

# Women in Business NI Ltd



Established in October 2002, Women in Business NI Ltd is the largest and fastest growing network for business women in Northern Ireland.

The network came about when 10 business women met on a training programme.

Women in Business support and empower new and established women-owned businesses and women in management positions, by providing information, ideas and business connections.

A Belfast-based body with members throughout Northern Ireland and links to sister networks throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, it is a not-for-profit organisation with a written constitution and a Board of Directors of 10 women. The network is supported by Invest Northern Ireland and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).

The key aim of Women in Business is to support networking, promote local role models, encouraging best practice and links with other small business organisations.

Women in Business NI Ltd, currently has over 250 members from the public, private and voluntary sectors and is growing year on year and continues to deliver real benefits and value for money to its members.

The network came about when 10 business women met on a training programme. Christine Boyle, the Chair of Women in Business explains: "We bonded immediately and benefited greatly from sharing business experiences and ideas together and agreed that it would be beneficial to continue to meet on occasion, as we all valued the support network. We subsequently discovered that there was the possibility of funding available from DEL through the EU Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme and Invest NI, to grow the network and Women in Business was subsequently launched."

Pictured left to right are: Christine Boyle, chair of Women in Business NI Ltd, Rachel Lomax, Deputy Governor of Monetary Policy at the Bank of England, Mary-Jo Lynch from Barclays Bank



Women in Business offers female entrepreneurs and those considering self-employment a forum for networking via regular seminars and workshops on business topics, learning and exchanging business contacts and provides regular communications on issues and opportunities that may be of interest. ►

# Case Study

For Dawn Cudworth and Sharon Wilson, joining Women in Business NI Ltd, proved to be the turning point for their fledgling company, Dial A Clean, which they launched in 2002, as Dawn explains, "We received a flyer from Women in Business NI Ltd to join them at a networking event and soon after, we became members.

The networking opportunities presented to us via Women in Business proved to be invaluable and as a direct result, our business took off. Being a member of Women in Business isn't just about networking with like-minded women and sharing potential business opportunities.

There is so much more to gain from being a member. Had we not become members of Women in Business, I dare say that Dawn and I would have remained completely oblivious to what was out there in terms of support for small business owners."



Rosemary Morrison, Director of Women in Business NI Ltd, Margaret Mountford, non-executive Director of Amstrad and judge on the BBC's The Apprentice, Christine Boyle, Chair of Women in Business NI Ltd, Susan McCambridge, Chief Executive of Women in Business NI Ltd

## ► Women in business continued...

Membership benefits include:

- Monthly Events/Seminars on topics that are of real benefit and interest to members
- Informal facilitated networking opportunities
- Information on business training and support programmes specific to women
- Free Newsletters
- Free listing in the members business directory
- Promotion of your business through our Member Discount Scheme and the Member Communication Service
- Network website including members only section
- Opportunities to network with other Business networks including half price membership of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Opportunities for free PR/Promotion via NI wide media coverage
- Up to date information about other events, activities, or, issues of interest to women running their own businesses
- Corporate discounts.

In association with Training for Women Network (TWN), the network annually hosts the Women in Business Conference. In 2007, Margaret Mountford, non-executive Director of Amstrad and judge on the cult BBC business show, "The Apprentice" provided the keynote address. Women in Business NI Ltd have also hosted a range of seminars with well-known entrepreneurs and business experts as speakers, including Felicity Huston, Commissioner of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland and Rachel Lomax, Deputy Governor Monetary Policy with the Bank of England.

2007 was a very significant year, with the launch of a much enhanced website, enabling the network to provide a more professional and efficient service to members. In addition, a targeted recruitment drive has increased Women in Business' membership across the private, public and voluntary sectors and having recently celebrated their fifth birthday event which was attended by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, Women in Business are thriving.

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