



EUROPEAN
PWN

How do women network?

A study by EuropeanPWN



Summary of the findings

Senior and international professional women were the target group for the survey *How do women network?*, that ran from March to May 2008 and gathered 310 participants.

The survey found that a typical senior international professional woman forms her networks primarily for social/personal reasons (e.g. meet new people, personal development), and secondly for business reasons (e.g. develop own business, meet new or potential customers). However, 'advancing my career', 'finding a job' and 'integrating at work' are at the top of the list of business reasons for networking.

A typical woman from the survey has on average 95 contacts in her paper address book, 398 contacts in her electronic address book, and 170 contacts through online social networks. She keeps in touch with her contacts five times a year, mainly through emails. Most of her contacts originate through work, followed by a school/university and clubs.

Our typical woman is rather reactive than proactive, answer positively to requests and likes to refer people. From time to time she gets in touch with her family or friends for business reasons.

Her preferred networks or clubs are those reserved for women, as well as online social and alumni networks. She is an active member in 2,18, and a passive member in 1,98 organizations.

LinkedIn and EuropeanPWN are preferred online networks for a typical woman surveyed, who also favours 'medium engagement', as well as 'read, answer and occasionally post valuable information'.

Below are the Do's and Don'ts of our typical woman:

Do's

- Be helpful, open-minded
- Give
- Be proactive
- Get to know people
- Listen
- Do it over years
- Recommend people
- Be yourself
- Follow-up
- Be pragmatic
- Keep in touch
- Focus
- Keep your promises
- Be discreet

Don'ts

- Waste people's time
- Just think on own benefits
- Bad manners
- Hard selling/be pushy
- Passive attitude
- Expect to receive immediately
- Become a contact collector
- Restrict your network
- Asking unreasonable things
- Make rash promises
- Share too freely personal contact info
- Give a false image of yourself
- Forget to follow-up



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To find out about some more trends uncovered in our survey, such as differences in networking between corporate and non-corporate women, those above- and below-40 (even below-32), US expatriates, etc. please read on in the detailed answers on the following pages.



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Why do women practice networking?

Women network primarily for social-personal reasons:

Most women practice networking to meet new people. Business reasons, such as 'develop my business', 'meet new or potential clients', 'advance my career', 'find a new job' and 'integration at work', get lower priority behind social and personal development reasons. This social/business split is the same among all countries, but disappears for non-corporate respondents, whose priorities are evenly balanced between social-personal and business reasons.

Top secondary reasons for networking, for all age groups,

as well as for the corporate women, is 'advance my career'. 'Find a new job' is top secondary networking reason for women below 40 years of age, becoming more important for younger women and for corporate respondents. 'Find a new job' and 'integration at work' both remain at the bottom for non-corporate women (respectively 53% and 55% answered 'No') as well as for those above 40 (respectively 39% and 42%).

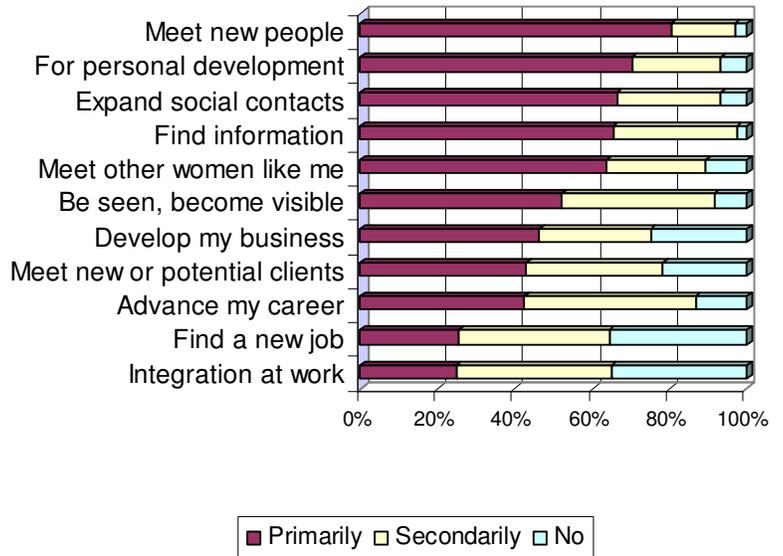
Top reasons for the non-corporate respondents are 'meet new people' and 'develop my business' (respectively 78% and 74%); followed by 'meet new and potential clients' (66%) and 'for personal development' (64%).

