

COUNCIL & NETWORK LEADERSHIP

SBN's Forerunner Paved the Way



The SEMA Businesswomen's Network (SBN) is celebrating a milestone: Three decades devoted to advancing women's professional careers through networking, mentoring and education. From Gear-Up Girl events, awards recognition and member spotlights to the Women's Leadership Forum and acclaimed all-female builds, the accomplishments rack up.

But SBN's roots can be traced to the mid-'80s—a time when men had the inside track on opportunities to build personal and professional connections. And few such opportunities existed for women. That is, until four determined industry pros took up the challenge.

Amy Faulk, Martha Doyle, Ellen McKoy



Hailing PWL's inaugural newsletter, then-SEMA President Chuck Blum wrote: *"The Board of Directors of SEMA and staff support with zeal the new periodical. Of more importance is the opportunity, through PWL Network, to serve businesswomen who play a vital role in the progress and success of our industry."*

Courtesy Ellen McKoy, EMK Marketing

and Charlie Van Cleave spearheaded the formation of the Professional Women's League (PWL), the forerunner to SBN. A subcommittee of SEMA's Women's Activities Committee (WAC)—a spouse group—PWL was founded in 1987. Its mission: to provide professional women in the aftermarket with a venue through which they can enhance and strengthen their position and role in the performance and appearance

segments of the industry.

"When I started in the industry, there were few women who had professional positions in the industry," said Hyper-tech CEO Amy Faulk, then employed at TCI Automotive. "It was important to give professional women the same career-advancement opportunities that men had."

Faulk and her colleagues lobbied for a professional women's forum. Not surprisingly, some male colleagues were skeptical that women would be interested. Within a year, membership ballooned from 25 businesswomen to more than 160.

Springboard to Professional Development

In keeping with its mission, PWL began

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ETTN/SAE Career Fair Creates Pathways Into the Aftermarket

Cultivating the next generation of innovators, engineers, product developers, builders and others with advanced technical skills is essential to the future growth and success of the specialty-equipment industry.

And what better way to inspire students to pursue a career in the aftermarket industry than to open the doors of the

SEMA Garage for a one-day event jointly hosted by SEMA, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) of Southern California and the Emerging Trends & Technology Network (ETTN).

The ETTN/SAE Career Fair, held March 25, at the SEMA Garage in Diamond Bar, California, was a beehive of activity. More

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The ETTN/SAE Career Fair was a beehive of activity for the next generation of innovators, engineers, product developers and builders.

ARMO AUTOMOTIVE RESTORATION MARKET ORGANIZATION	ETTN EMERGING TRENDS & TECHNOLOGY NETWORK	FLN FUTURE LEADERS NETWORK	HOT ROD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE	MPMC MOTORSPORTS PARTS MANUFACTURERS COUNCIL	PRO PROFESSIONAL RESTYLERS ORGANIZATION
SBN SEMA Businesswomen's Network	TORA TRUCK & OFF-ROAD ALLIANCE	WTC WHEEL & TIRE COUNCIL	Byron Bergmann, Project Manager, Member Services byronb@sema.org • 909-378-4859		

FLN Prioritizes Professional Development, Networking

Following on the heels of a successful launch of the Professional Development Program last year, the Future Leaders Network (FLN) recently wrapped up this year's event. Held May 11–12 at the SEMA Garage in Detroit, the two-day interactive program was sponsored by FLN in partnership with Dale Carnegie.

Open exclusively to FLN members, and capped at 25 attendees, the intimate setting provided an unparalleled learning experience for aspiring leaders seeking to advance their industry careers. Following a kick-off networking mixer, held May 10, the program focused on sharpening personal and professional skillsets.

Under the guidance of experienced Dale Carnegie trainers, attendees were coached on how to enhance communication skills and express confidence in business settings and engage with others by building rapport. The program also touched on how to tackle complex workplace challenges and use new skills to achieve measurable results.

“Our mission is to help young professionals advance in the industry and the Professional Development Program is a critical piece of that,” said newly installed FLN Chair Matt Beenen. “We know this program can really impact a lot of people. That’s what motivates us to create these programs for our members.”



To help foster camaraderie and build awareness of SEMA councils and networks, the Truck & Off-Road Alliance (TORA) collaborated with FLN, SBN and WTC to present a mixer at King of the Hammers (as seen above). At the Keystone Big Show, TORA teamed with FLN, SBN, WTC and PRO and capped off its mixers at Easter Jeep Safari and Jeep Beach Week.

Building Connections

Besides programs to nurture career growth, FLN centers on opportunities to connect members through networking. This year, FLN co-hosted in-person networking events in collaboration with other SEMA councils and networks.

At the King of the Hammers in Johnson Valley, California, in February, FLN partnered with TORA, SBN and WTC. In March, FLN joined forces with PRO, SBN, TORA and WTC at the Keystone Big Show, held at the Gaylord Rockies Resort in Aurora, Colorado.

While acknowledging that these events

give FLN members a chance to broaden their professional networks, Beenen noted that West Coast locations tend to limit opportunities for young leaders who are often East Coast-based.

With that thought in mind, he said FLN is exploring ways to build similar value for East Coasters. “We need to get more members involved and engaged, to round up the troops,” he said. “For young professionals it’s often not realistic to attend a West Coast mixer. If we want to show East Coast members value in FLN, we need to look at new ways to help them build connections.” **SMN**

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◀ Cont. from p. 83

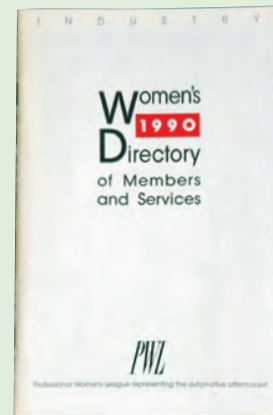
rolling out assets. The group published its first newsletter, PWL Network, in 1988. At the SEMA/AI Show that year, PWL hosted roundtables on topics still relevant today: “How to Deal with Difficult People,” “Imposter Syndrome: Do You Ever Feel You Don’t Deserve to be Where You Are?,” among others.

PWL also hosted an annual breakfast during Show Week featuring noted speakers, introduced the SEMA Woman of the Year Award (later renamed Athena Award), and was a driving force behind the SEMA Silent Auction, a fundraiser for the SEMA

Memorial Scholarship Fund.

To better serve its members’ needs and differentiate itself from WAC’s social activities for wives, PWL was elevated to committee status in 1990. In November 1993, the SEMA Board approved changing the name to the SEMA Businesswomen’s Network.

“There was a void and four determined women on a mission to fill the void and plant the seeds,” recalled Faulk. “At the time, we never envisioned the powerhouse that SBN would become, from just a few to 735 members strong.” **SMN**



The first Women’s Directory of Members and Services. The four founding members, and company affiliations at the time: Amy Faulk, TCI Automotive; Martha Doyle, Argus Publishing; Ellen McKoy, EMK Marketing; and Charlie Van Cleve, Hedman Manufacturing. Courtesy Ellen McKoy, EMK Marketing.