

MEETING EVOLVING NEEDS

EMILY'S STORY: BLACK DRESS CIRCLE EVOLVE MEMBER



Emily Castle, Managing Principal at Castle Design, a prominent residential interior design firm serving clients nationwide, joined Black Dress Circle Evolve twice.

I first became a member in 2013 after I had recently purchased another interior design firm and I needed the advice and input from fellow business owners," she said. "After a year, I thought I had all of the information I needed."

Laughing, Emily notes that what she didn't realize was that as her firm grew, so, too, would her needs. "My business became more layered with more employees," she said. "I needed HR skills, I needed additional operations skills, and more." Emily rejoined in 2015.

In Search of...

"When I first started out, I was a member of a group of interior designers who had started their own businesses [not a Black Dress Circle]," remembers Emily. "I found value in that group... until my company doubled in size. At that point, I needed advice from other business owners running multi-million-dollar organizations so we could discuss the specific challenges that occur at that level."

In addition, Emily wanted to move away from an industry-specific advisory board and knew that the perspectives from women leading companies in a variety of industries would be beneficial.

Evolving Group, Evolving Perspectives, Evolving Companies

"This group has helped me navigate a merger and several difficult staff challenges," shares Emily. "It has grown along with me, and my business."

Emily notes that the group flourishes when new members join.

"As a group, we have a specific energy and dynamic," she said. "When new members come in, it adds new perspectives, new personalities, and new approaches to business challenges."

Plus, when new industries are represented, new challenges surface for exploration—and learning opportunities.

"This group is an invaluable resource," Emily says.

The Value

In addition to the monthly roundtable with members and 1:1 sessions with Erin, Founder & CEO of Black Dress Circle, Emily loves the fact that she has access to these women outside of the circle.

"We've all exchanged information and are there for each other," she says. "When I call Erin, she answers."

Emily credits Castle Design's sustained corporate culture (even through a merger) and employee incentive initiatives to Black Dress Circle Evolve.

"When you merge, it is difficult to organically translate your culture to the other employees," she said. "It is challenging to maintain a culture you've worked hard to build when you experience fast growth. This group helped me to navigate this successfully."

She believes the Group's success is founded in the quality of members, the expert facilitation, and the dedicated time block.

"It is the only structured, designated time to work ON your business, without getting distracted and succumbing to working IN the business," she said.

The Result

Under Emily's leadership, Castle Design's revenue has increased 240% in three years. Her own income has increased by 75%.

She says that Black Dress Circle Evolve has helped her maintain a solid strategic perspective, while experiencing this rapid growth.

"As a result of my involvement in this group, I am better equipped to handle a wide variety of issues with the business," she shared. "It has expanded my capabilities and my capacity...after all, more profits, more people, and more clients translate to the need for more support."



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