How many contacts do you have?

The size of the address books dramatically varies among respondents, as shown on the graph below, and follows a Pareto distribution.

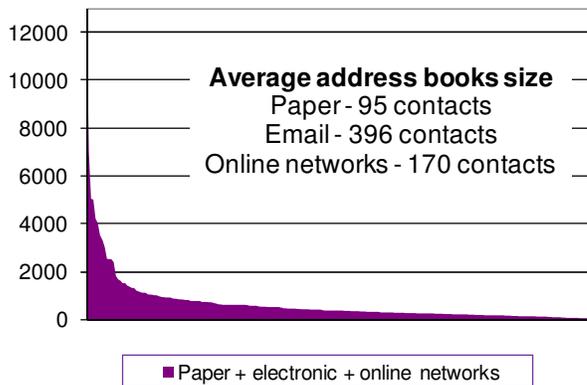
Paper address book averages 95 contacts, with a maximum of 1,000 contacts, and is used by 66% of the respondents.

Why do you practice networking ?





Roughly how many contacts do you have in your address books



The electronic address book, used by 98% of the respondents, averages 398 contacts, with a maximum of 7,000.

Online social networks are utilized by 89% of the respondents, with the most active respondent having 10,000. The number rapidly decreases with an average of 170 contacts per woman.

Non-corporate respondents have the highest average in the three categories, with respectively 117 contacts in their paper address book, 583 contacts in their electronic address book, and 215

contacts throughout online social networks.

Looking at the total number of contacts on average (663 generally), the respondents with the highest average are the elders in age (*above-40* average 814 contacts), *non-corporate* (915 contacts) and *executives* (1039 contacts).

How often are you in touch with your contacts?

Women get in touch with their contacts on average five times a year.

There is very little variation among different age groups, job roles (exec versus non-execs), or type of job (corporate versus non-corporate), although a small trend exists with an average number of 'touches' varying in an inversely proportional way compared to the number of contacts.

How often are you in touch with your contacts?	Average
Once a month or more	27%
Once a quarter	30%
One to three time a year	44%

Where do your current contacts come from?

Most contacts are made through work, followed by school/university/college and clubs, with the family and the Internet coming in the last place as sources of contacts.

Although again there is little difference among the groups, the most important variations are:

- Execs source more contact from work than non-execs (52% versus 43%);
- Women below-40 average twice as much school/university/college contacts compared to

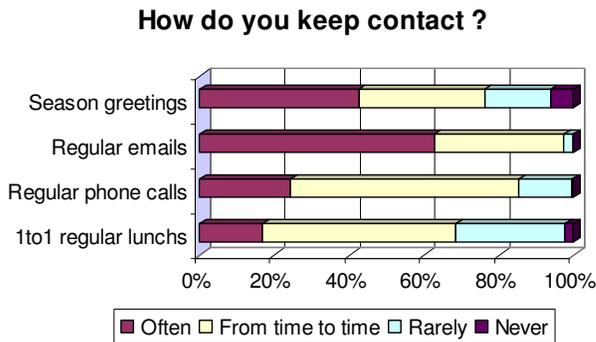
Contact origin	Average
Work (former or current)	46%
School/university/college	15%
Clubs (sport, social)	14%
Other	8%
Family	8%
Internet	7%



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- those above-40 (30% versus 10%);
- Non-corporate women source more contacts through clubs than their corporate counterparts (17% versus 12%);
- Women below-40 source more contacts through the family than those above-40 (9% versus 7%); and
- Non-corporate women source more contacts from the Internet than those in the corporate world (9% versus 6%).

How do you keep contact?



Majority of women note email as their preferred way to keep contact; followed by 'season greetings' and 'phone calls', with 'one-to-one regular lunches' coming in last.

There was no noticeable variation among the different sub-groups.

