

FLORIDA FEDERATION OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

FLORIDA BUSINESS WOMAN

FALL 2023



Building Bridges

**Personal &
Professional Tips:**
MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS AT WORK
CULTIVATE INSPIRATION
NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

STATE CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS!
BPW/FL EDUCATION HAPPENINGS
STATE COMMITTEE &
LOCAL ORGANIZATION NEWS

2023-2024 BPW/FL Officers & Executive Committee

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BPW/FL Calendar of Events (2023)

<i>August</i>	11	International Day of the Girl
6	National Sister's Day	15-21 National Business Women's Week
26	Women's Equality Day	
<i>September</i>		<i>November</i>
Hispanic Heritage Month		11 Veterans Day
17	National Women's Friendship Day	<i>February</i>
		American Heart Month
<i>October</i>		<i>May/June</i>
Domestic Violence Awareness Month		TBD State Conference
Breast Cancer Awareness Month		

BPW/FL's Mission
To achieve equity for all working women through advocacy, education and connections.

Florida Business Woman

Florida Business Woman, the official publication of BPW/FL, is published three times annually by the Florida Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. (BPW/FL. Membership subscription is included in Federation dues.

Upcoming advertising and copy deadlines:

Winter issue	December 1, 2023
State conference issue	April 1, 2024
Summer issue	August 1, 2024

<i>Advertising Rates:</i>	Single issue	Two issues	Three issues
Full Page	\$175	\$315	\$420
Half Page	\$100	\$180	\$240
Back Cover (1/2 p)	\$150	\$270	\$360
Quarter Page	\$50	\$ 90	\$120
Business Card	\$25	\$ 45	\$ 60

The rates quoted are for BPW/FL members. Non-member fees are double the member fees. Color ads will show online but the print issues will be black & white. All copy and ads (with check) should be sent directly to the Editor. Please make checks for ads payable to BPW/FL.

Articles of up to one page will be accepted for consideration to be included on a space available basis. Items to be submitted include: officer and state committee chair reports, calendar entries & press releases, photos & articles about local organization events, and articles related to our mission that would be of interest to BPW members.

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Visit BPW/FL at www.bpwfl.org.
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear BPW/FL Members—

Two months!

Well, it has been just shy of two months since I assumed the role of President of BPW/FL. I remain humbled and honored! I can tell you that the first few months have been very hectic trying to juggle new schedules and obligations between my 34-year career with Duke Energy, which I affectionately refer to as my “day job,” and the demands of the presidency of this awesome organization. One of the bridges I hope to build, with your help, is how to streamline and organize in a way that is not too demanding for any one person.

You all have received my monthly emails so you should be caught up on my activities and priorities so I thought I would pivot and cover something you might not expect. I went to see the new Barbie movie with my nieces this week. What a SURPRISE and DELIGHT! I fully expected to be transported back to 10-year old Michele playing barbies with her sisters and friends but instead I was DELIGHTED to see a film that addressed feminism and had a humorous take on our male-dominated society. I laughed, cried and was motivated when it ended. And, now I want you all to go see it. Here are some of the themes the movie addresses:

- Women can break barriers and redefine what's possible.
- Even the most traditional icons can evolve and adapt.
- “Barbie” sparks important conversations about gender roles and equality

helping shape the way we talk and think about women’s roles and representation in society.

- A society governed by men, showing how the scales are tipped against women.
- The movie becomes a critique of patriarchal structures, and the challenges women face because of them.
- Barbie’s growth in the movie is a strong critique of societal norms and leads her towards self-realization.

So, my plea to you all is to don your favorite ‘pink’ outfit, grab a few girlfriends and go see this movie!



Now back to BPW business. A big thank you to all of you for heeding the call to lean in and help us achieve our strategic priorities set out at State Conference!

We still need folks to join our Programs, Public Policy and Marketing/ Membership Committees. If you are interested in finding out how to get more involved, please send me an email at moc.bpw@gmail.com.



I look forward to the next quarter focused on some key milestones for women. August 26 is Women’s Equality Day, to commemorate the 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. The third full week in October ushers in National Business Women’s Week. The observance focuses on the accomplishments of women in business. It also takes a look at the past and how far women in business have come and how far they have yet to go.

Remember, if you want to have me join your LO at an upcoming event – in person or virtual, please let me know!

Michele O. Cavallo

Michele Cavallo
President, BPW/FL, 2023-2024
moc.bpw@gmail.com
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Budget	—Open—		
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Women's Wellness	Sheri McCandless	Gold Coast	sheri.m@comcast.net

Ad Hoc Committees

State Conference —Open—

CONTRACT POSITIONS

Business Manager Cindi Irwin Upper Keys BusinessManager@bpwfl.org

Website StudioX

Please contact the above committee chairs if you would like to help; contact information can be found at www.bpwfl.org.

HISTORY OF BPW/FL BREAST CANCER FUND

Past State President Suzanne Dalton shares a brief history of the BPW/FL Breast Cancer Fund, which was established during her term as President in 1990-1991:



Image by WangXiNa on Freepik

“In 1991 there was minimal public awareness, research and/or legislation related to women’s health issues like breast cancer. It was during this time that the BPW/FL Legislative Committee identified a need related to accreditation of equipment used for mammography. Through the lobbying efforts of the members of BPW/FL and its legislative consultant, former State Senator Roberta Fox, the accreditation legislation was enacted and became law. Mammograms still play a very important role in the early detection of breast cancer.

Florida women can rest assured that the equipment used for mammograms is accredited thanks in part to BPW/FL’s efforts in 1991. It was shortly after the legislation regulating mammogram equipment was adopted that BPW/FL established its Breast Cancer Fund to provide financial assistance to individuals for mammograms. At that time, most insurance companies did not cover the cost of mammograms and there was a large segment of the population with no insurance at all.”

NOTE: Today a recipient of a distribution from the fund may use the \$250 for any purpose she chooses, including medical expenses, household bills, etc. and not just for the cost of a mammogram as originally established.

JO ANN ORR
 Education Foundation Treasurer
 BPW Florida Treasurer
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BPW/Gold Coast Remembers Member
LINDA SCHLEELEIN (Pictured Bottom Right)



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 President 2020-2021
 BPW/FL President 1993-1994

MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS AT WORK

Communication is so often the first step to solving any problem, and this is especially true when it comes to mental health challenges in the workplace. In order for staff to feel properly supported in their wellbeing, they need to feel that they are able to openly discuss their personal issues with their managers and colleagues, and that these concerns will be listened to compassionately and, wherever possible, addressed.

Every good employer understands how important it is to foster an open and welcoming culture when it comes to talking about mental health, but not every organisation is able to achieve it. A 2021 Lanes Group survey of 1,047 professionals revealed that 27% of respondents did not feel able to speak to their manager about mental health issues – more than one-quarter of those polled.

Here, we will examine some of the key issues that prevent employers from creating a positive environment for mental health conversations in the workplace, and suggests key solutions that help to tackle these issues.

What is holding back mental health conversations in the workplace?

In recent years, employers across every industry have become more aware of the importance of proper mental health support in the workplace – especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought many of these issues to the forefront in a major way. In March 2023, Peninsula Group published the [findings of a survey](#) of 79,000 businesses from four countries, which revealed that nearly half of UK bosses have seen an increase in workplace mental health issues. These executives recognise that they have a responsibility to their employees – 94% said they are available to help staff who are struggling with mental health concerns.

The poll revealed that two-thirds of employers are confident their employees would talk to them about their mental health concerns. However, it also showed that only 12% of employees have actually done so – and one in seven of those who did speak to their bosses said nothing was done as a result of this.

In my own experience, there is often a

gap in perceptions and outlooks between company management and the rank-and-file employees, which can make it difficult to foster open and productive conversations about mental health. Many managers maintain too much of a distance from the everyday concerns and attitudes of their workers to be able to have empathetic conversations with them, and in the worst cases, this can lead to an unhelpfully adversarial “us vs them” attitude.



These problems are exacerbated by cultural differences between workers and their bosses, especially in blue-collar or service-based industries, where staff often face unique circumstances and challenges that the managerial class does not understand:

- Many employees in the construction and engineering sectors are younger than their managers, creating a generational gap that hampers communication. Others may also be neurodivergent, meaning they will have particular mental health needs that need to be managed in specific ways.
- Some manual labourers will be used to working alone, on their own initiative, and simply prefer not to be actively “managed” at all; this means they will be less willing to open up on matters of mental wellbeing.

