



## Helping each other reinvent themselves in the business world

By: [Tarice L.S. Gray](#) Posted date: January 04, 2013 In: [Small Business](#), [Westchester](#) | comment : [2](#)

By 2010, Judy Goss knew a career change was inevitable. She'd been laid off twice and was seeking not only job security but fulfillment in her career.

"I was 41 years old, I had two kids at home and a husband whose business was really crashing and burning," Goss said. She worked as an editor at More magazine and her focus was on women and reinvention. Goss took that experience, combined it with her own commitment to jumpstart her career change, and launched Over 40 Females, a networking organization for women.

"I think some of us are forced to reinvent ourselves," Goss said of founding the company. "I think women are looking to meet each other in person and looking to help each other so we can all raise each other up to a higher level."

Goss set out to do just that. She hosted her first networking party in April 2010. At that first event, 70 women came to New York City, a place known for its competitive networking parties. She knew she was on to something.

"I started in New York City and I tested the waters in Florida, Arizona and Connecticut, and I realized that there was this inherent need all across the country," said Goss.

Just last year, she settled on Westchester County as the perfect chapter site for her growing networking organization. Recently, the newly minted chapter celebrated its first year in operation and already claims 100 members. All told, there are 500 members in Over 40 Females.

Within the Westchester County chapter, members expressed a genuine need for networking as opportunities to grow and prosper have proven difficult to come by for many reasons. Over 40 Females chapter member Teresa Goetz, a transformational coach, believes women in business are challenged by dual responsibilities at home and at work. "They are responsible for the family and their business and they always feel pulled in so many directions," Goetz claimed.

Chapter director Phyllis Hirschauer began her journey with Over 40 Females a year ago when the Westchester branch launched. She helped spearhead the group's debut and recruitment. Like most of the members, Hirschauer reinvented herself after spending 45 years in her career, as a nurse. "The older women in the group – we can mentor and educate (these women). You know we've walked that walk already," she said.



Phyllis Hirschauer.

Hirschauer has been networking for 10 years and believes women network differently than men and that's why it's so important for women to connect with one another, she said. "Men, when they network, they do it on the golf course, tennis court, playing racquetball. Women are different, we need to build relationships and we need to build friendships."

Hirschauer confirmed this method of social gathering, bonding and networking has translated into opportunity. One Over 40 Females member, a gluten-free baker, brought her product to a chapter event in New Haven, Conn., and expressed an interest in seeking out a commercial kitchen to expand her brand. A fellow member who happened to be a restaurateur offered her an opportunity on the spot. Goss explained, "So making connections through nontraditional methods is what we try to find for our members."

This new method of networking is spreading as part of Goss's effort to build Over 40 Females into a recognized national organization. Beyond Westchester and New York City, Over 40 Females has chapters in Putnam County, N.Y., New Haven, Fairfield County, Hartford, Conn., Bergen County, N.J., and Los Angeles.

As for the coming year, the group hopes to increase membership and help other women reinvent themselves through tried-and-true networking methods, which as Hirschauer puts it, is "more than just a business card exchange."