

# FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS MAKING A CONNECTION

By Tanya Hammond



*Shelli Warren of Success Coach, SheConnex (photos courtesy of: JEMMAN Photography of Kemptville.)*

Shelli Warren of Brockville is the woman behind the successful SheConnex brand. Described by many as a born leader. At age 54, Shelli, a local Success Coach has made it her mission to assist other women in reaching their full potential. In doing so, she is changing the face of the stagnant networking scene and making meaningful connections along the way.

I decided I needed to find out what the buzz was about and meet this champion of women for myself. This past June, I participated in a Feminar hosted by Shelli, entitled "She's So Confident". The interactive workshop took place in The Brockville Convention Centre where Shelli started off the day by sharing her own story about how she decided to take the leap into entrepreneurship. Just over a year ago, Shelli left behind a safe and very lucrative, corporate job at Procter and Gamble to follow her dream. As a result, she has skillfully developed, not only a plan for her own success, but also a plan to help other women succeed as well.

With clients all over North America, Shelli provides individualized success coaching, custom group training, with on line tools, feminars (which are seminars with a feminine twist) and her popular SheConnex Success

Series. She shares monthly live interview sessions in Brockville, Kingston, Kemptville and Cornwall. There is no doubt that listening to Shelli speak is inspirational, however what I found to be even more impressive was her goal to empower other women and shine a light on them. Her passion for encouraging female entrepreneurs of all ages and stages of their life became evident as she showcased a select group of fellow business owners, giving them a chance to share their stories.

I loved the fact that when Shelli introduced women who had started another career in mid life, she called it an encore career. Certainly a more positive spin on something so often judged with scepticism and even criticism from others. Having changed careers late in life myself, I appreciated the refreshing reference made, as well as the chance to hear other women share their own stories of how or why their second careers evolved.

Mary Lynn Villeneuve from Athens was one of the featured speakers that day who sparked my interest. She discussed her transition from Transport Driver to Travel Agent. She had been driving transport across the country with her husband for years before she decided to stay home and

work behind a desk. Something for Mary Lynn though was missing and she realized it was the travel that she longed for. After some soul searching and research of course, Mary Lynn decided to purchase a TravelOnly franchise and is happy to report that she is embarking on her 12th year in business. She enjoys working closely with her clients and says, "the most fulfilling part of my business is the loyalty of my clients." I'm sure the perks of travelling to check out the destinations first hand don't hurt either. To contact Mary Lynn you can e-mail her at [mwilleneuve@travelonly.com](mailto:mwilleneuve@travelonly.com) or call 613-924-1404.

Not everyone who shared their story was someone who had transitioned to an encore career. For instance, Stephanie Forgues knew what she was meant to do right from the start. Stephanie is following her path and spreading positive vibes wherever she goes and like Shelli, she too provides consultations to help empower, encourage and guide women to be their best self. Stephanie has been operating New Leaf Wellness since



*Author/Model Judy Paul-Utman (photo courtesy of Isabelle Bouchard from Abelle Photographie)*



*Stephanie Forgues- New Leaf Wellness participating in the SheConnex series hosted by Shelli Warren*

2008 and offers Intuitive Reiki, reflexology and other wellness services to all ages in the Brockville and Ottawa area. Passionate about healthy eating as well, Stephanie radiates health and wellness. Her commitment to inspire others in the community to be well is evident as she proudly presents the 5th annual Celebrating Wellness event, taking place at the Brockville Country Club Saturday October 15th. Call Stephanie at 613-498-2952 or e-mail her at [Stephanie@newleafwellness.ca](mailto:Stephanie@newleafwellness.ca) for more information.

Thanks to Shelli, these women had an opportunity to provide those of us in the audience that day, with a glimpse into their businesses, and even better, a chance to get to know them on a more personal level. With ample time allotted for networking and even some confidence creating challenges posed by Shelli, we were able to make other connections throughout the day. I discovered those presenting that day were not the only ones with an inspiring story to share. Judy Paul-Utman was one such person I was fortunate to meet. She is the funky kind of 60 yr old that should be featured in commercials. Oh wait she is! That's right at 60 she auditioned for a modelling agency, Mode Elle, at the 1000 Islands Mall on a dare, so to speak. Quite to her surprise, she got selected and has been busy taking part in fashion shows and travelling to Toronto for commercial auditions ever since. Judy, a long time Brockville resident, tells me she has a commercial coming out, but is not at liberty to disclose for what company, because it hasn't aired yet. A self described jack of all trades, Judy was originally a physiotherapist, lactation consultant, business administrator with her husband for 31 yrs in their Employee Assistance Program firm and is



*SheConnex seminar with Mary Lynne Villeneuve ( left) and Shelli Warren( right- host of "She's so Confident" Feminar) photo by Carol Palko.*

even qualified as a scuba diver master. If that isn't enough, Judy has recently become an author and can be found promoting her book, *Voices in the Wilderness*. To contact Judy, to purchase a copy of her book, you can e-mail her at [perspect@ripnet.com](mailto:perspect@ripnet.com) or it is available through Amazon as well.

Obviously, confidence was a trait that all of these women shared. We, as participants were encouraged to break through our fears, follow our dreams and make a plan! What an uplifting way to spend a day with women in the community, all willing to connect and share their stories and encourage, rather than criticize, or even feel the need to compete. That's what building

a community is about, embracing those businesses around you and supporting the local economy by empowering others to succeed. Shelli Warren truly stands behind her motto, "when she wins I win", when referring to her clients. Shelli's commitment to invest and encourage women is clear, as she recently donated \$2000 to Girls Incorporated during her 1st year anniversary of her SheConnex Success Series. To learn more about the services Shelli offers, or to take part in her upcoming Feminar called *Successfully Stacking A Team* on October 22nd check [www.sheconnex.com](http://www.sheconnex.com) or call 613-246-3685. You can also reach Shelli by e-mail at [warrenshelli@gmail.com](mailto:warrenshelli@gmail.com). **LH**