None of these factors are necessarily negative, and do not need to be a source of any problems in the workplace, but if managers do not take these dynamics into consideration, it becomes much more difficult for them to encourage these workers to be open about their mental health, or about any other workplace concerns they might have.

The result of this may be a dysfunctional

working environment, in which managers and workers do not respect each other, where staff do not feel valued for their contributions or able to discuss their problems, and where clear and constructive communication is not possible.

Key steps to foster open dialogue about mental health

In order to avoid these negative outcomes, employers need to make sure they are taking all of the necessary steps to create a welcoming and supportive workplace, in which workers feel comfortable and empowered to have open conversations about even the most challenging mental health topics.

Here are just a few steps your organisation can take to generate a more positive dialogue about mental health:

Instill a culture of empathetic management

It is vital that your company’s management culture treats workers as individual people first and foremost, rather than as resources to be managed. This means that those in charge of a specific team should strive to know and understand each member of their team as individuals, and recognise their personal needs.

As part of this, managers should take time to speak to workers who appear to be struggling; if a staff member is having trouble with timekeeping, or has taken extended sickness absence, it is always better to have a conversation and find out what might be troubling them, rather than hitting them with disciplinary measures or putting them straight on to a performance improvement plan.

Develop individualised support plans to meet each worker’s needs

Good mental health in the workplace should be seen as interchangeable with physical safety. This is why psychological risk assessments for individual staff members can be a useful tool, building on the methodology used in carrying out standard risk assessments for dangerous physical tasks.

A psychological risk assessment involves speaking to your workers about their mental health background and indi-

(Continued on page 9)

BPW/FL COMMITTEE NEWS

Marketing

As we head into the new BPW/FL year, the Marketing Committee plans to build on the branding work completed last year while providing essential support for the new BPW/FL Strategic Plan. First, I would like to thank the membership and the Board of Directors for adopting the revised Mission Statement and newly drafted Core Values during state conference in June. As I write this update, these foundational branding elements are being incorporated into the BPW/FL bylaws and handbook.

Second, I would like to thank the members who raised their hands during conference to help with marketing projects. This year's Marketing Committee Members are: Lily Alcott (St Pete-Pinellas), Janine Duffy (St Pete-Pinellas), Cyndi Fredricks (Englewood-Venice) and McKell Moorhead (St Pete-Pinellas).

The most urgent priority for the committee is to meet with LO leaders to better understand the unique obstacles each LO faces in growing their membership. From those discussions, we will develop a plan and prioritized list of deliverables to best support LO and statewide membership growth goals. Another priority is to continue the branding work by reviewing marketing materials across the LOs and recommend ways to make our messages more impactful and consistent across the state. And finally, we will collaborate closely with the Membership, Public Policy, Programs and Technology Committees to provide marketing support for their strategic projects.

The BPW/FL Strategic Plan is both ambitious and necessary to reverse statewide membership trends. If you would like to be part of the solution to our declining membership numbers, please reach out to me, any other Committee Chair, or BPW/FL President Michele Cavallo to discuss your interests. There are many ways to get involved, even if it's just for a short time or to support a specific task. Remember: Many hands make light work... and contributing your time and talents is the best way to support our mission of achieving equity for working women!

Patricia Milian, BPW/FL Marketing Committee Chair

Programs

The goals of the Program Committee are to convene working women across the state to participate in educational and information sessions on work related topics, to create educational and professional development content that can be used by the LOs, and to provide a platform through which LOs and individual members can develop and share content. Our strategies for achieving those goals are to: analyze what is currently available, assess its value and leverage that content in developing programs; conduct a market analysis to identify gaps or unmet needs within BPW/FL's membership; design programs around existing content; test different venues/platforms for delivering content; and brand and promote the programs. To begin all that we will create a library of existing BPW resources; identify/consolidate free publicly available resources; survey the membership on topics they would like BPW/FL to provide and ask what they could present on; and then begin developing content where appropriate.

We'll work with the technology committee when looking at venues/platforms for delivering content and with the marketing committee when we have programs to promote. One item that is already available is a calendar of programming, which can be found in the members-only area of the website under Document Resources (see pages 9-10 of the Local Organization Program Planning document under the Other category—lower half of the webpage). We will use this calendar to refresh the home page with relevant content throughout the year.

In the meantime, please check out the programs now available, which consist of recorded webinars, leadership documents and presentation slides from the Individual Development Program. There are four recorded webinars available from the home page of the website as well as three presentations from this year's annual conference on the annual conference recap page. Finally there are multiple webinars that can be found under "webinars" in the members-only section of the website including several on BPW LO leadership.

The committee currently consists of Sheila Barry-Oliver, Chair, Kaila Palmer

(FAU Scholarship House President), Vicki Faulkner (BPW/St Pete-Pinellas, BPW/FL Secretary), Margie Smith (BPW/Upper Keys) and Steph Marcusky (BPW/Englewood-Venice, Technology Committee Chair). We really need more committee members to make this effort work and are seeking those who have the interest and skills to impact what our programs will look like. If you'd like to know more, contact Sheila at sbo.bpw@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for our virtual Equality Day webinar on August 24 at 1:00 pm—a joint effort with the Public Policy Committee. See bpwfl.org for more details.

Sheila Barry-Oliver, BPW/FL Programs Committee Chair

Public Policy

BPW/FL Members if you didn't get a chance to attend our Annual State Conference in June, you might not know that significant changes were proposed and approved, by vote of the membership in attendance, to our BPW/FL Public Policy Platform. The new Public Policy Platform can be found at [Public Policy Platform - Florida Federation of Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. \(bpwfl.org\)](http://PublicPolicyPlatform-FloridaFederationofBusiness&ProfessionalWomensClubs,Inc.bpwfl.org).

All BPW/FL members were provided an opportunity, in advance of State Conference, to review and provide feedback to the Committee on the proposed Public Policy Platform. The Committee remains grateful for the changes that were made in how the Public Policy Platform is provided to the membership in advance of voting on it at Conference. The Committee is also aware of a desire by the membership to get the information even earlier for review. While the Committee will continue to get the proposed Platform to the membership as provided for in our governing documents, we will do our best to get it to you even earlier. One of the potential problems in providing the proposed Platform even earlier is the timing of the legislative session. If Session is in January as it will be in 2024, then the Committee members will have time to work with the proposed Platform earlier in the year, as the end of Session will be in March. When Session begins in March and ends in May, committee

BPW/FL COMMITTEE NEWS

members are quite busy keeping up with all that is going on in Tallahassee to keep our members as informed as possible, which unfortunately makes it more difficult for us to complete the work of the Committee any earlier.

If you would like to stay informed on what the Committee is posting (articles, letters, etc.) you can find them here [Public Policy News - Florida Federation of Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. \(bpwfl.org\)](https://www.bpwfl.org/bpwfl-breast-cancer-donations/). We endeavor to make sure we post items that relate to all of our Platform items. If you read something that you think would be educational and important for our members to know, please do not hesitate to contact me via email, jerri0679@gmail.com, and provide a copy for the Committee's review and potential posting.

Your Public Policy Committee has been busy in the few months post our Annual State Conference. President Michele Cavallo and Chair Jerri met via Zoom with a lobbyist to investigate the cost of us having assistance in scheduling a trip to Tallahassee for Committee Days. It was confirmed with the lobbyist that Committee Days are our best time to go to Tallahassee and have a real opportunity to meet with our legislative members. As 2024 is a presidential election year Session will begin in January, which means that Committee Days will be in November and December. While this seems like it is a long way off, it is really just around the corner.

DO YOU WANT TO GO TO TALLAHASSEE? The Public Policy Committee needs your input. We need to know your true ability to go to Tallahassee in November or December, 2023. We are investigating the cost of hiring transportation so that all our members will be together during the trip, but this is difficult if we don't have a realistic idea of how many of our members can actually commit to going. Please send me an email at jerri0679@gmail.com or let your LO President know, so that they can provide an LO tally of members who would truly like to go to Tallahassee. The Committee will also be sending a survey soon to determine other aspects of a trip to Tallahassee and our members' level of engagement.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you throughout the year.