When asked what other means women utilize to keep contact, many mentioned events (i.e. clubs, business, conferences and

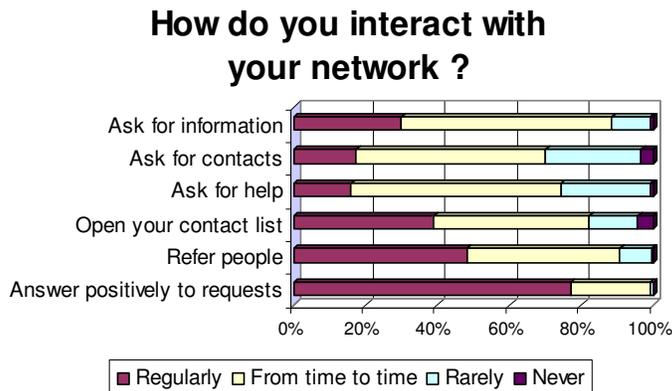
tradeshow, alumni). Also mentioned were: coffee breaks, after-work catch-ups, dinners, private events and sport/weekend trips/holidays, online social network tools (LinkedIn and Facebook), Skype, SMS, instant messaging and quarterly email updates.

How do you interact with your network?

The survey results show that women are generally reactive in their interaction – answering requests, rather than initiating or requesting.

A few interesting trends to notice:

- Women who regularly ask for help are all 27-32 years old;
- Those who regularly ask for contacts are the ones that network for meeting new people at 90%, and have more contacts (753 versus 663);





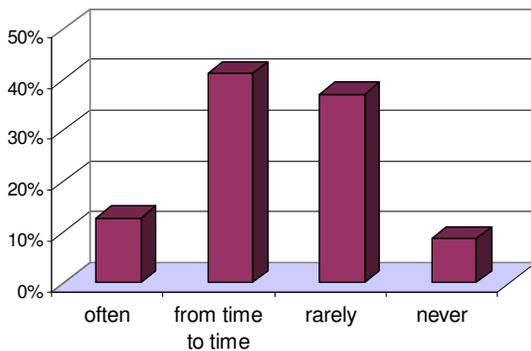
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- Although the volumes are too small to decrypt real trends, we noticed that those who 'never open their contact lists' have a lower volume of contact (229 versus 663); and it is corporate women who 'never ask for contacts'.

Many women mentioned 'provide useful an interesting information to their contacts' as another way to interact proactively; and some stated possibilities like 'arrange to attend events together', 'organize events', and 'remember birthdays' as ways of interacting.

Do you get in touch with your friends/family network for business reasons?

Do you get in touch with your friends/family for business reasons ?



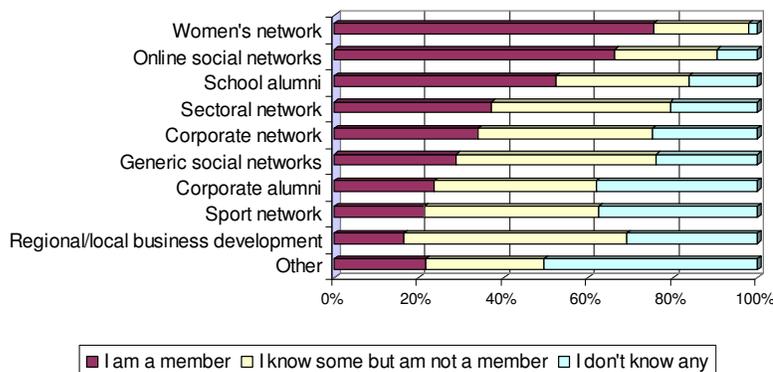
54% of women get in touch with friend or family for business reasons 'often' or 'from time to time'.

Those who get in touch with friends/family for business reasons 'often', do not fit specific profile; while those who 'never' get in touch with friends/family for business reasons are mostly corporate (70%).

What kind of networks/clubs do you know?

It is interesting to notice that the split between social-personal reasons and business reasons to network does not show up in responses to these questions; in fact,

What kind of networks (clubs) do you know ? (for business/professional use)



purely business networks (sectoral, corporate and regional/business development) are evenly distributed among the respondents.



How many clubs are you members of?

