

Professional Women in Pest Management

The event was opened by **Sabra Fearon** from **Killgerm Group**. Sabra is a member of the **Professional Women in Pest Management (PWIPM)** Council in USA and with the blessing of the American branch and the National Pest Management Association has been fundamental in the launch of the group in the UK.

Sabra explained the need for PWIPM and that it aims to support and promote women in the industry. PWIPM will provide a necessary networking opportunity. This inspiring and motivational group will enable women throughout the industry to develop their business skills. Sabra also thanked the organisations sponsor Pest Control News.

Jennifer Leggett joined us from the American **PWIPM** group to explain how the group had grown and how she had developed her own career. Jennifer is a certified operator with her own business, **Lindsey Pest Control Inc** in Florida. Whilst working for Lindsey Pest Control Inc was only ever supposed to be a summer job, the industry has become Jennifer's passion and she is a former president of the Florida State Association, the second largest state association in the USA and is a board member of the National Pest Management Association.

Jennifer is an inspiration to women within the industry, proving that barriers can be broken. She is an avid advocator of PWIPM and as one of the initial members in USA she explained how the organisation has grown from humble origins to now having over a couple of hundred members who offer a scholarship to women who work within the pest management industry which helps them grow and improve their business. Members are contacted regularly by an electronic newsletter.

Jennifer believes that PWIPM provides a wonderful opportunity to help women through networking, sharing with each other and learning from one another. She is very proud to be a part of this industry and a member of this group as fundamentally it helps people and solves their problems.

Christine Petyt joined us as the principal speaker. Christine owns **Excellion Leadership** a company which motivates and develops women in business. The company works primarily with women returning to work and part of her work acknowledges the qualities and attributes of women and how these differ to men in business.

Christine illustrated that there is still a distinct lack of women in the 'top' jobs within FTSE100 companies and discussed whether this was due to a perceived 'glass ceiling'. The ability to come together, mentor and share best practice through organisations such as PWIPM was seen to be very important.

Christine discussed the self-limiting behaviours typical of women in business and highlighted the importance of having a real understanding of your goals, the things that drive you and your ability to influence other people. You must be able to ask for what you want and know where you want to be in the business. Christine also emphasized that it is important to promote yourself for the good work you do and to look for recognition and to build strategic alliances with others that can promote you.

A key to success in women was to know what your company is doing and to become integrated in its business plan, knowing your work and your skills and how they can benefit an organisation. Christine discussed how emotional intelligence, an attribute common in many women, is becoming increasingly valued as businesses are dealing with the issues the current economic client brings and how these skills can be used to benefit your career and business.

Christine believes that in order to succeed we must be supportive of other women, sharing experiences and lessons learned.

For a copy of Christine's slides **please visit www.pwipm.co.uk**
or to view the Excellion website **please go to www.excellionleadership.co.uk**

Susan Denmead from **Dress for Success** spoke about the development of the charity and the vital impact it has on women's lives. The charity was founded by a law student in New York and now has branches throughout the world. The UK branch was opened by Cherie Blair and works largely with underprivileged women such as those who are homeless, on welfare or with criminal records. All clients are referred to the charity by organisations such as the job centre and they all have job interviews pre-organised. The charity not only provides clients with an outfit for their interview but if they are successful in attaining a job they will receive enough outfits for a working week.

The charity helps to empower women, building their confidence and treating them with respect and understanding. These vulnerable women find a place of acceptance and place where they can start to rebuild their lives at Dress for Success.

Dress for Success runs a series of workshops for women speaking to a variety of women from those in prison to school children helping them to gain the skills they need to support themselves and change their lives.

Dress for Success is the PWIPM designated charity. If you have any unwanted outfits that you would like to donate please contact info@pwipm.co.uk or go to www.dressforsuccess.org
To find out more about Dress for Success please click here

Attendee's were invited to discuss how the organisation can be promoted further and how it will be run. It was suggested that members should view themselves as ambassadors encouraging women that they know or meet at events to get involved. Further promotion through industry publications was discussed and Francis McKim and Helen Riby from Pest volunteered to write a PWIPM newsletter that would be circulated to members. Future events will be run throughout the UK and meeting will be held at industry events. These will continue to be supported by Pest Control News. Feedback forms were circulated and the following suggestions have been made. Please email any further suggestions or feedback to info@pwipm.co.uk

PWIPM Questionnaire feedback

Out of the twenty nine attendee's thirteen feedback forms were returned. All questions gave attendees the ability to mark more than one preference

When do you think PWIPM meetings should be held?

- breakfast - 0
- lunch - 12
- evening - 1
- events at industry events - 3

Where do you suggest our meetings are held? Responses included...

Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Leicester
London, Similar to current venue
London yearly and regional
Alternate around members offices
Close to railway stations
Somewhere central in UK
Alternating between the north and south

What kind of meetings do you prefer?

- Educational - 9
- Networking - 9

What kind of speakers would you like at future PWIPM meetings?

- Motivational - 7
- subject specific e.g. marketing – 9

What did you enjoy about this meeting? Responses included...

Informal, plenty of enthusiasm. A variety of different women from all areas of the industry
Meeting people that have experienced starting pest control businesses
Networking, nice lunch
Very welcoming. Food was outstanding.
Informal and networking
Social, enjoyable
Meeting like minded women
Discussions
Meeting other people in the industry
Speakers were very interesting
Sharing information and ideas

What could we do to improve the event? Responses included...

It would be beneficial to have a delegate list
It was perfect
Meetings on a regular basis
Promptness
Keep it up it's fab!!
Speakers from within the industry

What skills would you like to develop?

- marketing – 6
- presentation skills - 4
- sales - 6
- leadership - 5
- financial - 2
- human resources - 3

How do you suggest PWIPM promote themselves and attract new members?

- merchandise - 3
- advertising - 7
- press releases - 4
- newsletters - 8
- website - 9
- word of mouth - 5
- other

How do you suggest we keep in touch between meetings?

- forum - 3
- email - 12
- facebook – 4

Any further comments... Responses included...

Well done
Thank you for an inspiring day
Generally very good
Thank you
A very enjoyable day and I would like to do it again
Look at the way the invite is worded. Rather than 'professional women' it should be clear that it is for all women that work in pest control.
Small businesses would benefit from marketing help to get their business off the ground
More help for small companies – best way to gain more jobs and how to advertise etc.
Let's think about Pest Management Woman of the Year

Thank You

To all those that were able to attend the launch, we hope you enjoyed the day and look forward to seeing you again at our local meetings and at the meeting held at Pest-Ex in April.