Jerri Evans, BPW/FL Public Policy Committee Chair

Technology

The Technology Committee looks forward to supporting the Strategic Planning Committee with the three main pillars of the plan. Suzi Youngberg will be working with Patricia Milian on Membership Experience, Amy Divino will be working with Jerri Evans on Public Policy, as well as analyzing the needs versus opportunities of new software, and Stephanie Marcusky will be working with Sheila Barry-Oliver of the Programs portion of the Strategic Plan.

Stephanie Marcusky, BPW/FL Technology Committee Chair

Women's Wellness

The Women's Wellness Committee consists of Sheri McCandless, Past State President, BPW/Gold Coast, as Committee Chair, and Committee Members Suzanne Dalton, Past State President (1990-1991), Member at Large; Jo Ann Orr, BPW/Marathon and 2023-2024 State Treasurer; Gwen Sermon, BPW/North Sarasota; and Erin Hamilton, BPW/Upper Keys.

The Committee is charged with fundraising for the BPW/FL Breast Cancer Fund. At a planning meeting held on June 20, the Committee agreed on the following:

- To encourage LOs to hold a program or event during the month of October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, to educate their members on the Breast Cancer Fund and to have some type of fundraiser benefitting the Fund;
- To share educational information with the membership through the monthly BPW/FL newsletter and all three issues Florida Business Woman (FBW); and
- To hold a fundraising event for the Fund during the 2024 State Conference.

The Wellness Committee is also kicking

off a year-long Member Donation Campaign to help boost the Breast Cancer Fund, introduced in the July BPW/FL newsletter. BPW/FL members are asked to go online and make a donation to the Fund, using this link to the page on the BPW/FL website: <https://www.bpwfl.org/bpwfl-breast-cancer-donations/>

- Every donation of \$25 or more will receive a Pink Ribbon Lapel Pin as a thank you for your support.
- Every donation of \$250* or more (*the amount of one distribution from the Fund) will receive a special supporter lapel pin.

As of the writing of this article, we have already received one request for distribution from the Fund for this new BPW fiscal year. Your continuing support of BPW/FL's Breast Cancer Fund can and will make a difference ... until the day there is a cure.

The Committee will also be sharing educational information in the monthly BPW/FL newsletters and future issues of FBW on other women's health issues, including heart disease and mental health.

Sheri McCandless, BPW/FL Women's Wellness Committee Chair

Nominations

In 2024, we will elect all the BPW/FL officers (President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Nominations Chair) and the BPW/FL Education Foundation officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer). It is not too early to be thinking about whether you or someone in your local organization would be a good fit and would be willing to serve. Read the relevant bylaws (and the BPW/FL Handbook) to learn the requirements and duties of each office. Until we get a Nominations Chair, reach out to any current officer in either BPW/FL or BPW/FL Education Foundation to learn more.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY VS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Understanding the nuances that differentiate Employment Equity (EE) and Affirmative Action (AA) is essential in creating a diverse, inclusive, and fair workplace. Although interconnected, these concepts have unique applications and implications.

Employment Equity provides equal opportunities, allowing everyone to thrive regardless of background or personal characteristics. This principle ensures everyone has the same access to career progression and personal development, eliminating discriminatory practices that might hamper their growth.

Conversely, Affirmative Action is a proactive policy to increase workplace and educational opportunities for demographic groups historically underrepresented in leadership and professional roles. AA is a countermeasure to systemic biases and prejudices, supporting those consistently deprived of fair and equal treatment.

It's crucial to comprehend the seven pillars of diversity that underpin these principles and ensure their successful implementation:

1. Access: Guaranteeing equal opportunities for all individuals.
2. Attitude: Fostering a positive, accepting mindset towards differences.
3. Choice: Ensuring individuals have the freedom to express their unique characteristics.
4. Partnerships: Building solid relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.
5. Communication: Encouraging open dialogue about diversity and inclusion.
6. Policy: Implementing guidelines that uphold diversity and fairness.
7. Opportunities: Creating equal chances for personal and professional growth.

As we strive to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, we must address three significant barriers:

1. Unconscious bias: Tackling the often invisible prejudices that can unfairly influence decisions.

2. Lack of representation: Increasing the presence of underrepresented groups in all areas and levels of the organization.
3. Privilege: Recognizing and mitigating some individuals have advantages over others.

Lastly, it's essential to note the connection between Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and Affirmative Action. While DEI is a broad framework that aims to create an environment where everyone feels valued, Affirmative Action is a set of actions implemented to address historical and ongoing discrimination. DEI often encompasses Affirmative Action strategies as part of its toolkit, aiming to create a society where opportunities are genuinely equal. Together, DEI and Affirmative Action form the front line in the battle against structural barriers and the drive toward a more inclusive society.

By Nylma Laureano, member of BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas and Chair of the BPW/SPP DEI Committee

MENTAL HEALTH *(Continued from page 5)*

vidual needs, in order to find out what kind of support they might require from you, and identify anything they might need to stay mentally safe and well on the job. By creating these individual safety profiles and plans, it will be easier for managers and HR leaders to understand how to support each staff member.

Create resources for managers to learn about mental health

The principles of good mental health support cannot be learned overnight, or in a single training session. Companies need to provide their managers with access to high-quality training resources and information on an ongoing basis, and all members of the team must show a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

After all, mental health crises can be extremely challenging to deal with, but if they happen in the workplace, bosses have a responsibility to know what to do. If a member of staff is struggling with suicidal feelings, for example, would your team feel confident in handling the matter? If such a situation arises, it is essential that colleagues around them know what steps to take, or at very

least, that they have resources they can consult to help guide their actions.

Support your mental health first aiders

Many modern workplaces will have a certain number of mental health first aiders on their team. Having these trained volunteers among your workforce can be invaluable in giving people a first point of contact if they are struggling, and allowing them to share their problems with a peer or colleague rather than going straight to management.

It is also vital to make sure that mental health first aiders are properly supported by the HR team and managers. After all, these are also individuals with their own mental health needs, who may become overburdened if they are required to do too much; make sure to surround them with supportive managers, and provide them with training and guidance to help them grow and evolve their own understanding of mental health.

Encourage staff to be proactive about their own mental health needs

The most effective way to generate more positive conversations about mental health in the workplace is to do so at every level of the company, rather than

simply from the top down. Workers need to know that their managers will support them with their mental health – but they also need to be encouraged to take their own mental wellbeing seriously, and to speak up if they are unhappy in order to improve their circumstances.

This means making sure that everyone on site knows who to speak to about their mental health needs. You can do this by posting contact details and key information in communal break rooms, or hosting coffee break talks on key topics relating to mental wellbeing, such as stress management and suicide awareness.

By taking these steps, companies will be able to make important progress towards their goal of creating a truly constructive environment of trust and open dialogue when it comes to mental health. This will not happen overnight, but by embedding these values into your HR strategy, you stand the best chance of creating the self-sustaining improvements that any company needs to truly transform its culture.

By Alana Warburton-Whitehead
<https://www.thehrdirector.com/business-news/mental-health/whats-holding-back-mental-health-conversations-work/>

Two Great Events

with
BPW / St. Petersburg - Pinellas

Equality Day Tea

Join us on Saturday August 26 from noon to 2pm for our annual celebration of the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote.

The Duke Energy Center for the Arts -
The Mahaffey Theater

Visit www.BPWStPetePinellas.org
for tickets and information



BPW Working Women's Forum 2023



**Working to Belong:
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- ◆ Thursday, October 26, 2023 | 5:30-7:30 pm
- ◆ The Center for Health Equity - 2333 34th St. South, St. Petersburg
- ◆ Visit www.BPWForum.com for tickets, sponsorships and information

Stay up to date on all our events and activities by subscribing to our weekly "Touch Base Tuesday" email at www.BPWStPetePinellas.org

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HOW INSPIRATION WORKS IN THE BRAIN

To understand what it takes to cultivate regular inspiration, we have to look at what happens in the brain when inspiration strikes.



[Photo: Venti Views/Unsplash; Donnie Ray Crisp/Unsplash]

By Katina Bajaj

Have you ever wondered why your best ideas seem to come at the most random moments?

