



# Strategic Plan October 2014

## INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

CREW Denver is the local chapter of CREW Network in the Denver metropolitan market. CREW Network is a professional organization committed to the success of the commercial real estate industry through the advancement of the career achievements of women. This Strategic Plan has been developed through a collaborative process during 2014, involving the 2014 CREW Denver Board of Directors, committee chairs and other select leaders (past and current). It provides the strategic vision for the chapter's future, and identifies key initiatives that will enable CREW Denver to reach that vision. This Strategic Plan provides a fluid framework for the future of CREW Denver and should be reevaluated in three to five years.

## MISSION AND CORE PURPOSES

CREW Denver's mission and core purpose is to **advance the careers and success of women in the commercial real estate industry.**

CREW Denver is a difference maker, a thought leader, a connection-maker, a career builder. CREW Denver does more than just talk about the successes women have in commercial real estate, CREW Denver plays an active part in that success.

## VALUES

The core values of CREW Denver are leadership, professional relationships, and excellence. These values inform the manner in which our chapter executes all of its activities and strives to reach its goals. Each of these values is discussed in more detail below.

*Leadership—CREW Denver endeavors to be a thought leader in commercial real estate. We will be visionary, solution-oriented, collaborative and supportive in all we do. We will create opportunities for our members at the commercial real estate table to take on more leadership roles within their respective disciplines. We will provide a platform for educating the current and future leaders in our industry.*

*Professional Relationship—CREW Denver will help our members build lasting professional and multidisciplinary relationships, which will lead to career development and advancement. Our chapter’s activities will provide a platform for access to other disciplines and levels of expertise. We will work to educate the commercial real estate industry at large regarding the contribution and value that women can bring to the industry.*

*Excellence—CREW Denver will provide an example to its members of the meaning of excellence in the commercial real estate industry and empower its members to operate at the highest levels within discipline and experience levels. Our chapter will be a go-getter in the industry and will inspire our members to do the same in their own career paths and organizations.*

### **BIG AUDACIOUS GOAL**

CREW Denver’s “Big Audacious Goal” is to **be the premier commercial real estate professional organization in the Denver metropolitan area.**

While sticking to our values as a chapter, CREW Denver will become the premier commercial real estate professional organization in the Denver area, which will serve to advance the careers and success of women in the commercial real estate industry – both those who are current and/or future members and those who are not. By accomplishing this, the entire commercial real estate industry benefits.

### **STRATEGIC VISION FOR 2020**

In 2020, CREW Denver will be a chapter approaching 500 members, representing various levels of experience and diversity of expertise. Educational programming will be of the highest quality and draw roughly equal numbers of men and women and members and non-members. Our chapter will have strengthened ties with CREW Northern Colorado, through joint programs and networking events.

CREW Denver will have developed and executed a thorough and consistent communications strategy, with professionally developed branding, marketing, website and e-communication materials. We will be using advertising to bring awareness to our brand and organization, not just our events.

Our chapter's ties with CREW Network will be stronger than ever and we will have raised the profile of CREW Network within the Denver market, with the national organization being as much of a driver for new memberships as our local chapter. Our members will have a consistent presence on the CREW Network board and committees. We will regularly have 20 or more members at the CREW Network Convention and Marketplace and we will have a scholarship program that provides funding (or partial funding) to send a majority of all Board members and committee chairs to the Network convention.

### **KEY DRIVERS FOR SUCCESS**

CREW Denver has identified four key drivers for success, each of which is discussed in more detail below. These key drivers are:

- The Right People in the Room
- Talk About the Right Things
- Focus on a National Presence
- Clear and Impactful Communications

There are many possible courses of action based on these key drivers, not all of which our chapter will take in the immediate, mid- or long-term. However, in all that we do, CREW Denver should be mindful of these key drivers.

**The Right People in the Room.** In order to reach CREW Denver's big, audacious goal, at all times our chapter must have the right people in the room. Depending upon the event or occasion, this means different things. This is not only important for our events, but also for our leadership, at both the board and committee chair level.

**Heavy Hitters:** Whether or not "heavy hitters" in the industry become members of CREW Denver, the chapter recognizes the importance that these people have in the future success of CREW Denver. This group includes past presidents of CREW Denver, senior members of the commercial real estate industry, and local economic development leaders and elected officials. These heavy hitters include both men and women. Our chapter recognizes that many of these people will not join CREW Denver, but there is still opportunity to engage

them in our programs as speakers, attendees, honorees, and potentially, mentors. By engaging with this group in a deliberate and meaningful way, CREW Denver hopes to help spread the word about the good things our chapter is doing.

Sponsors: As the presence of our chapter in the Denver marketplace grows, we need to be strategic about having the right companies involved with CREW Denver's sponsorship, whether on a year-round basis or for a specific program or event. By aligning with the key companies involved with commercial real estate in the metro area, CREW Denver's reach can be broadened.

Speakers/Attendees: It is important that our chapter continues to put on programs at the highest level, which means finding the best speakers available for a given topic. And, when a particular topic is especially interesting to a company or group, CREW Denver leadership needs to make targeted invitations (including to the heavy hitter group) for that program. Having a key member of the commercial real estate industry in the audience at a program can be very powerful.

Up & Comers: The rising stars in commercial real estate are also very important to the future of CREW Denver. These rising stars are often at the companies with which we seek to partner and in many instances work with the heavy hitters with whom we wish to engage. A strong base of up-and-comers will build CREW Denver's organizational and leadership strength as individuals in that group advance in their own careers and experience.

