



BPW INTERNATIONAL
Business & Professional Women

*Young BPW
Europe*

Young BPW Guide

**How to integrate and
communicate with
new (younger)
Club members**



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Introduction: How to use this guide

This guide has been created from the personal experiences of Young BPW of several BPW Club in various countries, It is meant to be a practical collection of ideas and to help all BPW Club that want to attract more women under 35 years and look after them professionally – regardless of whether there already is a Young BPW section in this Club or not.

...for Club presidents

We have learned from numerous discussions that it is not always easy for BPW Germany – and indeed for most other associations or Club – to integrate new members, especially younger ones, into the Club in such a way that they want to stay in the Club. For this reason we would like to present BPW presidents – especially of Club where the integration of new members is a priority – with tried and tested ideas on how to improve the introduction and integration of new members into the Club as well as how to improve communication in general.

...for Young BPW representatives in the Club

In addition to that we would like to support the Young BPW representatives in each Club and present them with new ideas in how to make the integration of new members even more professional and successful.

...actually for everybody!

This guide contains tried and tested ideas from several Clubs but is of course far from complete. Certainly there are more experiences and tips that are not mentioned in this booklet. If your Club has further ideas or material concerning the topics represented here, please do not hesitate to tell us about them so that we can include them in an extended edition of this guide.

A lot of success to everyone who is dealing with the topic of integration and communication!

With all my best wishes,

Young BPW Europe
Viktoria Balensiefen



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**1. BPW grows
- From prospective member to member-**

1.1 Interview

A prospective member would like to join BPW – so what do you do? A good idea is to interview her and this interview should be conducted by an experienced BPW member. This is because she will be able to answer all possible questions, give the new member useful Tips and most importantly: fill her with enthusiasm. If the prospective member is a young woman, it would be good a good idea to have a Young BPW conduct the interview.

Do not forget to inform the executive of your Club about this **interview** which should include the following points:

Expectations of the new member:

- Why would you like to join BPW?
- What would you like to contribute to BPW?
- What is it that you find most interesting about BPW?

Asking what a woman expects from the Club is important, because it shows if the new member's expectations are realistic. In addition to that you can give her tips on how these expectations can be fulfilled. A lot of women leave BPW again after only a short time, because their expectations were too high or even wrong and so could not be met.

TIP:

Prospective members who do not actively ask to join but who you would like to become a BPW member are mostly very please if you ask them directly to become a member ("I think you would be perfect for our Club.") .This is also a good way to do away with doubts or reservations.



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The Club's demands and expectations of the new member:

- To be working or in education or training. Our target group are working women who would like to share their knowledge and experiences with others to help each other to advance.
- To understand the giving and taking in an open network. Our network can only work, if every member contributes their talents, abilities and contacts.
- Active participation: Would you like to contribute to BPW on a local, regional, national or international level or in a local or national task force?
- To inform the Club about topics of interest from a prospective member's point-of-view.
- To participate in regional, national and / or international BPW conventions. Regular participation in conventions is certainly recommended, but we do not know of any Club that has made it compulsory.
- Small jobs should be taken on by all members. Active Club members can approach others directly and ask them for help with specific jobs.
- To represent the Club and promote the idea of BPW is something that all BPW members should do at appropriate occasions.
- **Others:** Each Club can determine in an internal discussion what it wants its ideal member to be like.

The formalities:

- Membership fee, due date, methods of payment
- Statutes and rules
- BPW principles



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1.2 Membership application

The candidate fills in an application form. Some Clubs include these additional points in their forms:

- Reasons for joining BPW
- What I would like to contribute

The executive then decides if the new member will be accepted into the Club. This mostly happens during the next meeting of the executive.

1.3 Welcoming the new member to the Club

The new member should be officially welcomed and introduced to the Club. This does not only reinforce the team spirit within the Club, but is also the easiest way for new members to get to know the other Club members. A friendly welcome is especially important for Young BPW to get in touch with the „rest of the Club“.