From the outside, inspiration can seem unpredictable and illogical. It's almost like an idea just suddenly falls into your lap—a problem you've been trying to solve for days suddenly has an answer, or the arc for a story somehow fits together.

Personally, I had always assumed that the harder I tried to get to the right answer, the better outcomes I would have. But, as soon as I began studying how creativity works in the brain, I learned that this couldn't be further from the truth. Our creative brains don't necessarily care about hard work. In fact, creative ideas can pop into our minds when we're doing something completely irrelevant.

This isn't just a personal hunch; there's a biological reason for why this is the case. Creativity doesn't just come about because of some outside force—we can actually create the circumstances that turn inspiration into a regular, predictable thing.

At my company, Daydreamers, we've put together a not-so-secret formula that helps us cultivate inspiration on a regular basis. It requires us to pay attention, re-

lax, and enjoy ourselves more often. If that sounds, well, impossible, here's exactly how it works from a scientific perspective.

The Root of Creativity

Creativity is a natural part of our DNA. As adults in an output-driven world, we often lose touch with this innately human quality, largely because we treat our brains like machines. We're constantly checking to-do lists, setting out to achieve tasks, or responding to "urgent" requests. This can make us stressed, and [researchers have found](#) that stress can impede creativity.

In the most simple terms, creativity happens when we ask, "What if things could be different?" It requires us to combine information in a new way, and see the world in a manner we haven't before. But, when our brain is operating in the linear fashion we're used to, it can get stuck in mental tunnel vision.

Creative inspiration strikes when we return back to the default mode of our brain. The default mode network (DMN) is an intricate combination of regions in our brains that are geared toward connecting the dots we may not see on the surface. Historically, the DMN was often seen as the part of our brain we want to *escape* in order to get more done. However, [scientists are now finding](#) that the DMN is at the root of creativity, meaning-making, and introspection.

Being in the DMN often happens when our body is doing one thing and our mind is somewhere else. Essentially, it happens when we daydream—or quit trying so hard.

The Formula for Creative Breakthroughs

Creative inspiration happens long before we sit down to create. [Our brains](#) are constantly collecting new information from our environments.

This is why I believe beholding beauty, savoring a moment, or exercising your mental flexibility are especially important to the core foundations of creative thinking. In essence, paying attention gives our creative brains the "dots" we need in order to combine ideas in a new way.

But to understand what it takes to culti-

vate regular inspiration, we have to look at what happens in the brain when inspiration strikes. Some scientists call that moment right before a jolt of inspiration a "brain blink." Right before a moment of inspiration, studies have shown through fMRI imaging that a rush of alpha waves shuts off our visual cortex in order to quiet all potential distractions, allowing the DMN to thrive. While our external world is slowing down, our brain is making disparate connections until that "Aha!" moment comes alive.

A few years ago, scientists were curious about this exact topic. In a study [published in Nature](#), researchers looked at the impact of "quitting" as it relates to creative breakthroughs in three different ways: doing nothing, doing something intense, or daydreaming. Guess which type of quitting helped with creativity the most? Those who had active downtime (i.e., mind-wandering) performed 41% better than their counterparts on creative tasks. When our brains have a moment to breathe they emit endorphins that help us relax, have space to go inward, and finally get out of that mental tunnel vision.

But not all mind-wandering is created equal—relaxation is a crucial element when trying to foster creativity and inspiration. That's why going on a walk in nature or even getting into creative "flow" without worrying about the output can help us feel more creatively inspired.

Mind-wandering and relaxation can be used by workers in a wide range of industries—not just academia. Creators, inventors, and status-quo pushers alike have been prioritizing mental breaks for centuries. Albert Einstein was known for taking long breaks to mind-wander when working on solving tough problems, which he called "thought experiments." He literally came up with the theory of relativity while imagining himself riding a sunbeam to the edge of the universe during the school day. Talk about a daydream!

In order to cultivate inspiration more regularly, we have to start long before we create. Being open to new ideas, experiences, and saving beautiful things helps our brains collect as much infor-

(Continued on page 15)

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

A Quick Synopsis

A total of 46 BPW/FL members and guests representing 8 local organizations and members-at-large attended the in person 2023 BPW/FL Annual Conference on June 12-14 in Ft. Lauderdale. Twelve first time attendees were present.

State conference began on Monday at noon with three educational workshops (Effectively Using Parliamentary Procedure, Lobbying Effectively and Overview of the Women’s Bureau). Speakers included Mary Giddens, Anne Gannon and Natasha Black. We then held an open discussion on Tuesday’s business, which was followed by a fellowship reception.

Tuesday morning focused on the strategic plan and the development of “tactics” through the use of round table discussions about the three main prongs of membership experience, policy and programs. Attendees were then asked to commit themselves to a strategic activity in this coming year.

Tuesday afternoon focused on the business of the Federation including approving the budget and the public policy platform, adopting 16 bylaws changes, and the election of officers as well as the business of the Education Foundation including approving a budget and electing directors. The awards presentation recognized all the hard work and accomplishments of BPW/FL LOs during the 2022-2023 BPW year. The Council of Presidents Delegate to the Executive Committee was elected and announced.

The Education Foundation held its annual Hawg Callin as well as a very creative fundraiser. A total of \$912 (plus a \$5,000 grant) was collected. In addition, \$200 was collected for the Breast Cancer Fund.

On Tuesday evening, the 2023-2024 BPW/FL officers were installed at the banquet, which featured dancing.

On Wednesday morning, the 2023-2024 Board of Directors and Executive Committee met to discuss the coming BPW year.

BPW/FL 2023-2024 Public Policy Platform

The proposed 2023-2024 Public Policy Platform was adopted as presented.

Introduction:

Since the inception of BPW/FL in 1919, BPW/FL has always supported women’s rights. BPW/FL continues to support the ERA as a basic foundation of our Public Policy Platform, even as we understand that passing the ERA grows more difficult with the passage of time. BPW/FL firmly believes that equality of rights under the law should not be abridged or denied by the United States or by any state on account of sex, and the rights of women require constant vigilance.

Item 1: Economic Equity, Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- ensure pay equity and equal employment opportunities for all women
- promote opportunities for women-owned businesses
- promote affordable, quality dependent care
- promote Social Security and retirement reform options benefiting women
- guarantee a workplace free from harassment and discrimination

Item 2: Health Care

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- support the expansion of affordable care, including Medicaid, in Florida
- support funding and initiatives that cover women’s health care needs
- ensure women’s access to all health care and family planning needs, including full access to all forms of reproductive health services, education, and prescriptions

Item 3: Voting Rights and Access

BPW/FL supports public policies that:

- promote free and fair elections
- are aimed at expanding voters’ access to the polls
- are designed to protect the right of all American citizens to vote in fairly drawn legislative districts

Annual Awards

- Educational Programming: **BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas**
- Membership Management:

	<u>Growth</u>	<u>Retention</u>
◇ ≤ 20 members:	BPW/N. Sarasota	BPW/Gold Coast
◇ 21-39 members:	BPW/Englewood-Venice	BPW/Marathon
◇ 40+ members:	BPW/Upper Keys	BPW/Upper Keys
- Public Policy: **BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas**
- Public Relations: **BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas**
- Technology: **BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas**
- LO of the Year: **BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas**

Remember: you cannot receive an award if you do not submit an entry.

BPW 2023-2024 Annual Awards
Start preparing now to submit for the annual awards competition. Award criteria are at www.bpwfl.org, members only section, under the “membership” category.

FIRST TIMERS' VIEWS OF CONFERENCE

Attending the BPW/FL Annual Conference as a first-time attendee was an exhilarating and transformative experience. Stepping into a vibrant space filled with like-minded individuals who share a passion for professional growth and women's empowerment was inspiring.

From the moment I arrived, I was greeted with warm smiles and an atmosphere buzzing with anticipation. The conference offered various sessions, panel discussions, and keynote speeches covering various topics relevant to women in business. These sessions were led by accomplished professionals who generously shared their knowledge and experiences, igniting a fire within me to aim higher and push boundaries.

