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C-Suite the next step on ladies' career ladder

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From exclusion, to inclusion, to evolution, to revolution: I've seen the role of women in the real estate industry expand exponentially in the fewer than three decades I've been in the industry.

And it's continuing to grow in size and influence.

As late as the 1980s, women were nearly non-existent in the commercial real estate business. Projects were designed and built by men. Deals were done in restaurants and bars, on the golf course, and in private clubs that excluded women as members.

There were no organizations specifically for women in the industry to learn or build the relationships that are critical in this people-driven industry.

Slowly and surely, that began to change. We joined the industry, then joined organizations such as the Young Men's Real Estate Association in such numbers they formed a women's division. Pioneers such as Merle Ginsberg founded other organizations, such as the Association of Real Estate Women.

And we worked hard, twice or three times as hard to get the business done, whether we were brokers, lawyers, financial executives...The networks began to grow. I went from being the only woman in a room, to one of a few, then one of many.

We established even more organizations, watched them grow and used the relationships we'd build through them to improve our business.

We are now architects and developers, financial and environmental consultants, and yes, brokers. We have climbed the corporate ladder and are vice presidents, senior vice presidents and more. We are entrepreneurs.

Comparatively few of us are in corporate C-Suites. And that's the next goal. But what will it take for more women to shatter that strongest of glass ceilings? Quite simply, even more production.

We must work together, and with our male counterparts, to build smarter and better, make more money for our clients and investors, and make sure the industry knows about it.

We must promote ourselves so that board members will promote us to the top roles in our organizations. We're working on it.

Today's Women's Forum from Real Estate Weekly is just one example of women's growing influence in real estate.

Other events coming up includes a "Meet the Press" panel at the Winter session of the Academy for Continuing Education, founded by my colleague and dear friend, superstar broker and educator Esther Muller.

The session will be held Friday, February 27, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and feature insights from representatives of some of my favorite media outlets.

And the CREW Luncheon will be held at the International Council of Shopping Centers' RECon conference in Las Vegas in May.