

CEW Unveils Fight for Female Founders Initiative

The campaign aims to invigorate founders during the coronavirus pandemic. BY JAMES MANSO

COSMETIC EXECUTIVE Women, CEW, has a new program aimed specifically at helping brand founders navigate business during the coronavirus pandemic.

The group aims to bridge the gaps between founders and resources with its new #Fight4FemaleFounders initiative, which is geared toward supporting founders and small businesses with CEW's network and business know-how. The resources, which will live on [Fight4FemaleFounders.org](https://www.fight4femalefounders.org), include information on grant and loan applications, a mentorship platform connecting entrepreneurs with industry veterans, and weekly webinars, dubbed CEW Founder Fridays. Brand founders make up 15 percent of CEW membership, the organization said.

While CEW's in-person events have all been postponed, the group is seeking to make up for that networking with its mentorship platform. Brand founders can either be connected with business

advisers or via a directory of over 40 experts, ranging from authorities in the legal sphere, communications or supply chain. CEW has also decreased membership costs for the months April through December for those seeking out industry support, and lowered ticket prices for digital events.

However, according to Carlotta Jacobson, president of CEW, despite efforts to give back, the current climate does have some drawbacks for the organization. "Our events generally give us the revenue to operate, but we did have reserves and we decided we would open up the information we had that is just generally for members," said Jacobson. Jacobson also said they are orchestrating seven webinars per month, as opposed to the initially slated seven per year. "We increased what we were doing, and just made it free to the industry. Our newsletter is no longer behind a wall. Our database has now 25,000 people that are going through it. People need information."



Loli Beauty's Plum Elixir.

Beyond access to information and mentors, #Fight4FemaleFounders also puts the spotlight on the group that needs the assistance. "We have this social media campaign of women talking about what actually happened to them and their business during the virus, what their hopes are," Jacobson said. One of these includes Tina Hedges of Loli Beauty, whose story Jacobson found particularly resonant. Hedges, after years of building her business, was met with halted investor talks as the pandemic hit. Jacobson said stories like Hedges' are becoming more common. "A lot of them are also positioned in

brick-and-mortar, not all of them are direct-to-consumer, and those are all closed. They don't have the reserves to get through this. That's why we specifically went after with this group," she said.

Founders have been a recent focus for CEW, who also had their inaugural Female Founder Awards two years ago. As for how they are able to continue their ongoing efforts, Jacobson credits the network CEW is touting as its greatest asset. "We're very fortunate to be a part of a very generous industry," Jacobson said. "We couldn't do this without the beauty industry and the people in it."