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Same work ethic but with even more style

Thursday, January 29, 2009
By JENNIFER KIM
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Every day, women run around in their high-heeled pumps attending seminars, conferences and meetings. Working in a predominantly male-powered world, it's hard enough walking around in stilettos all day but climbing the corporate ladder in those three-inch heels is another feat.

Like the thousands of women who can attest to this struggle, Lynette Lewis has personally teetered in those shoes. A Midwest girl from Indiana, Lewis' 25-year career has taken her from public relations and fundraising to the senior marketing leader for the National Women's Initiative at Deloitte & Touche in New York City.

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Working in New York City helped mold Lewis' passion to empower other professional, working women through speaking engagements and now in her book, "Climbing the Ladder in Stilettos."

Working at Deloitte for nine years, Lewis explains her road to success as an author.

"I was working in the marketing department. From there, I began to experiment with my concepts right here at work," she says. "I started speaking in small group meetings and non-profit organizations. And then I got feedback."

Planting the seed for Lewis' current career, many of the common feedback from her speaking engagements ran along the lines of, "I wish you had a book," "I wish you had more resources."

Servicing those comments, Lewis was inspired to inspire others. Published in 2006, "Climbing the Ladder in Stilettos" sought recognition among women nationwide in various industries. Lewis' resourceful book challenges the

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modern woman to discover their unique purpose and turning it into a lifestyle, in collaboration with their other roles as a mother, wife, etc., with powerful results.

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"I'm really big on weaving it altogether. Everyone has some core message or expertise in building their own brand. It's really about finding your purpose at work and connecting them effectively," Lewis enthusiastically says.

NEW (Network of Executive Women), an organization that focuses on attracting, retaining and advancing women to their industry in retail or manufacturing consumer goods, will present the event 'Branding You as a Leader,' a skill-building workshop and networking dinner featuring Lewis as a keynote speaker on Feb. 5 at the Sheraton Meadowlands Hotel. Besides Lewis, the event will have a few extra highlights like a free copy of "Climbing the Corporate Ladder in Stilettos" with a book signing by Lewis, as well as an array of high-end designer shoes from Gucci to Ferragamo, courtesy of Saks Fifth Avenue.

Though the event will be geared towards women, it is open to men as well. Maria Edelson, regional chair for the NY Metro chapter of NEW, laughs and says, "Oh, it's great. About 25 percent of our audience is typically men. They always get a round of applause. Having them there shows they really appreciate the fact that women are investing in themselves and they in turn are learning themselves."

Edelson encourages women of all ages to get involved.

"We're very excited to have Lynette come and speak. I think her message is so timely, especially in our economic environment. There are a lot of women looking for work, from recent college grads to women switching careers, and creating your personal brand will enhance their opportunity."

Walking confidently in her personal brand, Lewis dreams to have her own talk show someday.

"I love talking about women and their careers and how to advance in them," says Lewis. "Live your dreams now; don't wait until something big happens."

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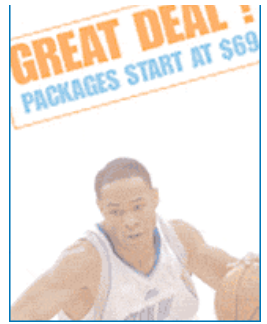
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