One of the highlights of the conference was the networking opportunities it provided. I had the chance to connect with professionals from different industries and backgrounds, forming meaningful connections that extended beyond the event. Conversations with successful women who had overcome challenges and achieved remarkable feats gave me valuable insights and encouragement to pursue my aspirations fearlessly.

The conference also emphasized personal and professional development, offering resources and tools to enhance skills and leadership capabilities. I participated in interactive workshops to build upon

the strategic plan of BPW moving forward. These sessions equipped me with practical techniques I could implement immediately in my professional life, helping me build confidence and competence in the workplace.

As a first-time attendee, the BPW/FL Annual Conference provided a supportive and nurturing environment where I felt valued and celebrated. It reaffirmed my belief in the power of women supporting women. It motivated me to make a positive impact as the FAU BPW Scholarship House President, in my career, and beyond. The experience was transformative, leaving a mark on my personal and professional journey.

Kaila Palmer, FAU Scholarship House President

As a first-time attendee of this year's BPW/FL 102nd Annual State Conference, I wasn't sure what to expect, but I had hoped for, at a minimum, some quality interactions with fellow female professionals and a couple of fun evenings out on the town. What I took away from this multi-day event was so much more than I could have imagined. The vast array of generational representation alone created a fun and diverse participant group, with attendees ranging in ages that spanned well over five decades. I was also incredibly impressed with the time-honored components of tradition

and intentional formality that accompanied the business sessions, with the use of parliamentary procedure keeping the interactions respectful, organized, and productive. The group recitation of Mary Stewart's Collect grounded the room in a refreshing foundation of collaboration, compassion, and kindness that allowed for the respectful flow of thoughts and ideas that transcended political, intellectual, and social barriers, just as it had been intended to do back in 1904 when it was first written.

A particular highlight for me was getting to hear from so many of the scholarship house recipients as they shared in their own words how the BPW/FL Education Foundation funds have contributed to the betterment of their collegiate and post-graduate life experiences. It is not often enough that we can see, first-hand, the positive outcomes and influence of our philanthropic programs and deeds. This served as a touching and humble reminder to me of the importance of leading with a servant heart in everything we do, recognizing the positive impact and humanity behind our efforts. I'm already looking forward to next year's state conference where I will again be reunited with both my current and new friends within the BPW sisterhood to further the goals and initiatives of this great organization.

Jennifer Lindley, Member since 2022



Conference First Timers

STATE CONFERENCE IN PICTURES



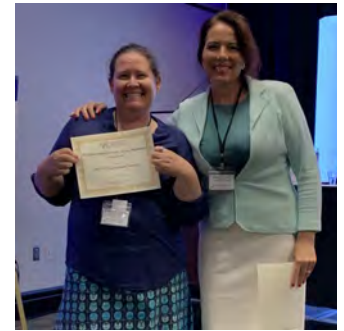
BPW/N. Sarasota



BPW/Gold Coast



BPW/Marathon



BPW/Englewood-Venice

Awards



BPW/Upper Keys



BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas



Full room of an actively engaged audience.



Newly Installed BPW/FL Officers

Past State Presidents (L-R): Carole Tolomeo, Jerri Evans, Mary Giddens, Tami Simms, Sheila Barry-Oliver, Sheri McCandless and Sue Banks. Zelda Ladan was not present for the picture.



Members Dancing at the Installation Banquet

BPW/FL 2023-2024 BUDGET

Income		Secretary	350
Conference & Meeting Income		Treasurer	350
Annual Planning Meeting	1,200	Council of Presidents Delegate	350
Lobby Days	1,500	Parliamentarian	350
Fall Conference Income	2,000	Total Executive Committee Expenses	3,150
State Conference Income	15,000		
Conference Revenue from Reserves	5,000	Florida Business Woman Magazine	
Total State Conference Revenue	20,000	Publication & Mailing	2,600
Total Conference Meeting Income	24,700		
Dues		Standing Committees	
Member at Large (12 @ \$90)	1,080	Bylaws	100
Member of Local (251 @ \$65)	16,315	Leadership	100
Student of Local (1 @ \$26)	26	Membership	100
Student at Large (2 @ \$35)	70	Public Policy	100
Total Dues	17,491	Public Relations	100
FL Bus. Woman Advertising	1,500	Technology	100
Interest Income	1,750	Total Standing Committees	600
Technology Upgrade (Fd Bal Transfer)	1,900	Special Committees	
Lobbyist Fund Transfer	730	Audit	0
Appropriation of Prior Year Funds	29,199	Breast Cancer/Wellness	100
Total Income	<u>\$77,270</u>	Budget	0
		Strategic Planning Implementation	20,000
		Tribute	0
		Total Special Committees	20,100
Expenses		Administrative Expenses	
Conference & Meeting Expenses		Annual Corporate Filing Fee	123
Annual Planning Meeting	1,200	Awards and Citations	100
Lobby Days	1,500	BPW/FL Web Site & Maintenance	1,500
Fall Conference Expenses	2,000	Liability Insurance	777
State Conference Expenses	20,000	Marketing & Advertising	1,500
Total Conference & Meeting Expenses	24,700	Office Supplies	250
Contract Personnel		Postage	250
Management Consultant		Quickbooks Online	1,060
Business Manager		Credit Card Fees	750
Contract	12,000	Contingency	650
Expenses	650	Tax Return Preparation	1,250
Total Business Manager	12,650	Technology Upgrade	1,900
Web Services	2,000	Total Administrative Expenses	10,070
Total Contract Personnel	14,650	Legislative Services (from restricted fund)	1,400
Executive Committee Expenses		Total Expenses	<u>\$77,270</u>
President	1,000	Net Income	\$0
President-Elect			
Vice President	750		

*“If you are good at building bridges,
you will never fall into the abyss.”*
~ Mehmet Murat ildan

INSPIRATION *(Continued from page 11)*

mation as it can. Then, finding ways to relax, like practicing creative flow, and allowing your mind to wander on a regular basis can give your brain the breather it needs to be creative and combine those facets of information in a new, interesting way.

Think of the formula—explore, relax, daydream—next time you’re stuck in a creative block. Or better yet, give yourself a moment to mind-wander and it’ll likely do the trick.

Katina Bajaj is the cofounder and chief wellbeing officer of Daydreamers. Katina is a published wellbeing author and

has an MA in clinical psychology from Columbia’s Mind-Body Institute.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90923653/heres-how-inspiration-works-in-the-brain-and-how-you-make-your-brain-more-creative>

LOCAL ORGANIZATION

BPW/Gold Coast

BPW/Gold Coast is proud to announce that member PSP Sheri McCandless has been appointed to Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick's (FL District 20) Inaugural Florida 20th Congressional District Advisory Board. Among the issues Congresswoman Cherfilus-McCormick intends to tackle are the growing housing crisis, inadequate access to quality health care, and lack of equitable opportunities throughout the district and country. As McCandless is the 2023-2024 Chair of BPW/FL Wellness Committee, she is well matched for this Advisory Board.

Another member, Peggy Beyer, a past BPW/FL Secretary, has been appointed to serve on our BPW/FL Education Foundation. Beyer's credentials include serving on the board of The Lily Bentano Foundation.

BPW/Englewood-Venice

BPW/Englewood-Venice started out our new fiscal year with our installation of officers at our May meeting. In June, we welcomed Kathleen Callahan, owner of Xpertech Auto Repair. She shared with us how she started in this typically male oriented field. Kathleen's business is quite successful and she was a very interesting speaker. We had four members attend the annual state conference in Ft. Lauderdale in June.

Due to the success of our annual wine tasting fundraiser last year, we were able to award scholarships in July to four deserving women working hard to enhance their education so as to better improve their future employment opportunities. We have a fun speaker scheduled in August who will tell us all about laughter yoga. Then in September our speaker will be Shannon Messenburg, who will speak about Operation Solid 7, which addresses the epidemic of suicide in the military and among first responders, and in October we welcome Rita Bertler, founder of Dollars for Mammograms, helping women who are uninsured or underinsured and can't afford mammograms.

Our wine tasting fundraiser for this year will be coming in the fall and the committee will begin meeting soon to start

the preparations. Lastly, we are very proud to share that our member Stephanie Marcusky will be chairing the Technology Committee for the state. We look forward to a very fulfilling and successful year ahead.

