a bit of reassurance that this is normal. Introducing the parental buddy scheme to help has really reduced the rate of parents leaving our organisation, particularly those in their late 30s and early 40s.'

Eleanor Hruzik,
Head of Business Change,
London Metal Exchange



5. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning and development opportunities are at the heart of women's networks, whether it's via informal public-speaking opportunities that allow others to learn about topics outside their orbit, hearing from senior role models on how they navigated career challenges or attending more structured or formal seminars and workshops.

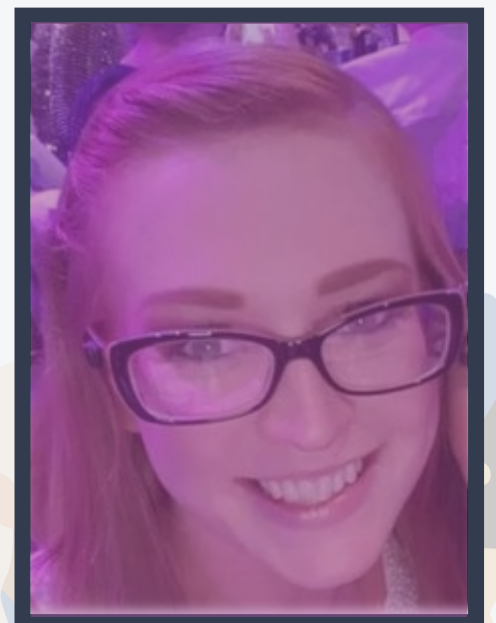


“An open mic session gives people the opportunity to practise their public speaking and a safe space to present something they care about — when I did it, I shared 10 things I’ve learned since becoming a mother. It’s such an inspirational session because it’s so different from your day job, and you are hearing things from people that you would never normally hear at work.”

Gemma Thomson,
Project Manager,
Centrica

‘Each year we think about the theme of International Women's Day and find some great guest speakers around it. Importantly, we use this speaking platform as an opportunity to do some recognition in the business too, with a virtual award ceremony where our employees are recognised for their achievements by their peers.’

Sarah Mercer,
Continuous Improvement Lead,
FedEx

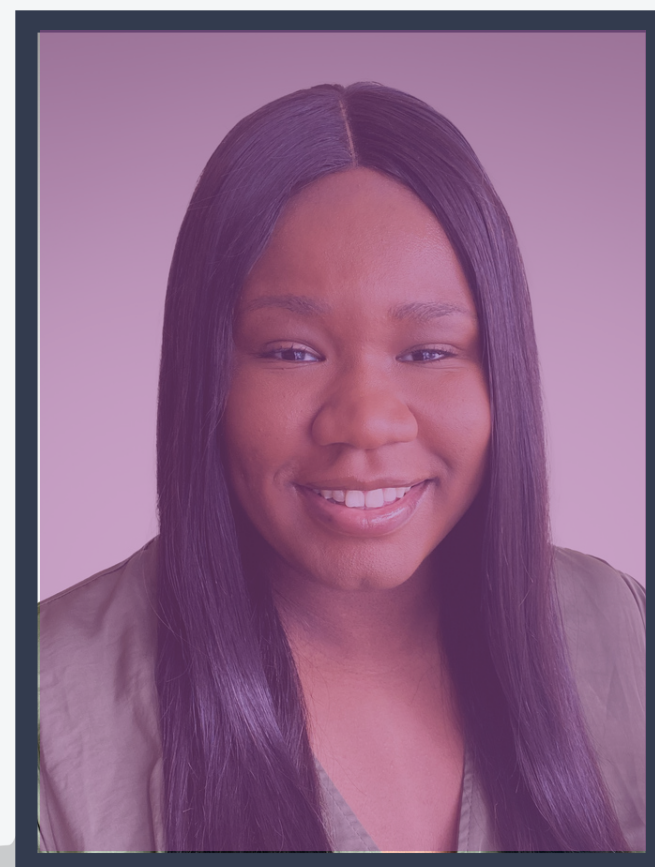


5. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The creation of learning and developing content takes time and can be costly. The everywomanNetwork has vast resources, including live classes, on-demand webinars, and workbooks, to help you start conversations and get inspired. In addition, our members have access to a series of Workshops-in-a-Box, consisting of a scripted deck that gives anyone in your organisation the resources they need to host a learning session for events such as International Women's Day and Learning at Work Week.

'For International Women's Day, we're going to use the everywoman toolkit. I want to give our employees the option to tap into whatever learning resources are going to be most important to them, which is why the resources available from everywoman — so diverse in terms of workbooks, webinars and quizzes — is so valuable for our women's network.'

Jayven Sandy,
Product Owner – Low Code Technologies,
M&G Investments



Download your workshop-in-a-box for
International Women's Day:
Master the Art of Self-Promotion