Many Clubs officially welcome their new members when they take part in a BPW meeting for the first time after they have joined the Club. The new member is welcomed by the president or her representative. Then the new member introduces herself and tells the others about her personal and professional background as well as about her reasons for joining BPW.



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Some Clubs hand over to their new members a **BPW bag containing important information for a successful start in the Club-life:**

- Welcome letter from the Club President
- Information about the Club:
 - Statutes
 - List of Club members
 - BPW principles
 - Schedule of Club events (feel free to include several brochures for distribution so that you can make use of the new member's enthusiasm!)
 - Task forces and other committees and projects of the Club, as for example political task force, economic task force, cultural circle, special meetings for entrepreneurs and so on.
- „**BPW equipment**“:
 - BPW pin
 - BPW bookmark
 - BPW business cards
 - BPW history
- Information about your national **BPW organisation** and **topics of national interest**:
 - Information about the national BPW organisation
 - BPW brochure / magazine
 - Information about national task forces and projects
 - Information about networks like BPW-Danube-Net, BPW Hanse-Net etc.



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- **BPW events and conventions:**
 - Events in your local BPW Club: regular meetings, general meeting, candlelight ceremony, Christmas party etc.
 - Conventions of your national BPW association
 - Regional conventions: D-A-CH, Hanse-Meeting
 - Conventions of BPW Europe and BPW International: BPW European Congress, BPW International Congress
- Depending on age: Information about **Young BPW**
 - Young BPW brochure
 - Information about local and national Young BPW representative, mailing list, meetings
- Information about **BPW Europe** and **BPW International**
 - Information about BPW International: structure and data [**see attachment**]
 - Information about international projects and task forces: Five-O-Project, Twinning, Friends and Fellows, Water-Project
 - Political influence and seats in the UN, EWL, Council of Europe etc.
- Online information:
 - Information about the websites of BPW International, Young BPW International, BPW Europe, Young BPW Europe including passwords or information about how to register [**see attachment**]
 - Information about mailing lists and distribution lists
 - Business-Member-Pages: www.bpw-business.org



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Switzerland has come up with a good idea: All new members are given a pack of **BPW business cards with their names** as a welcome present! This investment is certainly worthwhile because with these business cards all BPW members can act as Multiplier.

For new members the different levels of networking within PBW can be hard to see through. It is especially important for young women to participate in the association they have just joined and to understand the structures that are behind it.

1.4 Team spirit within the Club

New members do not only enlarge and enrich a Club, but expansion has to be desired and supported **by all** members and planned and prepared by the executive.

Openness and structure

Openness and structure are important: Take care that your Club remains open to new members. For the Club to run smoothly it is important that new members feel welcome in the Club and that the Club is happy to get new members. Set an example in your Club by showing your interest in the new members.



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In addition to this the executive should also create and maintain an environment that supports the growth of the Club. To achieve this, please ask yourself the following questions:

- Quality or quantity? What kind of “quality“ are we looking for?
- Where is the limit for quality instead of quantity?
- Are we generally ready for expansion?

As there are Club of various sizes in each country, it would be a good idea to ask other Club about their experiences and share yours.

Power and influence

If we like our members to be active, we must give them the chance to contribute actively to the Club. Most women are unwilling to take part in the Club life on a long-term basis, if they cannot contribute their own ideas. For this reason we have to understand that we have to **share influence and power** – if we don't, especially active and confident women will soon leave the Club again and look for another field of activity.

The godmother – a way to link generations

Giving her a “godmother“ is a good way to integrate an new member into the Club. The „newcomer“ is assigned an experienced Club member, who can answer her questions and can be approached out of the usual order. Some Club have a certain number of “godmothers” who look after the new members, others assign a suitable godmother to each new member.