BPW/Marathon



BPW/Marathon has had a very busy couple of months. We had a wonderful guest speaker in May, an excellence coach sharing the secret to move "From Stress to Productivity." We had a Wonder Woman themed board induction where we welcomed Sarah Bartus and Rachel Keller to the board. And finally, we were awarded the "Most Patriotic" float in the local 4th of July parade.

BPW/North Sarasota

As we embark on a new club year, we first reflect on our successes this past year. We celebrated our 50th LO anniversary in September; we presented four scholarships to graduating high school seniors, continuing in our tradition of supporting young ladies and helping them pursue their educational pursuit; and then for all BPW/North Sarasota does in our community, we received the Community Service Award from the Sarasota Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee. This was a great honor to be recognized for our work in the community and the difference we are making. We also hosted our Annual H'attitude Scholarship Luncheon and Hat Show, which raises funds for our scholarship and other community projects.

We experienced a loss this year when our charter president Ann Weatherington passed away. Ann remained a member of our LO for 50 years.

We now look forward to the 2023-2024

club year with enthusiasm and excitement as we embark on "building bridges" – connecting with our BPW sisters, our communities and with each other.

Our officers for the 2023-2024 BPW year are shown with City of Sarasota Mayor Kyle Battie and Vice Mayor Liz Alpert at our installation ceremony: Valerie Reeves, treasurer, Gwen Sermon, secretary, Wendy White, president, Norrece Wright, second vice president and Deanna Manigo, first vice president.



BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas

We were thrilled to have 14 members attend state conference in Ft. Lauderdale, and even more pleased to be recognized as the LO of the Year. Our members work hard throughout the year to provide outstanding programming, signature events and opportunities for growth and leadership development.

Our luncheon meetings are held on the first Thursday monthly, and we recently moved to a new location, a private room at Parkshore Grill in downtown St. Petersburg. Upcoming speakers include the CEO of the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, the St. Petersburg Chief of Police, a representative of the St. Pete Youth Farm, Florida Representative Lindsey Cross and the head of the Pinellas County Teachers' Union. We invite any of you to attend, any time.

Two of our signature events are coming up soon. Our annual Equality Day Tea will be held on Saturday August 26 to recognize the passage of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote. Then, our annual Working Women's Forum will take place on Thursday October 26 with a panel discussion titled "Working to Belong: Developing Environments Where EVERYone Thrives."

(LO) NEWS

See our ad for more information on both events.

BPW/Upper Keys

In **April** we held our Spring Member Expo / Networking evening. Fourteen members signed up as Exhibitors-Sponsors and even more members contributed to the raffle or bought tickets. A fun game sheet encouraged everyone to visit all our exhibitors for an extra chance to win at the raffle. All proceeds went to our Women's Scholarship Fund.

Our **Annual Meeting** luncheon was held at beautiful Baker's Cay Resort in Key Largo on May 17! The program included a report on all the ways our Upper Keys BPW members and supporters have empowered working women over the past 12 months, induction of new members and announcement of our newest Women's Scholarship awardees. The 2023-2024 Board of Directors was installed with a theme of "Gaggle of Geese":

- President: Jill Kuehnert
- Secretary: Mary Houston
- Treasurer: Victoria Leonard
- VP Membership: Holly Redding
- VP Hospitality: Amy Young
- VP Program Development: Patricia Milian
- Director: Margie Smith
- Director: Bonnie Barnes

In June, **nine members of Upper Keys BPW attended the 102nd Annual BPW/FL State Conference** "Energizing the Future Today!" in Fort Lauderdale. Two members exhibited as vendors – Ena Soul/Yoga Keys Life and Erin Hamilton/Hope Wines. We all enjoyed the workshops, strategy session and business meetings – as well as getting to know members from around the state.

Our **Networking Evening on June 21** was back under the tiki hut at Safe Harbor Angler House in Islamorada. A warm crowd of more than 50 members and guests mingled and learned a bit about the State Conference and upcoming activities in the Upper Keys.

July's luncheon event featured our very own board member, Patricia Milian. She gave a thought-provoking presentation on how to recognize and overcome our unconscious biases – in-

cluding the brain science behind why it happens (to ALL of us!), how it impacts our daily lives and the steps we can take to ensure authentic connection in our increasingly diverse world.

Other activities included monthly virtual Coffee Chats and meeting up at a fundraising dinner for the Domestic Abuse Shelter of the Florida Keys.

Our Upper Keys BPW Adult Women's Scholarship Program had a record-breaking 20 applications for the Spring cycle, following a significant update of our application, review and selection process. Thanks to a first payout from our Endowment Fund, we were able to fund three awardees in May.

Finally, we loved interacting with our sisters in BPW/Marathon this season! In May a few of us drove down and spent a lovely evening at their monthly meeting. In June several of them returned the favor and joined our evening networking event. We look forward to an exciting few months ahead!

TIDBITS

With National Business Women's Week coming in October, did you know that large businesses tend to get most of the attention, but **small businesses employ almost half of the U.S. workforce**

See pictures below from a member's recent travels in Arizona via motorhome. "Yesterday in Holbrook we were wandering through a small town museum. What did I find but a vintage sign commemorating BPW. I was stunned and amazed. I hope our readers enjoy being part of such an illustrious and lasting organization."



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HOW NONPROFITS CAN GARNER STATE LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSES

In order to serve their communities and advance their missions, nonprofits frequently advocate for laws that will improve people's lives.

To do this, they must persuade legislators — the people who make the laws — to pass bills, a process known as lobbying. Lobbying can be done by any number of people within the nonprofit sector, including nonprofit staff, volunteers, contracted individuals, or hired lobbying companies.



Legislators can be progressive, conservative, and everything in between. They include politicians, community activists (of all ideologies), and regular people in both parties who bring their personal beliefs and biases to the legislature.

Simply put, you won't succeed by demanding legislators "do the right thing." In many places, legislators can take this to mean being anti-choice, anti-trans, anti-immigrant, and pro-police, stances that generally do not align with the values of many nonprofits.

Whoever does it, though, must understand that the legislative process frequently works in ways that some people may think is illogical. I've seen bills win (and lose) for reasons that have nothing to do with their content. Legislative outcomes are often not the result of thoughtful discussion but of the exercise of political power.

But fear not! Nonprofits can exercise that power if they do it correctly. They need to know what to say to legislators, how to say it, and when to say it. They need to know which tactics will work and which won't. Winning is very, very possible.

Here are eleven things you can do to garner legislative support for your issue:

1. Know the rules and customs of the legislative body you are lobbying.

Every legislature operates differently and often in ways that you might not expect. You can learn about these customs from experienced colleagues or just discover them on your own. Things do not happen the way they were taught in your high school civics class.

For example, when two committees claim jurisdiction over a bill, we were taught that the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee to decide where it will be heard. In reality, legislative leaders decide what committee hears a bill

(sometimes arbitrarily). This means leaders can mark a bill for defeat without anybody having to vote against it by sending it to the Rules Committee.

Similarly, defeated bills can be given second lives via conference committees, and a committee chair can have the authority to report a bill to the full chamber even without the requisite number of votes. This means that you need to know the key players on your bill's committee and get them on your side.

2. Recruit a sponsor who can get your bill passed.

When asking a legislator to sponsor a bill, don't just approach the one who is most supportive of your issue. Select a person who you feel will be able to get other legislators to vote for the bill.

To do this, you'll first need to collect some information. Before a legislator agrees to sponsor your bill, that person will want to know who's for it, who's against it, what you are doing to win over (or at least neutralize) opponents, and where the governor stands on the bill. They'll want to know what they are walking into on your behalf.

3. Think from the legislators' point of view, not from your point of view.

Appeal to each legislator's self-interest. Your goal is to get legislators to vote for (or against) a bill, not to make them care about the people you are fighting for.

Despite their potentially problematic beliefs, the one thing most legislators have in common is a desire to get re-elected. The opinions of registered voters are what matters to them (not non-voters, non-citizens, or underage people), so frame your issue to be clearly advantageous to legislators' constituents.

Take the following example: in my state, three conservative Republicans voted in favor of a bill to increase public aid for Medicaid recipients who resided in nursing homes. They did it because voters in their districts had family members who had run out of money, were no longer able to pay for nursing home care, and had to go on Medicaid. They were persuaded to do what they believed helped their own people, even though they might vote against something that was perceived to give benefits to the underserved.