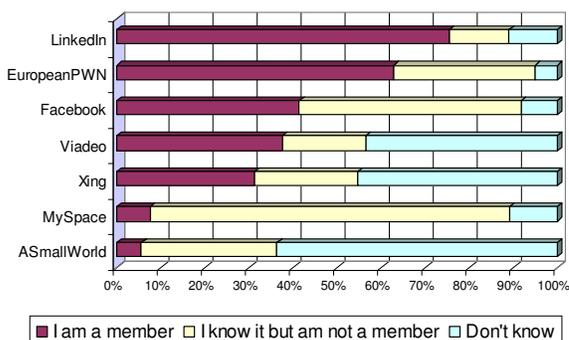
Answer Options	Response Average
Active member	2,15
Passive member	1,98

The maximum number of memberships is 10 as an active member, and 20 as a passive member. The maximum number of memberships is 23, consisting of three active and 20

passive memberships. These extreme responses are an exception rather than the trend. Even less rare are women not belonging to any club; only 6%. Among those holding memberships, 60% declare more active rather than passive involvement.

Do you know the following online networks?

Do you know the following online networks ?



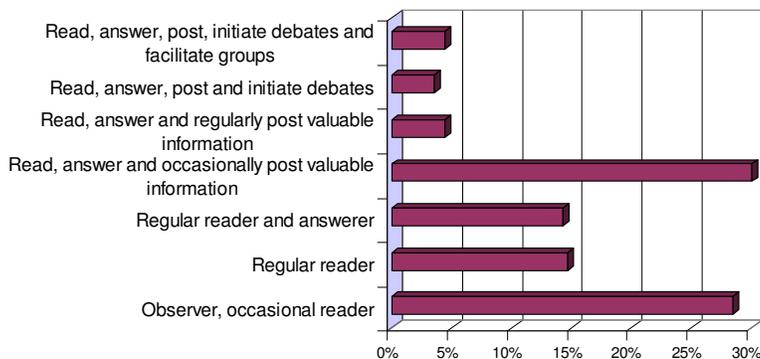
Interesting to notice is that only 37% of the respondents are not members of the EuropeanPWN.

Among other interesting findings is that the LinkedIn is the most joined online network. Since our panel was truly international, networks with a more specific area focus, such as Viadeo in France and Xing in Germany, are less mentioned.

What role do you like to take when networking online?

Responses to questions about engagement or involvement usually show as an even Pareto distribution. It is not the case here: we see an obvious peak in the middle. Majority respondents answered 'read, answer and occasionally post valuable information', telling us that women mainly prefer to have an active role, rather than being a leader or a facilitator.

What role do you like to take when networking online ?





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Your Do's for being a good networker...

The most praised best practice category for women is 'give', along with 'be helpful and open-minded'. Interesting to notice, there are three different statements about 'giving': 'as much' as, 'first' or 'more' than (or even without) receiving or taking. And no-one recommends making the most of networking by taking first (prior giving) or giving less (than what you get).

Generally all women agree, with little diverging opinions, that when answering they are focusing on ideal networking behaviors rather than on how to make the most of it; suggesting a visionary, rather than an opportunistic approach.

While most of the categories offer behavioral advice, two of the categories, 'be pragmatic' and 'focus', differ from the rest in offering functional and practical tips.

The below table summarizes best practices received in 14 categories, ordered by volume of occurrence (we received 358 best practices and 293 bad practices). Whilst the categories could have been arranged in a different way, we propose this one.