**Talk About the Right Things.** The substance of CREW Denver's programming is essential to the future success of our chapter. This includes the mix of programming type (typical lunch programs, educational sessions, networking events, mentoring programs), and the substance of each of those programs. At the same time, we need to be mindful that too many programs and events may weaken attendance (and thus value) of some of the events.

Lunch Programs: We need to ensure that at all times for our larger, lunch programs we are talking about things that are timely and relevant to all members of the commercial real estate profession – no matter gender or level of experience.

Signature Events: CREW Denver needs at least one or two “not to be missed” events each year that draw support from the entire commercial real estate industry. CREW Denver needs to keep our chapter’s signature events fresh and dynamic.

Engaging with the Community: CREW Denver should consider partnering with other professional organizations to host substantive programs or other events. Partnering with organizations such as ULI or NAIOP will lend credibility to the fact that CREW Denver is on its way to becoming the premier real estate professional organization in Denver. CREW Denver should also consider partnering with other professional organizations focused on the advancement of women (Women’s Chamber, Women’s Bar Association, etc.).

Targeted Events and Programs: While our lunch programs should have very broad appeal, CREW Denver should look for opportunities to provide more targeted programming. This could include a mentoring program, creating peer groups based on experience level, creating industry groups, or establishing a young leaders program. These targeted events and programs can provide opportunities for meaningful relationships to develop among our members.

Education Credits: As another way to provide value to our members, as we are putting together programs and events, CREW Denver should look for opportunities to have our programs certified for continuing education credits.

**Focus on a National Presence.** CREW Denver is a local chapter of a national organization, and our chapter should leverage that association. CREW Network is a powerful network that can be of great benefit to our chapter members. We should find ways to further connect our chapter and its members to CREW Network, through involvement with the CREW Network board and committees and the CREW Network leadership summits and convention. CREW Denver should work to align its branding with the branding of CREW Network and place focus on the CREW Network resources, such as industry white papers and press contacts. Likewise, Denver is a very active commercial real estate market and our chapter should look for opportunities to highlight Denver real estate (and in turn our members) at the Network level.

**Clear and Impactful Communications.** How we communicate, both internally and externally, is critical to the success of CREW Denver. Our chapter needs to speak with a unified and consistent voice in all matters, with the highest level of professionalism. This may lead to a branding and messaging exercise and development of brand standards and a style book. From an external standpoint, CREW Denver needs to make use of technology in its communication, which might include an increased presence on social media, a heightened awareness and use of CREWBiz among our members, and the potential for developing a CREW Denver mobile application. Also, CREW Denver should look for public relations opportunities for the chapter and its members. All of our communications should make our sponsors proud to be associated with CREW Denver. From an internal standpoint, streamlining processes to transition committee leadership from year to year and utilizing the administrative support of CREW Network to the fullest extent possible will free our volunteers to engage in more strategic leadership.

## **CREW DENVER CHAPTER GOALS**

With the mission and core purpose of CREW Denver, as well as the chapter's values, our "big audacious goal," and the key drivers for success in mind, certain chapter-wide goals became clear during the strategic planning process. Immediate, mid-term and long-range goals are set forth below. These goals do not stand in place of committee level goals, which should be developed based upon the points in this Strategic Plan.

### **Immediate Goals.**

**Strategic Board Protocol.** CREW Denver's Board of Directors should be a strategic board, not a working board. The Board meetings should reflect that, and day-to-day operational decisions should be vested in the committees and not be overly managed by the Board. CREW Denver will review its protocol for Board meetings, Board member involvement with committees, committee authority and similar items and make necessary adjustments in an effort to keep the Board meetings strategic in nature.

Leadership Succession Planning. Leadership at both the Board level and the committee chair level is a key to successful implementation of the strategic vision for the Chapter. The Board of Directors will establish a more coordinated process of selecting committee chairs and will review the nomination process for the Board positions to ensure that best practices are employed.

Restructure the Yearly Calendar. Each summer, the Board of Directors will consider the next year's programming and special events calendar. This will ensure that a proper number and balance of events is held and that sponsorships can be secured for these events. And, with limited exceptions, no additional events should be added to the calendar after it is approved. Generally speaking, the chapter should endeavor to have only one event per month, with a few exceptions. This will likely include fewer monthly lunch programs. Our goal is to make each event as well attended and high caliber as possible, with content rather than a calendar goal, driving the need for a program.

Process Improvement with CREW Network. A working group will be convened to work with CREW Network staff to ensure that processes are streamlined and CREW Network staff is empowered to proactively handle the administrative details for our chapter.

### **Mid-Term Goals**

Program Content. All programs should be relevant, timely and presented by the best possible panel of speakers. The programs committee will continue to work with the Board to identify topics and speakers and to fill the audience with quality attendees.

Strategic Communications Plan. A comprehensive, strategic communications plan will be developed for the chapter. It will look at branding, messaging, advertising, public relations, collateral materials and social media. As part of this process, a plan for implementation of the strategic communications plan should be developed, which should utilize the resources of CREW Network to the extent possible.

Membership Growth. The chapter will develop and implement a plan to increase CREW Denver's membership, with a focus on diversity of industry sector and experience level.

### **Long Range Goals**

Mentoring and Leadership Development Program. A mentoring and leadership program should be developed, where we offer mentoring to mid-level professionals. To the extent possible, we should engage the heavy hitters to speak or lead sessions during this program.

National Speaker for Professional Development. CREW Denver should bring in a nationally recognized speaker for a professional development program each year.