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## Creating Your Own Stiletto Network Six Startup Tips

It's the new women's movement—and it's sweeping the nation. Successful and motivated women are forming salons, organizing dinners, and meeting over cocktails with a purpose: supporting and advancing women. The first journalist to identify and name this pro-female revolution, **Pamela Ryckman** believes more women should be banding together and backing each other. In her new book, **STILETTO NETWORK** (AMACOM; May 16, 2013), she shares tips for starting your own girl power group:

- **Start now!** You don't need to be famous or well-established to create a Stiletto Network. "When women unite early in their careers," Ryckman attests, "they're more likely to steer each other toward promotions and opportunities, counsel each other through difficulties, and ultimately become powerful—together."
- **Think diversity.** Stiletto Networks shouldn't be cabals for best buddies—or gripe sessions for fellow employees. The most effective groups draw women with diverse skills from a variety of industries. They introduce women who might not otherwise meet, expand their horizons, and increase their spheres of influence.
- **Filter for relevance and shared experience.** To gel as a group, diverse women need to have some shared traits and common touch points, whether related to age or level of expertise. "Similar experiences allow women to quickly build the bonds of trust and loyalty at the heart of these networks," Ryckman observes.
- **Believe in the magic.** Stiletto Networks don't need a specific goal or agenda at the onset. They need only bring together women with shared values and ethics, women who are open to aiding others. "If you get dynamic ladies talking or walking or drinking, exciting things will happen," Ryckman assures.
- **Strike a balance between personal and professional.** Stiletto Networks should address the career-building needs of their members, yet still retain the fun. To achieve the right mix of purposefulness and pleasure, consider appointing a different woman to lead each meeting. Or bringing in guest speakers.
- **Have courage, give courage.** Stiletto Networks push members to pursue their passions. Members should help each other script difficult conversations, encourage each other to take risks, and shouldn't be afraid to disagree. "We all need friends who tell us hard truths," notes Ryckman, "but do it with kindness."

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Adapted from **STILETTO NETWORK: Inside the Women's Power Circles That Are Changing the Face of Business** by Pamela Ryckman (AMACOM; May 16, 2013; \$22.95 Hardcover; 978-0-8144-3253-2).

