

Online community for women at work

Sarah McDonald

The life of a professional woman is often lonely, according to two women who have set up a new website to address this problem.

The recently launched Professionelle aims to cater for women in corporate positions, providing them with a sense of community and a place to turn to for advice.

Founders Galia BarHava-Monteith and Sarah Wilshaw-Sparkes, who both come from a professional background, said that women were often outnumbered at corporate workplaces and didn't feel they could confide about their issues with other staff, for fear of looking weak.

They said that there were about 13,000 professional women in New Zealand that Professionelle would try to attract. It was not an anti-men site; it was just trying to address the fact that women in business tend to be more isolated than men, they said.



Galia BarHava-Monteith

Professionelle's bulletin board, which was added to the site in response to user feedback, was designed to provide a safe place for women to share problems and seek advice.

The site contains a mixture of articles and advice on topics such as pay equity, how to deal with a sexist boss, and juggling work commitments with raising children.



Sarah Wilshaw-Sparkes

Although in its early days, Professionelle is gaining a small following and aims to have 1000 registered users by the end of its first year.

As well as the website, Professionelle also provides consulting to businesses on how to attract and retain female employees.

ON THE WEB

■ www.professionelle.co.nz