



Rostrons Accountants creates “We Can”, to support women in the region to achieve at the highest level in business.

When Sabah Meddings, former EDP Business features writer, researched the top 100 EDP businesses, she found that as few as 74 of the 526 board members were female and a startling 57 firms had male only boards. The benefits of having female representation on boards have been widely discussed and interestingly none of the FTSE 100 companies have male only boards. For Norfolk to keep pace with the rest of the country and respond to the growth opportunities in our region, we need to create opportunities for women at the highest level.

The concept of “We Can” emerged after talking with women in leadership roles in the region and reading about the EDP research. At Rostrons, we were becoming increasingly aware of the absence of a female forum at a top level to share ideas and experiences and to provide a support for future female talent in Norfolk.

Led by 3 female directors, at Rostrons we feel both privileged to have the opportunity to work at a senior level and motivated and responsible for supporting other women achieve their career ambitions. Historically some senior women have been criticised for “pulling up the drawbridge” once they have made it themselves. We believe that if you nurture and support your region, ultimately you and your business will develop and grow too.



Looking to our professional contacts and client base as a start point, we assembled a group of successful women to see if there was an appetite to create a forum or group and identify what we might all wish to gain from it. Our plans and thoughts were deliberately embryonic. We wanted the future steps to be shaped by those who joined us.

Our first meeting took place in November and as a group of 12, we represented some of the region's top professional services firms and pressure groups. We quickly realised that as well as identifying a need for action, we had also linked up with a group of women similarly as motivated and excited about doing something to make a difference. At that initial meeting we agreed that to make a change, we needed to be action orientated and there were two key areas where we should focus on first:

- **Creating a network to advertise and gain support for women to achieve target board positions in Norfolk**
- **Harnessing the wealth of skills within our group to offer an unparalleled mentoring opportunity for aspiring women.**

Since then we have grown our support base as other high profile women in the region have become involved and our next steps are to organise a working session to translate ideas into action.

We are delighted that Norfolk Network is supporting us by sharing our story and practically offering us a space to meet and develop our plans. Please do contact us if you are interested to know more or would like to get involved. We are very excited about what we can achieve and hopefully how we can help to make a difference.