So, remember, legislators are elected to represent the people who live in their districts, not the people who live somewhere else. Make your issue matter to them.

4. Talk to legislators individually.

You're more likely to get legislators' votes by talking to them one-on-one than by making speeches to big groups.

(Continued on page 19)

You'll be better able to pitch to their individual interests that way.

This means you have to know legislators' political orientations and personal attitudes as well as who might be able to influence them. Try to find a connection to them, such as a church you both belong to, an organization you were both involved in, or a candidate you both supported.

But even though you want to talk to legislators individually, don't wait to schedule a one-on-one meeting. Instead, expect to catch them in passing (like walking in a hallway), and know that you'll rarely have their full attention. They may, for example, continue walking while you talk to them, giving you less than one minute to make your case. Get right to the point, and don't let interruptions bother you.

5. Distribute a very, very brief handout.

Your handout should be a very quick read. Ideally, it should be one side of one page with lots of white space and very little copy—no more than three or four bullets stating your main points. Don't give legislators reports or reams of data. Even those few who might want to read it just don't have the time.

These handouts are usually referred to as "leave-behinds," meaning that any time you talk to a legislator or testify in a hearing (see next point), you should make sure you have many on hand to pass out. Yes, you should put your contact information on the handout, but only to identify your organization as its source. Legislators will not call you with questions.

6. State your case in legislative committee hearings.

To be clear, this is not how you win influence, as few legislators are swayed by committee hearings.

In fact, legislators don't always listen to legislative testimony (although they'll try to look engaged). Some legislators may not even show up for a hearing if they know a vote won't be taken. Others will be there to fill a quorum but might be reading a book, for example. Often, the only legislators listening to you will be your supporters (to help you) and your opponents (to knock you down).

But remember that even for your supporters, the merits of the bill are not

necessarily what matters to them. Many legislators simply vote in accordance with party/faction interests or because of their relationship to the legislative sponsor. But because you've talked to each committee member individually, you should already know the outcome of the vote.

Present your views at committee hearings, anyway. Your testimony will be expected, and if you don't show up, it may make it easier for some to vote against your bill. Make it as difficult as possible for people to vote against you.

Testimony also puts your position in the legislative record, connecting a live person to a bill that only exists on paper.

Lastly, it enables you to score public relations points. You can disseminate a press release about your action afterward, and there may be reporters or even television cameras in the hearing room when you testify. This will help the public put a face to the bill, but it also gives face time for your organization.

7. Enlist legislative allies.

Identify every group or individual who has a reason to support your bill, even if that reason has nothing to do with the legislation. This will broaden your appeal and connect you to legislators you wouldn't have been able to influence on your own.

For example, the hotel and restaurant industries are often supportive of immigrant rights because their businesses are heavily reliant on immigrant labor. Their support can attract the votes of pro-corporate legislators who wouldn't otherwise be influenced by progressive issues.

Potential allies may want to be identified with your issue or use it to position themselves for something else. Maybe they want to get even with a legislator or another group because of something that happened in the past or they hope to sidetrack a rival's current political efforts.

Sometimes others' arguments will be more likely than yours to influence legislators. For example, in my state several groups independently opposed a proposal to shorten the election season by rescheduling the primary. Jewish organizations opposed its conflict with High Holy Days, unions opposed the difficulty of organizing summer campaigns, and the county clerks' association argued that any legal challenges to primaries

might not be resolved in time to print ballots for the general election. Ultimately, the clerks' argument carried the most weight and led to the bills' defeat—a win for all. However, think of how much less time and energy these organizations would have expended if they had realized their common cause and banded together to fight this bill.

8. Avoid petition drives.

Petition drives are the least effective of all legislative advocacy tactics. That is, they will not get you legislators' votes, even though they might help you build your donor database.

The reason that petition drives don't work is because legislators know that the number of signatures you collect is likely very small compared to their district's population—you are not likely to amass the more than 750,000 signatures of the people who live in each congressional district, for example. Legislators are less likely to be swayed by the amount than by the kind of support you claim, which is again why you should enlist powerful allies. As always, legislators are judging you to see how your efforts can help or hurt them, and petition drives will usually fail to frame your issue in their terms.

9. Try to divide your opposition.

When opinion is divided for any reason within a cause, profession, or industry, many legislators will be hesitant to take sides. After all, they don't want to lose the support of their constituents when re-election comes. Try to win the support of some anticipated adversaries. It will reduce the strength of your opponents.

In the earlier example of the conservative Republicans who voted for increased public aid to nursing home residents, consumer groups divided the opposition—namely, trade associations who represented nursing homes. One of the three trade associations felt that its members were being treated less fairly by the state than members of the other organizations, so consumer groups exploited this division. Ultimately, legislators—even those who wanted to support the nursing home industry over the consumers—were unwilling to oppose the bill.

10. Be prepared to compromise.

Compromise does not mean selling out. Think about it: even the most politically powerful people have to make conces-

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STOP HOLDING YOURSELF BACK

One of the most rewarding parts of the work I do is watching my clients soar – when they realize what’s standing in their way, address what’s standing in their way, and truly soar. And become the people they want to be.

Over the years, as I’ve watched my clients soar, I’ve also catalogued the things that have most often gotten in their way. Contrary to popular belief, it’s not others who have gotten in their way as much as it is my clients themselves.

It’s my client who doesn’t want to meet with senior leaders because she doesn’t want to be a burden to them. It’s my client who is facing tremendous family challenges, yet doesn’t want to tell his colleagues because “it shouldn’t affect me at work.” It’s my client who pushes all credit to her team and refuses to take



any herself, deflecting all compliments sent her way. It’s my client who feels like an imposter, and doesn’t recognize how qualified he is for his position and how much he contributes to the team.

There are so many ways we all hold ourselves back, and it’s time to stop.

As eloquently shared in this inspiring

video of Carla Harris from Morgan Stanley, it’s time to not only own our strengths, but to also claim them and even teach others to see us (and refer to us) in that way. To own our brilliance and learn to build the reputation, and relationships, that will help us succeed and soar.

It’s time to stop the silly tapes that play in our head, such as “I don’t want to be a burden,” or “I’m really not that good,” or “I have to work even harder to prove that I deserve this job.” It’s time to stop holding ourselves back.

How do you hold yourself back? How will you stop?

By Lisa Kohn <https://chatsworthconsulting.com/2023/07/20/stop-holding-yourself-back-2/>

ADVOCACY (Continued from page 19)

sions.

Start by asking for more than you need. Then you can strategically give up things you really didn’t want in the first place.

Remember, bills are usually modified throughout the legislative process. This can offer proponents and opponents alike the chance to have input in negotiations. Make sure you use this to your advantage by asking for more and then compromising for what you really want.

11. Be diplomatic.

Don’t burn any bridges. The legislative process goes on indefinitely, and today’s foe could be tomorrow’s ally on another bill.

Don’t act like you are morally superior to everybody else. Don’t act as if your adversaries are unfeeling or immoral (even if you think they are). Don’t act as if you are right, everybody else is wrong, and if they would just listen to you, they would realize that.

You need to give legislators a reason to support you. Being self-righteous and belligerent won’t accomplish this. Instead, it might end up making enemies of people who should be your allies.

Persuasion for the Win

For nonprofits, lobbying is a necessary and winnable activity. But keep in mind that lobbying is all about persuading legislators to vote the way you want them to. It’s not about promoting your cause or your organization; it’s about

passing laws that benefit the communities you serve.

To accomplish this, you must respect legislative customs, address each legislator’s needs, be diplomatic, and be prepared to compromise. This is how everyone wins.

David Patt is a seasoned lobbyist with a track record of securing legislative victories for nonprofit causes, including nursing home and electoral reform. He brings extensive management experience to his current role as President of Association Executive Management, which provides services to not-for-profit organizations.

<https://blueavocado.org/community-and-culture/legislative-support/>

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To see a map of where all the BPW/FL local organizations are and to learn about their meeting dates/times/locations, visit <https://www.bpwfl.org/membership/local-organizations/>.



