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## **Law firms partnered with Lilith Professional to develop Canada's first mentoring program to help retain and advance female lawyers.**

### **Overview**

A total of 10 Calgary based law firms and multi national companies partnered with Lilith Professional to address the lack of advancement of female lawyers in the legal profession. These companies and law firms selected mentoring as a strategy to accelerate the leadership development of female lawyers and prepare them for partnership and senior leadership roles.

### **Business Case**

A key strategic business objective for companies participating in the Lilith Law Mentoring Program was to invest in the development of their people and to insure that they were well positioned to ensure financial stability and to attract new talent and new clients in an increasingly demanding and diverse market..

*The business advantages of retaining and advancing women lawyers are significant. Firms that are able to provide quality services and value to clients on a consistent basis will be well-positioned to ensure their financial stability and to attract new talent and new clients in an increasingly demanding and diverse market, Kathryn Berge, QC Chair, Retention of Women in Law Task Force*

### **Objectives for participation in the Lilith Professional Program for Lawyers included:**

- Enhanced skills at managing the demands of work and family life
- Greater confidence in building and managing client relationships
- Foster expanded perspectives
- Exposure to a diverse group of role models and mentors

### **Mentoring Strategy**

Participating companies and law firms selected 10 top talent female lawyers to participate as mentees in the Lilith Law Program. Seasoned in house and private practice female lawyers were recruited and selected from a variety of a law firms and companies. Mentees and mentors were paired based on the needs of the mentee and the skills and experience of the mentor. Following a program kick off, the mentor and mentee dyads met for a minimum of two (2) hours per month for 6 months and attended six, two (2) hour sessions on topics ranging from Building Effective Networks to Time Management and Increasing Productivity. Sessions were led by topic specialists and subject matter experts and included panels of seasoned in house and private law firm lawyers. Mentor and mentee dyads constructed a mentoring plan to tackle the gaps identified in their Lilith Law Leader Assessment.

## Impact

When asked about their overall experience in the Lilith Law Mentoring Program, 90-100% of the mentees reported:

- Achieved a minimum of 80% or more of their established goals
- Heightened sense of job satisfaction and organizational commitment
- Increased ability to market oneself to others, including clients

When asked about their overall experience in the Lilith Law Mentoring Program, 80-90% of the mentors reported:

- Enhanced leadership skills and abilities
- Increased productivity
- Expansion of professional networks
- Increased sense of pride and commitment to the legal profession

"Due to some extenuating circumstances, my system had entirely collapsed. I wasn't managing my time and I was being less than productive. My mentor and the resources that have been made available to me in this program have brought me back and I am under control. Excellent!

- Protege, Fall 2009

"I experienced some excellent insights into the world of professional mentoring (as opposed to personal mentoring) and a renewed sense of commitment to following some of my dreams", Participant 2009

### Skills and Competencies

Improvement in their ability to take on leadership roles \_\_\_\_\_ 90%

Effectively advocates positions, conclusions and recommendations to senior counsel and partners \_\_\_\_\_ 80%

Increase in Productivity \_\_\_\_\_ 90%

Demonstrates ability to communicate advice and solutions clearly to clients, business partners and others \_\_\_\_\_ 80%

Would recommend the Lilith Law Mentoring Program to their colleagues \_\_\_\_ 100%

Participating Law Firms ~ Blakes, Burnet Duckworth & Palmer, Bennett Jones, Parlee McLaws, Suncor, Borden Ladner Gervais, Alberta Securities Commission, Gowlings