Best networking practices
Be helpful, open-minded and positive, diplomatic, always answer requests, have the win-win attitude, help when you can even briefly, answer quickly
Give: give information (helpful advice, views, ideas, best practices, business info, addresses), give rather than only want to receive, put as much as you intend to get out, give before you take, add value to others, balance give and take, think of other before yourself, be eager to share; what you put out comes back to you, get people in touch when there is potential win-win; enjoy exchanging, share your knowledge and experience
Be proactive, contribute, take responsibilities, be active, think about the value you may bring to the network, participate, attend events, be visible, attend regularly, be engaged, offer good topics and discussions, exchange online, use the forum (read and answer), invest time and money into networking, inspire, check for new connections
Get to know people, inquire on interest from others, show strong interpersonal skills and interest, be sincerely interested in others, be respectful, friendly, polite and nice, courteous, patient and tolerant, connect, introduce yourself to new people, pay attention and make sure to remember their names, meet/contact people not only for asking things, talk with persons of all ages, promote good ideas, support, try to know how they network
Listen, pay attention, try remember a comment so that there can be a discussion later, be curious, ask questions, be available and open to new discoveries
Do it over years, regularly, be consistent and persistent, don't wait to look for a job to do it, persevere, think long term
Recommend people, make or facilitate introductions, only refer propel to your network that you really know, welcome new comers, share contacts, file contacts for future reference, facilitate interaction, connect people
Be yourself, be personal, tell your story (you never know what part of people will be interested in), be honest, don't be shy (no-one can help you if you don't ask), stay true to yourself, feel good in your body, be sincere, don't hesitate to contact people when in need, think about how you would like to be approached
Follow-up on initial contact, after a discussion, when given a connection or an advice, thank people, follow-up even if you don't 'need' anything, give feedback when help is received
Be pragmatic: know how to start a conversation, have a 30' pitch, take initiative to know someone, be clear and concise, be precise when requesting information, have business cards with you (ensure they are professionally designed), be prepared, update your profile, immediately set appointments to see new contact again



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Keep in touch, keep your contacts posted regularly on what you are doing, ask for news, remember birthdays, keep contact actively even if just by email or phone, networking works best with people you know, maintain link

Focus, be focused on the goals, select the network that really suits your needs, find common interests, work intensively on the top 20% who have a direct impact on your work, think twice before you do business with your network acquaintances, keep your goals in mind, be ambitious; be selective in what business events you attend, keep appropriate level of contacts, add value for yourself

Keep your promises, be reliable

Be discreet, keep it private and off-line, respect people's privacy, preserve privacy and interest of your contacts

Your Don'ts - what to avoid when networking?

Many Don'ts mirror the Do's, whether pointing the opposite of or limiting the good practice. Though many responses carry different light and valuable information as can be seen in the summary below.

Bad networking practices

Waste people's time, spam, annoy people, insist heavily, saturate network with email, mass emailing, unsolicited emails, convey unnecessary information, give too much public information, chatting on professional networks, be superficial, small talks, clichés, empty talking, get caught up in the social side of it, spoil your network with unnecessary information, be too long when speaking, talk too much, network too far away from your search, attend network events not relevant to you, brown nosing, narrow minded and lecture oriented, start fruitless debates, look away when talking to someone, spread yourself over too thin, stereotype, gossip, be cynical, judgemental

Just think on own benefits, talk too much about yourself/your own business, only for personal ambition; only approach when you need something, only to get a job, being needy, subservient, give negative personal branding, have a pessimistic attitude, lack of self esteem; fail to ask questions and hear about others; don't give, use and abuse, always ask not give, just ask, not answering/ignoring questions or requests, only look for people that you can benefit from, be selfish

Bad manners, be rude, arrogant, be negative, don't thank, be unbending, interrupt when in a group, have prejudices, discussions about religion and politics, disrespect other people's opinion, think that your status at work spills over in the network, inappropriate dress sense, be over-familiar, post embarrassing personal information on Facebook/MySpace (recruiters look at it!), give unsolicited advice, arrive late or not show, don't respect the Netiquette

Hard selling, push your services, just sell, sales people, try to sell one's products services especially at first contact, personal business ads, be aggressive business wise, push business, make assumptions about someone's usefulness to you, abuse your contacts to promote your business, harass other members

Passive attitude, be a passive observer, wait for people to approach you, being shy, afraid to share information, never drink alcohol, waffle, be gullible, just give a comment to prove presence, keep silence when other stopped talking, stay with the same person, never attend events, let someone dominate the talk

Expect to receive immediately, look for short time return on investment, try too hard, expect too much, have too high expectation too soon; read too quickly, avoid spend time (be over-efficient), spend time jumping from a site to another, be in a hurry not taking time, be stressed, send resume with initial contact, cold calls, be impatient and not listening, expect a direct return for what you are giving

Become a contact collector who don't even know your contacts; add all names you cross as contact in LinkedIn, try to meet as many people as possible without any real discussion, add contacts just to boost number of contacts, business card exchanging without clear motive, give out many cards without finding who the recipients are, collect business cards, give your card without asking for the other's

Restrict your network to a specific profile of contacts, discriminate, avoid contact, hide connections, be paranoid, personal attacks, be more interested by the power than the person, intolerance of different personalities/circles



