


## SKILLS SAVVY

### Four Ways to Help Other Women Succeed While You Continue to Succeed

By Monica Blacker

A photograph showing two women in a professional office environment. One woman, with dark hair and wearing a dark blazer, is leaning over a desk and pointing at a tablet held by another woman. The second woman, with curly hair and wearing a light blue shirt, is looking at the tablet with a smile. They appear to be in a collaborative meeting or discussion. The background is softly blurred, showing office furniture and a window.

In the current political and cultural climate, we as women must be in charge of helping other women succeed. This can mean a lot of things, but it is a very important notion to remember, in particular, in the workplace context. For a long time, we have been told that other women are our competition, and therefore there has been a habit of putting other women down in order to secure positions or titles in the workplace. But as recent marches, campaigns, and elections have shown, this is simply no longer the case. Rather than seeing other women at work as our competition, we need to view them as partners, peers, and allies. Even as our own careers take off, we are responsible for helping other women. This may seem daunting, especially in the current environment, when many of us are teaching children, in addition to working full-time jobs. However, I've put together some simple steps that we can take between phone calls, pitches, and important client meetings to help other women in our companies and industries. These steps don't take much time or effort on either side!

#### 1. Amplify and Work Together with Women

As female professionals, we should always be aware of and become acquainted with other female professionals with whom we work. Our goal should be to amplify and work with other women so that all our voices can be heard. When we are at meetings and company events, an easy way to amplify the ideas or voices of other women in attendance is to work together to make sure we have each others' backs. If one woman is presenting an idea or speaking up in the meeting -- only to be immediately shot down, interrupted, or have her idea "stolen" by a man at the table -- another woman should ask a question that redirects to the presenter. A simple, "Oh, that was a great idea that Julie had" or "let's let Karen finish what she was saying, sounded like a great idea" may be ideal. This type of comment not only mildly chastises the individual who interrupted, but it also gives the woman back the floor to make her case.

#### 2. Avoid Arguing with Other Women

I am by no means saying that we can never disagree with other females, because this would only restrict our collective growth! When I say we should avoid arguing with other women, I mean "in public," and especially in meetings where there are very few women in a sea of men. To be clear, a disagreement in opinion or tactic does not necessarily warrant an argument. Rather, if we

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disagree with a coworker or colleague, we should not tell her so in the middle of the break room with half of the office watching. In movies and music videos, “cat fights” are glorified by the opposing sex, and we do not want to endorse this! So if one of us has a disagreement with a female colleague, we can pull her into a conference room and explain why we disagreed with her stance or actions, and then try to understand why she chose that route. We should do our best to preview and resolve these ideas ahead of a group discussion on the topic, if possible.

### **3. Network with Female Colleagues**

If you have not done this already, you need to make this a priority! To help others while we continue to succeed, we need to know these “others.” This requires networking and meeting other women. Luckily for us, there are a ton of online forums and sites for women to network and meet like-minded female professionals. All one needs to do to identify these groups is to google “female only networking group.” Once you skim through the list, carefully review each group, and pick one that works best for you. Then start networking. You won’t regret it! Also, ask women in your industry who are successful about groups they belong to, and where they have found networking value.

### **4. Encourage Women!**

Whether it is telling a random woman on the street that you love her dress, or replying to the company-wide email “Go Alicia!” after her work is highlighted, it is your job to encourage other women. It is such an easy thing to build up and help other women, but we rarely see females take the opportunity to do so. I encourage you to try and do this once a day. Give a female colleague a compliment or a pat on the back, or simply tell her that you appreciate her.

These four things are simple enough to get you into the routine of supporting other women while you yourself continue to succeed. It doesn’t have to be hard; help people you already know. If you can gradually implement all four of these ideas into your week, you not only will expand your female professional network, but I guarantee that you will find it easier than you think to work and connect with other women! You also will get back what you put out there in spades – other women will return your kindness. For more ways to continue to succeed as a female professional, or to learn about simple ways to embody “BAX” -- my acronym for “Bold Accomplished Women” -- send me a note, or follow me on Instagram at @baxadvisors. I look forward to connecting with you!

*\* Monica Blacker is the founder of BAX Advisors, LLC, which helps women to advance in the workplace. She also is a partner in Force Ten Partners LLC, an advisory firm specializing in corporate restructuring, bankruptcy, and litigation. Monica can be reached about BAX via her website at <https://www.baxadvisorsllc.com/contact>.*

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