This is what a godmother can do for the new Club member:

- Introduce her into the Club (especially to women of a similar age, profession or situation)
- Answer her questions about BPW, including local particulars
- Advise her in which ways she can actively contribute to the Club
- Ask for reasons, if the new member misses several meetings



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List of Club members

Larger Club in particular keep a **database of their members** or a **folder with profiles of their members**. Each new Club member can fill in a member's profile which is sent to all the other members (who have filled in a profile themselves when they joined the Club). The advantage is easy to see. You get a kind of „trade directory“ where you can find help or be found as an expert yourself. The more detailed your profile is, the better this is for you!

Some Club put his information on the „members only“ pages of their website. Other Club keep a simple folder: This is a **file that contains all member's profiles** and is regularly updated. Here, every Club member can look up the details of the other members.

Now is the time to ask your new Club member about her „special talents“! And encourage her to share them with you. Many women underestimate themselves and do not fill in their profiles because they are afraid that they have nothing to contribute („but I don't have any special talents“).

TIP:

Ask your new Club member what her **talents** are:

„Are you a good speaker? Or a good listener? Are you good with computers? Or are you juggling a career and a family? No matter what your talent is, you've got one. Please tell us about it.“



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**2. BPW lives!
- What we do and what we offer -**

The BPW-Club is alive and offers different occasions for everyone. Apart from the local, the national and the international programme there are various possibilities for specific networking in many Clubs. But above all we offer new chances and ideas for the individual professional and personal development.

2.1 BPW programme

Not only new members should be specifically informed about dates and events on the various BPW levels. This includes an exact explanation of the intentions of each meeting.

If a delegation of the Club has taken part in meetings and conventions, a report – perhaps even with photos – is an excellent way to inform the others about contents, results and contacts. Thus we can motivate other women to look further than their own Club.

- Club events and items on the agenda:
 - Regular Club meeting
 - Group of regulars, “jour-fixe”
 - Young BPW meeting
 - Excursions
 - Candlelight ceremony

TIP:
Please explain exactly what **candlelight ceremony** means.
And be lavish in your enthusiasm when talking about national and international conventions – make the others curious and inspire them!



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- National meetings and events:
 - General meetings, conventions
 - Meeting of task forces
 - Regional and national meetings (e.g “Three-Countries-Meeting” Germany – Switzerland – France, D-A-CH)
- International events and conventions
 - BPW International Congress
 - BPW Europe Congress
 - International Young BPW Meeting

2.2 Networking

Now we get to the central point of our Club, networking. Apart from **profiles of the members (see chapter 1.4)** which many Club put together there are two more ways to make the start in the network easier for the new members.

- Networking evenings: meetings without a set agenda, only for the purpose of networking, like for example cocktail parties, discussions or business card parties
- Possibility of professional presentaion
 - Distribution of business cards and company brochures during Club meetings
 - Information/report/presentation about one’s job



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2.3 External networking

Many BPW Clubs are in direct contact with commercial representatives, public institutions, other Club or gender equality representatives in their cities.

This networking is important. It makes BPW visible and shows publicly which subjects we are engaged in. And it enables us to stand up for certain matters with several partners on a larger scale.

In addition to that these networks and contacts make it possible to approach sponsors on certain occasions, to get to know interesting speakers, to get special conditions for Club members etc.

So it is worth asking new members especially if they are members of or have connections to other organisations. And to consider together if and how to make use of these connections.

However, the Club and especially the executive should be aware of which connections are wanted and which aims are to be achieved – there should be a strategy for it.



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**3. BPW plans and organises
- Hints and tips for organisation and strategy**

3.1 Motivation and participation

New members should be directly invited and encouraged to participate in various activities. Especially younger women are pleased to be integrated and to take over some tasks.

Therefore it is important to encourage the new members to take over **small tasks** (e.g. to establish a personal contact to a potential speaker; to deposit BPW brochures in frequently visited places or to provide their friends with brochures).

If you have found out during the admission interview or seen in the member's profile what your new member is good at and likes doing, you already have an idea which task to give her.

In practice these "small tasks" can be defined in the Club and written down on a list, for example. So each woman can choose a suitable task which corresponds to her interests, her time and her abilities.

An active Club-life is certainly better achieved by a larger number of women who take over small tasks than by large efforts of only a few people.