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Asking unreasonable favours to people, ask for a job referral to people you first meet, ask for a job without ever having talked before, get offended when people are not interested to you, ask for referrals if you can't explain what you will do with the contact
Make rash promises , promises not kept, promise help and don't give any, say you'll be in touch when you don't intend to, break promises, commit if you cannot follow through
Share too freely personal contact info, recipient disclosure, don't filter request before opening your contact list, divulge confidences, turn a contact as a single-point-of-contact, give information about your contacts without asking them, disrespect confidentiality
Give a false image of yourself , don't give your CV, provide false information, be insincere, lie, don't update your personal data
Forget to follow-up , wait too long to meet the person again, forget to inform the person that recommends you to another, no feedback to the people who advice you, ignore people for long periods

Have you evolved in your ways to network and how?

The vast majority of respondents (96%) answered that they have evolved or are evolving through networking, by seeing how important it is to network, becoming more active, selective, organized and relaxed with age and experience, adopting web tools, and learning different ways to network while moving countries (acknowledging different ways to network across the world). Many write that they have evolved by discovering and adopting the best practices mentioned in the previous answers.

What do you miss in the clubs/networks/organizations you belong to?

Many women state that they miss having more time to dedicate to networks, which is unrelated to the organization they belong to. The other responses vary, with a few themes being stated more than once:

- in person meetings (Internet is just not enough), local chapters
- innovation, new events, new topics
- a board member to introduce new comers
- free events
- focused groups (young professionals, consulting, ...)

A few compare mixed and women-only networks, and their pros and cons, however, there is not enough information to extrapolate.

Nice story or any other generic comments to help us understand how you network?

We received 55 nice stories and generic comments, many about EuropeanPWN enabling women to find jobs, partners, entrepreneurs to start a business, and provided life-long friends. At least three local chapters' presidents testified their terrific experience. Here are some prime cuts:

'Sometimes the least expected networking contact can become the richest source of learning and growth.'



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'Thirteen years ago I founded a network for women in new media which is still going strong today. A few months ago a young woman in the group created a spin-off network, and launched it with a day-long web-based conference bringing together more than 600 women across the world to hear fabulous, inspiring speakers. I planned to attend virtually, and was truly proud of the woman who had initiated the project and the team behind her. They had seen a need and seized an opportunity to meld personal and professional interests while also showcasing some cutting-edge internet technologies.'

*At the crack of dawn on the day of the conference, I sent a note to her with a few encouraging words. She wrote back in haste, thrilled to have had someone recognize just how hard she had been working and what a massive undertaking the project had been. The result: I am doubly impressed, because she not only planned and executed a great event, but she took the time on her incredibly busy morning to say thanks. She is likewise impressed that an 'old timer' like me is looking over her shoulder to say bravo to the young women coming up behind. I've seen a lot of people overlook this kind of feedback, which is something that takes just a minute but makes a real impact on the receiving end. Personal contact and personal recognition (plus delivering on what you say you will do) are key to building a meaningful network. It's really *not* about the number of groups you belong to or the quantity of business cards you collect. Unless you translate it into something your contact can relate to, you are just one more entry on their LinkedIn page.'*

'Yesterday at the networking dinner I sat nearby of one senior men who seemed to be much more interested in communicating with men who were sitting opposite to him and at his other side. So I thought it'll be most probably limited to 'Hej'. His attitude changed when we several time exchanged 'useful' comments on the dishes (it was a tasting session) and on our food preferences. So I got an opportunity to learn about his company and some of his ideas about the industry. :).'

'I always have a friendly smile for the people around me. While traveling/flying, this has often created opportunity to meet interesting people (mainly women) and some of the ladies where leaders in their industry - VPs and senior managers which I only found out when we landed and exchanged business cards. Our conversations were fun, and we talked and laughed about all kinds of subjects (traveling, men at work, children, pets and places to visit and stay) without touching business issues. For me this is the best possible way to start a network relationship.'

'The way I got my last job was totally unexpected: it came thru London (I'm based in Paris) thanks to a UK lady I had seen three times in a general networking cocktail in Toulouse.'

