

# Chicago Hospital New

THE REGION'S MONTHLY HEALTHCARE NEWSPAPER

## WHEN Member Shares Career Advice

BY BARBARA R. FALLON

**B**usiness ownership among women is growing at nearly twice the rate as all business, according to the Center for Women's Business Research. Female entrepreneurs may once have lagged behind their male counterparts but now they're making up for lost time.

That's one of the Top Ten observations Debra Kurtz, Principal, Kurtz Consulting, Inc, shares with fellow business women when discussing opportunities for career growth.

First on her list is advice to get as much management experience, specifically cross-functional, as possible if you want to be upwardly mobile. Gaining a deep knowledge of the customer base by involvement with strategic and tactical levels will only heighten your value to the company.

"While titles are important on our resumes, I would always contemplate even a lateral move if it allows you to see the organization through another lens. In the big picture, you bring diversity to a new team and that can improve the health of the organization," Kurtz insists.

Kurtz is an active member of Women Health Executives Network (WHEN), a not-for-profit professional organization founded in Chicago in 1981 in acknowledgement of the need for professional



Debra Kurtz

exchange and personal contact among women in the health care field.

For nearly 30 years, WHEN has been dedicated to providing Chicago's female health care executives with the educational and networking resources needed to succeed in today's challenging environment. Members in this dynamic organization exemplify the complexity of the health care field including representatives from women-owned firms, national and local companies, large and small businesses, health care providers, insurance

companies and health plans, non-profit organizations, consulting firms and trade associations. This diversity provides WHEN's membership with a richness not found in many professional organizations. The women-only policy creates a uniquely supportive environment for professional and personal enrichment.

Kurtz agrees that networking often uncovers unexpected opportunities and that along with success comes an obligation to mentor the next generation. WHEN members have immediate access to a diverse collection of some of the most experienced mentors and inquisitive newbies to the work force available.

"Sharing ideas from each perspective makes WHEN attractive during all stages of our careers," she said.

"I find conversations on juggling life, health, career and family issues just happen sooner at WHEN than other networking events because of the commonality women have. I suspect that because women are often naturally nurturing types, WHEN provides a very welcoming environment where I've been quickly drawn into conversations and projects that are engaging both personally and professionally," she continued.

Another piece of career growth advice Kurtz offers is to take advantage of any international assignments offered.

"Examine the pros and cons but recog-

nize that an expatriate opportunity will probably be high on the company radar screen and your efforts can serve as a launch pad to propel your career forward," she explained.

Finally according to Kurtz, you should know yourself and never over-stay your time at a job. If your job doesn't allow your ability to think creatively, develop new insights or provide growth opportunities, it may be time to re-think the future.

"Boredom is an absolute career killer and it is your own responsibility to make a change. That may mean getting involved on a volunteer basis, mentoring, continuing your education, seeking exposure to new areas and above all, being flexible in your career plan so that your eyes are open to the next opportunity that pops up," she concluded.

WHEN supports members who travel those avenues with opportunities to grow including job boards, educational programs, networking dinners, community service activities, a summer cultural event, and annual meeting.



To contact Debra Kurtz, e-mail [consulting@DebraKurtz.com](mailto:consulting@DebraKurtz.com) or call (224) 715-1538.

For more information on WHEN, call (847) 251-1400 or visit [www.whenchicago.org](http://www.whenchicago.org).