

For Immediate Release

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Women Business Owners Embrace Internet-Based Social Media, Latest WBCS Survey Finds

DALLAS—August 7, 2009— The Internet and social media have become critically important outlets for women-owned businesses, according to a survey by the Women's Business Council-Southwest (WBCS). Three-fourths of women business owners surveyed say they rely on social media and consider it important to the way they do business.

The survey of 92 WBCS members, conducted in July, showed that 64 percent of the business owners use social media for business networking, with 57 percent relying on it to research customers, suppliers, and others. Fifty-four percent count on social media when it comes to interacting with their customers, prospects, suppliers, and others; and 52 percent use it to sell and market their products and services.

Other uses of social media include leveraging it to drive traffic to a corporate website (36 percent of business owners reported doing this), for branding (34 percent), as a way to be innovative (30 percent), and for human resources purposes such as pre-employment screening (28 percent).

The business social media site LinkedIn was the top choice among women business owners. Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents said they use LinkedIn, 52 percent use Facebook, and 37 percent use Twitter, with other media outlets such as Plaxo and MySpace mentioned by small percentages of respondents. When asked which one media outlet was most important to them, 61 percent cited LinkedIn, with 22 percent favoring Facebook.

Usage of social media will only be increasing among WBCS members, according to the survey,

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with 83 percent of respondents indicating they plan to increase their use of social networking over the next year.

“Social media has obviously made its mark among women-owned businesses,” said Debbie Hurst, president of Women’s Business Council-Southwest. “Our survey shows that for our member businesses, Internet usage has evolved way beyond e-mail and online sales. The various social media have become a vital lifeline to current and potential clients, customers, suppliers, and partners.”

Marti Fox, owner of Dallas-based GlobalGoals, offers a great example of a woman-owned business that saw social media pay off. Fox has been using LinkedIn for six months, and leveraged the site to let old contacts know they could find her online. One of those contacts checked out her business profile on LinkedIn, Fox says, “and they liked what they saw. They happened to be looking for a corporate planner and signed a contract with us. Separately, we also scored two expo booth projects through LinkedIn.”

Fox’s social media advice: “Identify the specific purpose of social media for your business to make it work for you. Also, change something on your business profile occasionally to remind people you still exist, and contribute short responses to online discussions in your area of expertise.”

About WBCS

Headquartered in Arlington, Texas, WBCS is dedicated to increasing mutually beneficial procurement opportunities between certified woman-owned businesses, corporations, businesses, government entities, institutions and other organizations. With more than 850 WBE members and 80 corporate sustaining members, WBCS is in its 14th year of providing national certification to women-owned businesses. To find out more about the WBCS please visit www.wbcswest.org . WBCS is a regional affiliate of Women Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) covering Oklahoma, north Texas, Arkansas and New Mexico. Founded in 1997, WBENC has become a powerhouse organization for women entrepreneurs across the country, women-owned businesses, corporations, businesses, government entities, institutions and other organizations.

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