

EuropeanPWN

About us

Membership

Events & Conferences

Members Only

Think Tank

Corporate

Political

Career

Women Leading
Change

Mentoring

Women on Boards

Books, Links & More

City Networks

Please choose

Platinum Partner



Gold Partner

Deloitte.

Corporate Members

Q and A with chief networking officer Selma Prodanovic



Q: How common is the post of Chief Networking Officer in European firms?

A: As CNO, not common at all, but I expect this will change in the near future.

Q: Which companies are embracing the idea of the CNO? Are they from particular sectors or European countries?

A: This is a position which SMEs understand much better than corporations. Some small businesses call the position Chief Relationship Officer, which, in my opinion is different to CNO but it is based on the same idea – building long term relationships for future business development. The SME needs “quality” relationships much more than corporations who have the “quantity”, but still the corporate world will have to move in this direction.

As I said in my announcement for the WCN event on the topic: *“People make the difference statements made by leaders such as David Ogilvy or Jack Welsh are even more true today. It is not just about the individual knowledge and expertise, it is about the ability to connect the unconnected and with it create new business opportunities, foster innovation, enable long term business relationships, motivate employees and ensure sustainable development.”*

Q: How would you define ‘networking’?

A: Unfortunately, ‘networking’ is not the correct word anymore. In the U.S. , they use “connecting” more than ‘networking’, and I tend to use ‘brainworking’ instead. Today, networking describes establishing and keeping ‘contacts’. Especially the online networks allow you to have tens of thousands of ‘contacts’ but what is the purpose? How many of these contacts can you really use, rely upon and trust? How much do you know about these people? Of course, there are ways to manage such networks (be discussed on another occasion), but in my view it is more about a balance between quantity and quality, between diversity and trust. The sooner networking becomes a professional skill, the faster the position will be established. I lecture, train, coach and consult individuals and companies on how to use this skill to develop their business, creativity, and innovation.

Q: Can you name any companies that already employ CNOs?

A: The online network OpenBC has a chief networking officer, as does the Brazilian company Net-Bridges (Octavio Pitaluga). I am member of the Net-Bridges Advisory Board.