

## The Success Team Method – developed and applied cross border in the South Baltic project "Going Abroad"

(Föreningen Christina och en förening i Kronoberg från Sverige, två föreningar i Litauen och en i Tyskland)

*Many women do not talk much about what they can do and do not make themselves and their companies visible. Moreover many struggle alone and are forced to solve all the problems by themselves. Success Teams are a way of breaking this isolation, enabling people to both give and accept help from others.*

The idea of Success Teams originates from the USA, it's a method invented by Barbara Sher that Ulrike Bergman brought to Germany in the 1990s. Women Resource Centres (WRC) in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern have been working with Success Teams since 2000 and this has inspired WRCs in Sweden to start using the method.

A Success Team is a new approach in the pattern of contacts and networks. The idea is that business women from different branches meet regularly to motivate and support each other in the management and development of their own enterprises.

Once a Success Team has been recruited and formed, six to eight female entrepreneurs meet regularly in order to develop their businesses and to support each other. Each and every participant works towards their individual goals but gets help and support from the other team members. By giving themselves homework and setting achievable goals, the participants train to be successful business women.

Women in Success Teams achieve their aims faster and improve their self-discipline and management thanks to the regular meetings and the motivational impact of the group dynamics. Important factors include group pressure on members, the interactive structure of the teamwork and the development of common strategies applied to achieve aims.

This programme usually takes at least six months, depending on the composition of the group. Activities in a Success Team focus on improving the participants' abilities in starting up and/or managing a business and on motivating each other and sharing individual experiences.

The communicative interchange and social support from others and celebrating achievements together with likeminded people are other positive success factors.

The participants sign a contract with each other, committing to the work with the Success Team.

**The aims are in particular:**

To detect and formulate goals

To draw in external suggestions and impulses

To further develop the entrepreneurs and their businesses potential

**Requirements**

There are various requirements for running a Success Team, including readiness to participate in a team with people in a similar situation e.g. entrepreneurs.

Each member follows concrete aims and is supported in achieving them, whereas everyone can rely on assistance from the others. Specific collaboration guidelines ensure an efficient approach. The survival and success of the team is dependent on the commitment of the individual members.

**The members need:**

Time, energy, stamina

Trust in each other

A positive attitude

Discretion

Honesty in sharing experiences – related to problems and failures as well as successes

Appreciation of each other

Respectful communication

Constructive criticism

Workshops are organised with the purpose to provide the participants with new knowledge relevant for them and their company and to find suitable participants for the branch network. During the workshops the participants meet other entrepreneurs, exchange experiences, discover each other's potential and get ideas for the development of their businesses and for possible types of cooperation.

**Long lasting network**

Networking needs a lot of time and effort and should be seen as a long term strategy for the entrepreneurs and their businesses. On a project level, an important aim for the networking was for the participants to get to know each other and their businesses. Over time this will lead to benefits in terms of contacts, exchange of experiences and reference.

