

## WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE

## Focus Less on Your Job and More on Your Career

■ By Stephanie Kammer

OUR WORK HOURS ARE CONSUMED WITH JOB-RELATED tasks. After-work hours are taken up by everything else, so when do we find the time to think about the bigger picture, to consider the trajectory of our careers? The Women in the Profession Committee hosted an invigorating, interactive program on Oct. 25, directed at moving women ahead in their careers. Rachelle J. Canter, Ph.D., president of RJC Associates and an adjunct professor at the Women Senior Leaders Program at Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management's Center for Executive Women, distilled her more than 25 years of experience providing career assistance to attorneys and executives, into exploding the main career myths she felt were keeping women from advancing in the workplace.

The most important myth to debunk for Dr. Canter was the myth that hard work alone is enough to ensure career success. Related detrimental myths include: the idea that mentors would be as interested in your career advancement as you are, that IQ alone (and not attention to EQ, or interpersonal skills) could get you ahead, and that performance feedback is unimportant. Dr. Canter explained how women rely on these myths to trust that they will be rewarded for their work or talent, but when it comes to getting ahead, there is no substitute for self-



Rachelle J. Canter, Ph.D., president, RJC Associates (center); with Women in the Profession Committee Co-chairs Amber M. Racine (left) and Jennifer S. Coatsworth at the Committee meeting on Oct. 25.

confidence, focusing on advancing your own career or prioritizing your own career advancement in your daily life through small measurable steps toward your goals.

To help women manage their career ambitions and as an avenue for guiding their focus onto their careers, Dr. Canter had plenty of great tips and tools. She encouraged women to keep track of their accomplishments with an "Accomplishment Log" of quantifiable achievements. This kind of log can help boost confidence and facilitate making the case for yourself when seeking to move forward, whether in the form of an updated resume, a performance

review or asking for a specific assignment.

"Nothing speaks for itself," Dr. Canter said, as she encouraged women to ask—for feedback, for recognition and for promotions. She advised women to use their calendars to ensure they prioritize getting these necessary things done, to pencil them in as they would any other job-related or personal appointment. As part of the program, Dr. Canter had attendees write out their long-term career goals, how they planned on expanding their skills and value over the next year and how they planned on expanding their skills and value over the next three years. Participants were then asked to brainstorm one small step they could take in the next two weeks to accomplish their goals.

The crucial take away from the presentation, aside from the great tips, was that more than anything, for women, a critical step in ensuring their advancement is making it a priority in their lives—to focus less on their jobs, and more on their careers. In short, Dr. Canter encouraged women to "woman up!" when it comes to their own career success.

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