'Since I'm a Facebook member and I discovered this was a project for my company, I take now time to read articles on social networking itself.'

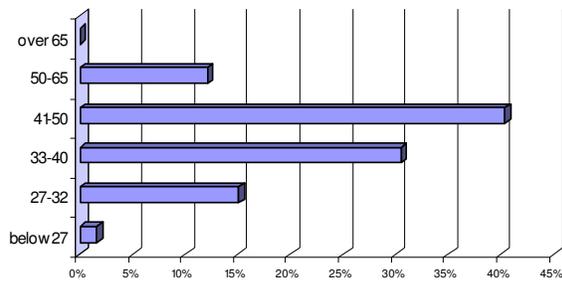


Who were the respondents

The survey, conducted in English, was opened from March to May 2008. It was mainly advertised in the EuropeanPWN newsletter and members' only platform, as well as in various other networks such as Xing and Expatica. We received 310 responses (304 women and six men). The small number of men answers did not allow drawing any conclusions; therefore these have been excluded from the analysis.

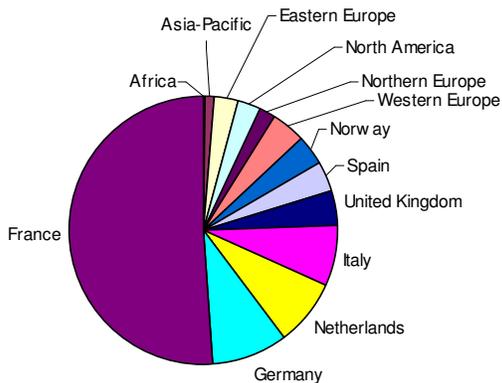
Demographics

304 respondents - average age: 41



Respondents were on average 41 years old; the age bracket that gathers the most answers (40%) was 41-50, which may lead to believe that this is the period of life for women where they network the most, hence have interest in responding to the survey.

Half of respondents live in France, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, UK Spain and Norway



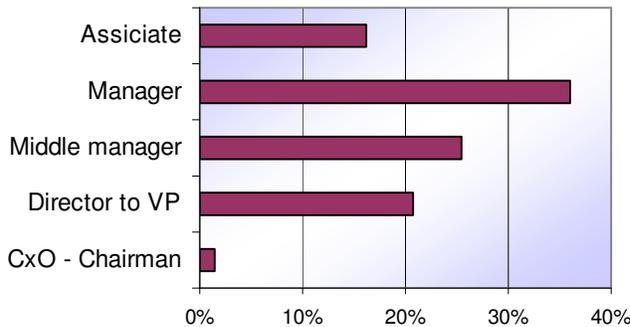
Most of the answers were received from women in France (155 respondents, i.e. 55%), which is not surprising given that Paris is where we gather the most

important volume of members. The volume of answers from Germany (28 respondents) was a pleasant surprise since our German chapters have just started. We attribute this to having advertised the survey on Xing. Other countries with over 20 responses were the Netherlands (25) and Italy (22). In total 25 countries were represented.

Of all the respondents 123 (39%) were expatriates, mostly from North America (29%), followed by Western Europe (25%) and Northern Europe (22%). Dutch respondents included 69% expatriates, followed by Italian (55%), German (36%) then French respondents (34%). Expatriates come from 32 different countries in total.



Corporate respondents are mainly managers



Socio-economics

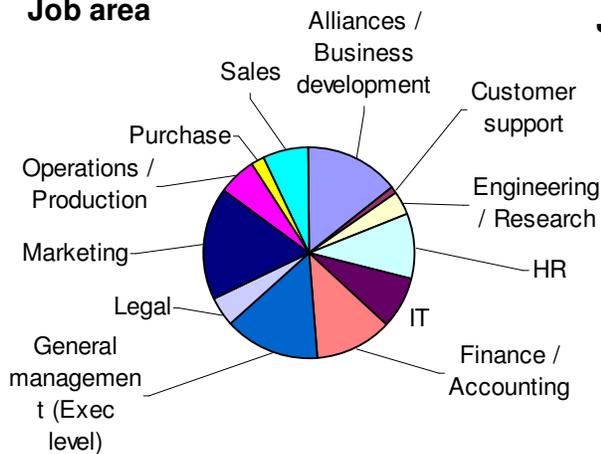
With regards to the socio-economic structure of respondents, 66% were employees, which we refer to as **corporate** in the analysis; 34% were self-employed, entrepreneurs 14% and free-lance 4%. We refer to them in the analysis as **non-corporate**. The remaining 4% were unemployed.