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Besides, women who are not very active at the moment are sometimes glad when they are **approached directly**. They do not put their hands up themselves because they do not think of it or because they are too shy and reserved. Or they are afraid that they cannot take on the tasks in their present situation. In this case it can be help to create **small and/or temporally limited tasks**.

Some Club use **competitions** to motivate their members, e.g.:

- Which woman was able to find the most new members for the Club?
- Which woman took part in all / the most Club events?
- Which woman submitted the most suggestions for improvement?

By the way, there is nothing to be said against joining forces with other Club in the area and organising a **regional or even national competition!**



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3.2 Praise and thanks

The more active the members, the more lively the Club, the more advantages for everyone. So you can say: **Activity has to be honoured.** These rewards can be promised to new members and rewards for very active new members can be created, should the occasion arise (e.g. “Most active newcomer of the year”). Make your Club members aware of their success. This will be an encouragement to everybody, the active members as well as the less active ones.

What is an appropriate expression of thanks for the commitment to the Club? Most important and most obvious: acknowledgement and appreciation.

It should be irrelevant how “big” the job was. **Everybody likes to be thanked.** Even more so, if this is done in an official ceremony. If “small” jobs are honoured, you will probably be able to motivate people for “big” tasks.

In addition to that Club can decide to grant **certain advantages or a bonus** to active members. Here are some ideas for an incentive and the appreciation of commitment:

- a document for long-term membership, successful recruitment of new members etc.
- financial contribution to the participation fees for national or international conventions
- small presents, personal gifts

TIP:

Everybody likes to be praised. **Support and promote the commitment of the Club members by appreciation and praise.**



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3.3 Information and communication

An important point for members to participate actively is communication and information. Each Club should make sure that **all members have access to important information**. It is only through open information and communication that a Club can remain active and develop freely.

Some Club regularly inform people about up-coming topics and events at their Club meetings – either by telling them directly or by printed brochures. Many Clubs pass on important information **by email** to all Club members. Other Club put together regular **newsletters** to inform their members about important topics and events.

Most Club regularly inform their members about the following topics:

- Current news of the executive
- Developments, projects and plans of the Club
- Status and results of local activities
- Results of local PR
- Development of local cooperations and connections
- National projects derived from the international motto

The members should also know where to find which information (online). Please find enclosed a form that shows how some Club present this information to their members. **[see attachment]**

TIP:

Please define exactly which information you want to pass on to your members by email. **Sort out unnecessary information carefully**, or you will achieve exactly the opposite! No woman likes a time-consuming flood of information.



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3.4 Branding

The term **corporate branding** describes the setting up and use of brands in order to create a distinctive image of enterprises and to contribute to the increase of the value of the enterprise. Corporate branding is meant to create a distinctive profile of an enterprise both internally and externally.

Branding is important for BPW as well. After all we want to be perceived and recognised as an integrated whole. That is why we use the same BPW logo internationally. Branding is also important internally because all members must know what BPW stands for.

Regular local Club meetings are by far not the only thing BPW does and what BPW stands for. BPW is an international politically active organisation that is active on behalf of equal opportunities of men and women in local, national and international committees. Newcomers must be provided with sufficient information about this and can be actively integrated in this process.

How can you make sure to get sufficient information? Some Club inform actively or passively (by hand-out) at Club meetings about:

- Transposition of the international BPW motto into single projects, e.g. lecture evenings or initiatives
- Projects and developments of national task forces
- Appeal: Which task force is looking for which support?
- Announcement of upcoming national and international events
- Reports about cooperations with commercial associations
- Results of projects and activities of the Council of Europe, EWL, activities at the UN



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How do you motivate people to participate? Some hints:

- Inform them about the international motto and BPW basic principles and show the resulting possibilities of participation
- Open list to sign up for a task force
- Regular passing on of reports of the task force leaders (a promise that should be made to new members and that should be demand of the task forces)
- Announcement of the list of participants in conventions for sharing cars or booking hotels together