

100 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - WHY IT IS AS IMPORTANT NOW AS IT WAS THEN



This year, we celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day, a movement founded in 1911 to support women in their struggle for equality and to celebrate their achievements. Much has changed for women in those hundred years – now we take it for granted that we can vote, take out a mortgage and keep our jobs when we get married.

In 2011, women face a different struggle – achieving equal pay for similar work, challenging stereotypical views that stop them progressing in the workplace and balancing work and home life which, for many, means running a business or holding down a demanding job as well as doing everything women did before.

There is no doubt that **progress still needs to be made**: at Success Network, we see examples of sexism all the time; for example, when members tell us they stop attending mixed networking groups as a result of encountering chauvinistic, intimidating or narrow-minded attitudes.

But **we also witness women making huge strides in their chosen fields** despite the difficulties and this is what we try to celebrate; we don't deny that sexism exists but we get on with running our businesses in spite of it and we support each other through the tough times.

What we do know about women and what makes them stand out in business is that they are brilliant communicators. However, it seems that **women do not use this important business skill to their advantage**.

Surveys show that up to 60% of female business owners do not use social media as part of their marketing strategy, **a real missed opportunity** when you consider how good women are at communicating generally.

Women may have some catching up to do when it comes to taking advantage of 21st century business communication. However, as there seems to be no visible division between male and female led business online, **the internet provides equal opportunities galore!**

Women just need to pluck up the courage to join in without fearing the technology, **so they can build their brand and their business online** in a way that suits their individual business needs.

On 7th March, Success Network will be celebrating its sixth International Women's Day in style, with a champagne reception and a keynote speech from social networking pioneer and Ecademy founder, Penny Power. Penny wants to show women that they don't have to love the technology, but need to love what social media can achieve for them and their business and why they are so suited to it.

To help women tap into new markets and business opportunities in 2011, Success Network will also be launching a series of workshops and mentoring groups to help local businesswomen to get the best out of platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

By focusing on Social Media in 2011, **Success Network** will be helping female business owners to do what they do best, even better!