

'The Network' - Cradle to Cradle Engagement Framework for Women in STEM

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Abstract : Female engineers and scientists face unique challenges in their careers that make the development of professional networks crucial, but also more difficult. Working to overcome these challenges, 'The Network' was established in 2013 at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Australia as an alumni chapter with the purpose of evoking continuous positive change for female participation and retention in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). 'The Network' adopts an innovative model for a Women in STEM alumni chapter which was inspired by the cradle to cradle approach to engagement, and the concept of growing and harvesting individual and collective social capital through a variety of initiatives. 'The Network' fosters an environment where the values exchanged in social and professional relationships can be capitalized for both current and future women in STEM. The model of 'The Network' acts as a simulation and opportunity for participants to further develop their leadership and other soft skills through learning, building and experimenting with 'The Network'.

Keywords : women in STEM, engagement, Cradle-to-Cradle, social capital

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