Most *corporate* respondents were at management levels, which is consistent with both the respondents' age and estimated average work experience of 15

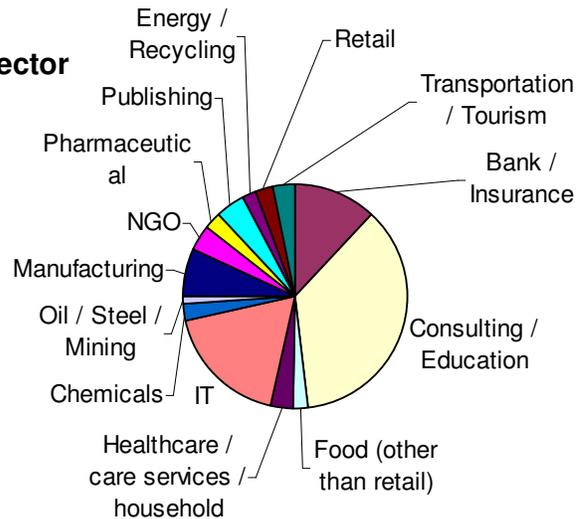
years.

Job areas were evenly distributed, as shown on the graphs below. In relation to the sectors, a noticeable majority belongs to the Consulting/Education industry, the IT and Bank/Insurance.

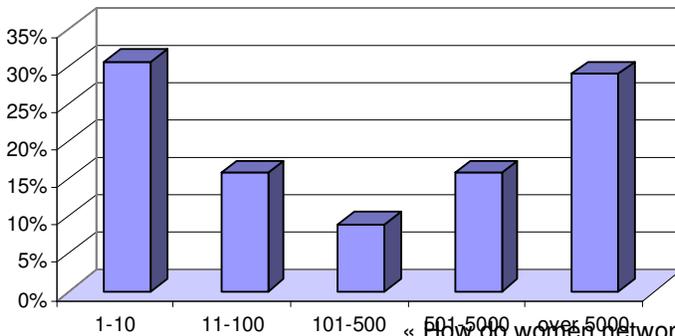
Job area



Job sector



Enterprise size



Enterprise size distribution correlates with the role distribution (31% belong to enterprises of 1-10 employees, consistent with the 34% of *non-corporate* respondents).



About...

...the Author



Cecile Demailly is VP Think Tank Communities for EuropeanPWN. She has worked in IBM, AT&T Business and GE Healthcare, and has recently founded the boutique consultancy, Early Strategies. She joined EuropeanPWN in 2003 and rapidly became involved in Paris then in the federation boards. In January 2007, Cécile launched the « Think Tank Groups » initiative to focus on women's career issues, decipher and encourage best practices.

A French, mother of three, she is a graduate of the Institut Supérieur de Gestion and currently following the Consulting and Coaching for Change Executive Masters degree from HEC-Oxford Saïd.

...the Editors

This survey has been kindly edited by Dina Zavrski-Makaric of Challenging Directions and Aimée DuBrule of FW Communication, both long time active members of EuropeanPWN.

...the European Professional Women's Network

EuropeanPWN's mission is to create a pan-European voice for professional women to promote professional progress, power and impact. The Europe's leading network for professional international women organizes over 500 leadership events a year in 17 major cities in Europe: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Geneva, London, Lyon, Madrid, Milan, Nice, Oslo, Paris, Stockholm and Vienna. Over 3,500 members, across 90 nationalities, are connected through the ThinkTank Communities, with state of the art Internet platform. EuropeanPWN has published eight books in its Women@Work series on topics *Best Practices in Corporate Diversity Programs*, *Mentoring* and *Women on Boards*. The main corporate partners of the EuropeanPWN are Deloitte and Orange, as well as IBM, Sodexo, Coca-Cola, Aon, Alcatel-Lucent, Cisco, Mexx and Mercer.

More about the Network, its Think Tank Communities and next publications can be found on www.EuropeanPWN.net.