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E-VERIFY COMES TO FLORIDA

Florida Expands E-Verify Requirement To Private Employers

Effective July 1, 2023 the State of Florida SB 1718 requires private employers of 25 employees or more to E-Verify all employees. This new state law signed by Governor DeSantis, compels employers to submit the information provided on employment documents be sent to the federal E-Verify system for comparison against data in the Social Security Administration (SSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) systems in order to determine the eligibility of their employees. This changes the current regulation applicable under the Federal I-9 rules, which require employers to examine the employment eligibility documents for unexpired status and authenticity (original document, not a copy), and to attest to the examination of the documents.

Does E-Verify Help Employers?

Good intentions, like a law prohibiting spitting gum on the sidewalk, may seem like a good idea. Though the reality is often more obscure. Legislation like this can be difficult to enforce, have unintended consequences, and the outcomes may cause more harm than good. The state will need to allocate tax payer funds for enforcement. For some, just quantifying the number of employees an employer has from day to day can be challenging.

Small businesses lament that they are over-regulated and under-appreciated for the vast number of jobs they cumulatively provide. Many employers find it difficult to fill jobs lately, especially those employing unskilled labor, and now there is worry of losing

workers impacted by E-Verify. Concerns of where the replacement employees will come from resonate among agriculture, restaurant, and construction industry representatives.

A Professional Employer Organization (PEO) Can Help Small Business Stay In Compliance

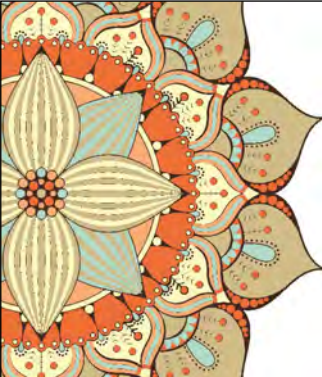
Small businesses may find themselves in a sticky situation. With employer regulations, more responsibilities equal more potential liabilities. They wonder if they need to hire a new human resources manager. They worry who will pick the summer corn and tomatoes.

Many small businesses using the services of a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) are relying on the advice and support of an industry accustomed to assisting small businesses with compliance. A PEO acts as a co-employer, giving employers peace of mind when it comes to complying with new regulations.

For Help With E-Verify, Call Sam Bond Benefit Group Today

Samantha Bond Richman has been providing independent advice to small business owners for over thirty years. Using a proven method of needs analysis, Sam Bond Benefit Group helps source the best qualified providers of PEO services. Call (877) 426-6320 to learn more or contact us on our website.

Samantha Bond Richman is founder and president of Sam Bond Benefit Group, an insurance agency catering to the needs of businesses for their employee benefits. Bond Richman is a member of BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas.



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ARE YOU A TALK-THINKER OR A QUIET-THINKER?

An acquaintance of mine, we'll call her Dana, is starting a new business venture with a friend of hers. "We are trying to figure each other out," Dana said. "We have known each other for a long time but not in a business sense. We are just getting to know each other's work style."

As we talked further, Dana described how her friend would sometimes stop her when she was in the middle of talking, by putting up a hand, and how she found it disconcerting. "I have so many great ideas for our product," she said. "And I can see it in my mind, the styles, the numbers, everything. But sometimes my friend shushes me!" Dana was clearly bothered by what she saw as her friend being dismissive of her ideas.

"Your friend may be someone who prefers to think first, then talk," I offered. "What I know of you, you are a talk-thinker."

"A talk thinker?" she asked with puzzlement.

"Yes, you like to talk as you think and formulate your ideas out loud."

"Yes, I do!" she said. "I like to verbalize my thoughts and bounce ideas in the moment."

"Yes, you do," I said. "And I'll bet your friend would rather sit in quiet as she mulls over the ideas you threw out and her ideas as well."

"That's it!," she said.

I know this situation well. It's what I have with Lisa, my business partner. Lisa is a talk-thinker. She thinks out loud and moves quickly through her thoughts. I am a quiet-thinker. I need to think things through in my head before I share. It's a style thing and in order to have an effective relationship, we've had to figure out how to satisfy both needs and maintain a strong connection.

Here are a few pointers for forging a great partnership between a talk-thinker and a quiet-thinker:

- **Call it out** – if you are in a new relationship with someone, you may not realize that you have two different thinking styles. Pay attention to how

you both approach a problem or share ideas. When you see that there is a difference in how you think, name it. Point out how you are both different.

- **See the value in both styles** – Lisa and I work very well together. We have created a bond and a way of working that works because we appreciate what we each bring to our work and our working relationship.
- **Leverage your different styles** – there are times when Lisa's ability to think quickly and talk things through is what we need to push ahead on an issue, generate excitement, and get started. There are also times when my more pensive, slower approach is needed in order to take a step back, consider what is needed, and ensure that we haven't missed anything. We have found ways to use both styles, and balance both styles, effectively.
- **Know how to communicate effectively with a talk-thinker** – to get the most

(Continued on page 23)

This little piggy (bank)... helps women obtain higher education.

Since 1965, the BPW/FL Education Foundation has helped women attend colleges and universities by defraying the costs of housing, first through brick and mortar housing on campuses and now also through housing scholarships. We need YOUR help to keep the legacy going forward for generations of Florida women to come!



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NEWS FROM THE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Education Foundation of the Florida Foundation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. (aka EFFFBPWC, Inc. and/or the BPW/FL Education Foundation), a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization, was established in 1965 by the members of BPW/FL. Its purpose is to provide housing opportunities for female college students at state college and university campuses across the state of Florida.



**BPW/FL
Education
Foundation**

Greetings, BPW/FL members!

What a fantastic time we had at state conference! We were pleased to have five young women who are residents of our scholarship houses in attendance, and we look forward to fostering relationships with them and their counterparts in the year ahead.

Our annual Hawg Callin' event was tons of fun, this year with a "Bring Home the Bacon Pig Race" fundraiser. The monies raised by our members and our LOs is crucial to continuing the efforts to support young women's pursuit of higher education.

In the year ahead, we'll have some big projects to tackle. We'll get our mentoring program into full gear, explore opportunities to rekindle our relationship with the University of Central Florida, and take next steps to implement initiatives identified by the Jackie Fleener Fund Task Force (JFFTF).

Scholarship House News

Both of the Houses (Florida Atlantic University and Tallahassee) will be back in session in August for the fall semester. As usual, we'll send goody bags to welcome the residents. A generous donation from the Ft. Lauderdale LO designated specifically for the FAU



Scholarship House Residents at Conference



BPW/FL Education Foundation Fundraising

House will surely allow for some additional support for those residents. Just before state conference, the board had a virtual pizza party dinner with the Tallahassee House residents. We'll explore ways to support both houses for Thanks-

giving and December holiday activities as well.

Direct Scholarship News

A single scholarship was awarded to a St. Petersburg College student for the upcoming fall semester. That award was the final one, marking ten years of support for that institution. There is a modest sum of money still available for female nursing students attending the University of North Florida, for which there have been no applicants for several years. Among the goals identified by the JFFTF was the possibility of providing scholarships throughout the state that are not tied to specific educational institutions, so watch for progress on that front.

We are grateful for the support of members and LOs statewide. This is YOUR Foundation, and you should be proud of the work that we do that impacts the lives of women seeking higher education.

Tami Simms, President
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P.S. If you're on social media, please "like" our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BPWFLedFdn

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from a talk-thinker, honor their need to talk things through. Set aside time to brainstorm and allow them to "riff" their ideas. You can help move to action by capturing their thoughts in writing. Often talk-thinkers can be a bit unfocused, so written information can keep them on track.

- **Know how to communicate with a quiet-thinker** – to get the most from a quiet-thinker, honor their need for space and peace. Give them time to think things through silently and wait for them to fully formulate their ideas, so they can share them. Ask questions in order to understand what is underneath their thoughts.

Research shows that the best teams and

partnerships come from diverse perspectives and styles. At first, it's necessary to understand and come to term with the differences. But once that happens, the differences among people can bring about greater innovation, productivity, and understanding.

By Robyn McLeod <https://chatsworthconsulting.com/2023/07/06/are-you-a-talk-thinker-or-a-quiet-thinker-2/>



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BPW/Florida's Mission

*To achieve equity for all women in the workplace
through advocacy, education and information.*

