
Erika Brown

Erika Brown is founder and CEO of the netGoddess Network, Inc. She brings her innovative vision of successful networking tools, techniques and courseware to the network's core membership of women professionals, cool guys "who get it" and very supportive corporations.

Erika is based in Denver, Colorado, and currently deploying the beta network in the Rocky Mountain region. Check it out at www.netgoddess.com.

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--Erika Brown

Rhyming Planet asks ...

What exactly is the netGoddess Network?

EB: It is a network that is developing a new paradigm of networking and mentoring for the enhancement of women's professional careers and business opportunities.

And how is this different from other existing networking organizations that target women professionals?

EB: Our approach is radically different from all of the other organizations "out there" targeting women. We actually teach women how to network in the same effective fashion that men use to network. By providing practical skills and networking techniques, netGoddess empowers women professionals to take charge of both their professional and personal lives. At the conclusion of our coursework, the netGoddess Networker will see real results --- she will have learned new techniques to apply in order to control her entry and participation into professional networks, those networks where the power decisions are made.

It sounds very interesting and appropriate to the current state of the job market. It seems like solid networking skills are in more demand than ever. Please elaborate on what makes the netGoddess Network a stronger group than many of the others.

EB: We take networking several steps further into the details than most networking groups due to both our courseware and online networking tools that are under development.

We are currently developing multiple networking courses to teach basic networking techniques and operable, practical methods for career networking. The courses will be offered through the continuing education departments of one of Colorado's major

universities as well as directly to our individual and corporate network members. These courses will be supplemented by a set of online networking tools.

NetGoddess facilitates, encourages and enables introductions and connections amongst our membership -- be they corporate, individual, or community members. Our intent is to become the cornerstone group for a larger, socially responsible network to extend our reach and our influence.

The company name is quite unique! Where did it come from?

EB: It was 1995 when I first experienced the tremendous communication potential of the Internet. The dramatic pull that I felt to its use made me want to name that whole potential, explosive communications experience, especially with regard to its use by women. Someone somewhere said to me "Why don't you get your own domain name?" and the name "netGoddess" came to me. It was still available as a domain name, so I registered it! I've had it since that time.

I felt that a group of like-minded women could work together to create a web-based community in support of professional women and their careers. I felt that this 'handle' had a name that would help to bring women together. And I was right.

The name "netGoddess" itself evokes visions of women who seek to find their own, uncompromised way in life. When the woman who "gets it" hears the name, she smiles and says, "I want to know more!" This became the basis of our initial membership - the women who smiled at the name then reacted by joining the list of users. These initial members also told their friends, colleagues and employers about the network and contributed significantly to its growth. Each member of the Network receives their own email address, e.g. Erika@netGoddess.com.

Tell us about the current services and opportunities that the network offers to it's paid membership as part of its mission.

EB: Starting in 2002, we plan to offer a myriad of services to our paid membership. They include Unmoderated List Access, where subscribers have the right to post messages to our growing list of web-based email users. Messages could include resumes, job postings, personal queries, networking requests, and meetings postings. As always, subscribers can choose whether or not to participate in these group networking and posting activities of the list.

NetGoddess also offers member discounts on our educational seminars, networking events and other collaborative opportunities. We are actively seeking member participation in the current conceptual design activities for our on-line networking tools, which will be made available exclusively to the membership Community.

What is your message for all of the women professionals regarding networking skills and techniques?

EB: Women need to understand that business networking is not the same thing as personal networking. While a woman's natural aptitude is for nurturing others, our natural female networking talents need to be augmented to fit within the business community.

The name seems a bit gender exclusive. Are men included in the equation?

EB: Not only included, supportive men are encouraged to join our Network. We know very well that without the support and active participation of these supportive men, we'll not get as far as we'd like in our quest to help women. I'll ask you a question: how can we teach women the importance of networking with men without having men in our networks?? We're "walking our talk" in a big way, and we value the inclusion of men in the netGoddess Network. We even have a special name for them; we call them the "Cool Guys".

What are the core skills and values you plan to bring to your membership of women professionals and "Cool Guys" in 2002?

EB: We plan to assist women in a life function that they already know very well: networking. Women, already skilled and practiced in nurturing, supporting, being emotionally available for others, are a bit in the dark about "business " of networking. As a direct result of our already-established nurturing and giving traits, there's an entitlement sense amongst women that makes the business side of networking difficult for them and, at the same time, creates an attitude that tends to baffle and frustrate the men with whom they work. The fact of the matter is that women have never really been schooled in the way business networking actually works.

We plan to provide women with that education with a course entitled " Networking as a Second Language", and this ground-breaking course will be first offered by the Continuing Education Departments of one of our major Colorado universities.

If you had to state in a single sentence the purpose of your organization, what would it be?

EB: The purpose of this global, for-profit organization will be to identify, train, mentor and fund the current and future development of professional women through the resources of the netGoddess Network and other associated socially responsible networks with which we are affiliated.

How can interested parties get in touch with you to learn more opportunities with and within the netGoddess Network?

EB: I am readily accessible to current and future members and encourage people to get in touch. The most direct route is email, Erika@netgoddess.com. I can also be reached by telephone at my Denver office, +1.303.780.9111.