



# The Green Sheet

The Financial Services Industry Source for Education, Inspiration and Actionable Advice

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## The Wonders of Women's Networking

**H**ave you ever thought, "If only I knew then what I know now"? We gain wisdom in our profession through experience, and part of the joy of having this wisdom is sharing it with others.



On the other side of the coin, if you are someone just beginning a career, think how wonderful it would be to have access to a room full of people eager to share the knowledge and experience you seek.

A new women's networking and mentoring organization, called W.net, offers just these chances. The group's mission is "to provide a networking forum for women in our industry to share ideas, inspiration and career-building opportunities."

Behind W.net are four accomplished payments industry executives:

- **Mary Gerdts**, Founder and President/Chief Executive Officer, POST Integrations Inc.
- **Diane Vogt**, President of Enterprise Customer Development, First Data Corp.
- **Linda Perry**, Senior Vice President, Visa U.S.A.
- **Holli Targan**, Partner, Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss PC

The four had discussed how, when they first began their careers, it would have been nice to have had more time devoted specifically to networking and mentoring with other women, and how the payments industry still lacked this.

They decided to try to create an organization for women that offered such a possibility, one that "allows you to meet other people, understand what they've been through, understand the challenges they may face, and how they got to where they are," Vogt said.

She said they formed W.net to help the future and the rising of women in payments as well as provide opportunities to network with and learn from other great women who have had success in it.

Before the Electronic Transactions Association's (ETA) Annual Meeting

& Expo in March 2005, the four women invited about 75 others to a networking event to be held during the ETA meeting. The women they included on their list had attended the ETA meetings the last two years.

Vogt said they were a little surprised by the resounding success of the first event. All who attended expressed a similar sentiment: Not only was there a strong need for such a group, but also a strong desire for one.

"I'm excited about what W.net is doing for women in this arena," said Becky Kopplin of Spokane, Wash.-based The CashLINQ Group. "Opportunities to meet with people that have similar interests and shared experiences are always valuable, especially for those of us who are newcomers to the industry.

"Although we are certainly the minority, there are some amazing women

## Interested in Sponsoring a W.net Meeting?

**If any company or individual is interested in sponsoring all or part of a future W.net meeting, a number of opportunities are available.**

**Targan said a sponsorship at the most basic level covers the cost of the meeting, which would include beverages and hors d'oeuvres.**

**There are also door prize and/or attendee gift sponsorships. She said next year the group is considering holding a luncheon, which would require even greater support from sponsors.**

**For more information, e-mail Holli Targan at [htargan@jaffelaw.com](mailto:htargan@jaffelaw.com).**



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shaping the future of the payments marketplace, and we should do all that we can to acknowledge and learn from them," Kopplin said.

Both Targan and Vogt said they have been mentored (although mostly by men) in their careers and have also served as a mentor to other women.

Vogt said mentoring is a way to share the secrets behind a success story: the things that you did to develop your career path and grow your business, the political landscape, the culture. "[People] want to learn from others' lessons ... that will help them maybe not make the same mistake, or [help them] look at things differently," she said.

Targan said the mentoring experience is important for both parties. "[As a mentee], it is invaluable talking to other people who are more experienced ... and are looking

to bring you along, helping you to make your way in the business world," she said. "I think it's critical for a successful career. On the mentor side of it, I have found my career to be extremely satisfying, and I want to help other women find that, too."

**Mark Your Calendars**

W.net will hold its next event on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2005 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., immediately preceding the ETA Strategic Leadership and Networking Forum at the Charleston Place Hotel in Charleston, S.C.

Pamela Joseph, NOVA Information Systems Chairman and Chief Executive Officer and Vice Chairman of U.S. Bancorp, will talk for part of the meeting about her experiences in climbing to the top of the male-dominated acquiring industry and the lessons she has learned along the way.

Joseph is responsible for managing all operations of NOVA, U.S. Bank Transaction Services, U.S. Bank Retail Payment Systems, and euroConex, NOVA's European affiliate. She has more than 20 years' experience in the financial services industry.

"Pamela Joseph started her [payments] career at Visa, and look where she is today," Vogt said. "People are coming because they can't wait to hear her."

Wine and cheese will also be offered at the meeting, as well as plenty of networking time, of course.

"I believe that women often network much differently than men do, and we need an organization to provide a forum that fosters our kind of networking," Targan said. "... The venues that women might choose to network in may be more comfort-

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able than those that traditionally are looked upon as networking venues for men; golf is the most obvious example of that."

**Why at ETA Events?**

Although W.net is an organization independent of ETA, the founders decided to plan the meetings, for now, in conjunction with the two ETA events because of the large number of women who attend them (ETA's Annual Meeting & Expo draws about 3,000 people overall, and the SLNF draws about 400).

"That's a big piece of the payments sector," Vogt said.

Targan said they want to encourage as many people to come as possible, but they recognize that it's not always easy to travel to an event independent of a major industry conference.

"Our vision is that eventually we will be independent and big enough ... to hold functions independent of ETA," Targan said. "I would like to see that eventually we have our own day or two-day conference for women business people. Or maybe it grows big enough that we have more regional kinds of events, that has certainly been discussed, but we're not there yet."

**All Women in Payments Invited**

Earlier this summer, the founding members sent out an e-mail to gather feedback on what women would like to get out of W.net and also invite them to the upcoming event in September, but Targan said now the news is spreading by word of mouth.

"It's no longer invitation-only," she said. "If a woman is interested, she should absolutely come." (She asked, though, that anyone planning to attend to try to let them know in advance so they know how many people to expect).

The feedback they've received so far is all positive, Vogt said. "[Women] want W.net to succeed, they definitely want to be a part of it ... and they want to help. They want to give their free time to make this a success." She said that all women in the payments-related financial services sector are invited. Whether they work with a vendor, financial institution, acquirer or processor, or are an ISO or a merchant level salesperson, all are welcome to participate.

"The idea is to help people along in their careers and get them to know other women in the industry," Targan said. "The more people who participate, the more effective I think the whole thing will be." ■

*For more information about W.net, e-mail Holli Targan at [htargan@jaffelaw.com](mailto:htargan@jaffelaw.com).*