

Women & Business
Featured Section

Oh, Really? What
Women Think

A Foreign Affair:
Dishes You'll Love

7th Annual
Ladies in Red

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It's
about the
Heart of a
Woman

GO RED!

Special Issue Presented By



S

ure, there are “How-to” guides out there for women entering the workforce; guides for women opening their own business, or those changing careers. These books provide steps a gal can take when she’s looking to make a move in the business world. They offer up helpful advice for women who aren’t sure how to approach the particular market they’re heading into. But do those steps and helpful hints really offer the kind of support it takes to make it in such a tough economic climate? Do they give the kind of advice one would get from a fellow businesswoman? From a sister? A friend? *The answer is usually “no.”*

believe. inspire. dream.

The Bakersfield Women's Business Conference is a very unique opportunity for women to explore possibilities and gain new awareness.

That’s why women in Bakersfield are a lucky bunch. They’re given the opportunity each year to attend a conference specifically designed for them; designed to provide a healthy dose of inspiration and encouragement when it comes to the business world and, more importantly, how women fit inside that world.

“The theme this year is ‘Believe. Inspire. Dream,’” said **Diane White**, the 2011 Chair for the Bakersfield Women’s Business Conference. “It’s about setting personal goals, believing in one’s self, in co-workers and colleagues.”

White, a tax manager with Brown Armstrong, is proud that the theme is one to which so many women can relate.



“We have to believe in something in order to inspire others to dream big,” she added. It’s a very cyclical theme.

“I want the Conference to inspire women to be the best, and I want it to inspire young women to get an education and to make a difference in their own lives,” White continued.

It’s one of the main reasons she got involved with the Conference. White has been with the Conference for five years now. She was originally asked to be a speaker and a volunteer, then found herself on the Board as Treasurer. She’s been on the >>

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**Colleen
 Bauer**

So it would seem inspiration abounds at the Bakersfield Women's Business Conference. It's certainly been proven over the years as many women who've attended go back year after year. But perhaps the most shining testament to the power of the Conference is the fact that there are so many success stories from women who've gone, so many women who've been empowered to follow their dreams.

"It took almost a year of planning," **Colleen Bauer** said of her journey to become a Day-Of Wedding Planner and start her own business, Fairy Godmother.

The successful Vice President/Deposit Relationship Manager for Rabobank was looking for a new venture, something that would challenge her outside of her day job, but not detract from her work or family.

"The process really evolved," Bauer said, with a smile on her face. "When I was Chair of the Conference in 2009, I got a particular vendor involved to liven up the day. Shortly afterward, she asked me why I wasn't doing event planning." After all, Bauer had years of experience planning family weddings, baby showers, and even events for Rabobank.

Bauer thought about that query for a while. She had an amazing job; why start a business?

But the challenge was there. The desire to try something new, to succeed at something she set her mind to, had Bauer doing her homework.

"I spent a lot of time reaching out to

other vendors and some of my competition. Because of the Conference, I felt confident going to these vendors, to other women, and talking to them—asking them what my next move should be," Bauer explained. As the Chair that year, Bauer was surrounded by nearly 30 other powerful Bakersfield women. She made sure to take the energy and confidence she saw in those women and incorporate it into how she ran her business.

"There's a lot to tackle early on when you start your own business and the Conference helped shape my approach. I pooled different mentors and friends that I had made through the Conference. I think women do a lot better job of reaching out for resources—we don't see it as a sign of weakness. We see the strength other women have and want to emulate that."

Bauer was encouraged by the women she met. She pushed herself to do something different.

"The Conference is there to push you," she said. "Make good use of your time there. Give your business card to someone you wouldn't normally give it to. Learn as much as you can."

Bauer certainly did. Her day-of wedding planner business has taken off quickly; she's already needed to bring on extra employees to keep up with the demand.

"But thanks to the lessons I learned at the Conference, I already had my network in place; I knew how to help my business grow successfully."