

## **Building on its initial success, ESSEC's female entrepreneurship program announces the Class of 2009**

*Cergy, 11th March 2009*

ESSEC's program "Entreprendre au féminin" welcomed its second annual intake of enterprising businesswomen following the graduation of the previous year's "Pioneers of 2008".

Women entrepreneurs in Europe still face significant barriers, claims a 2006 study carried out by Professor Viviane de Beaufort under the aegis of the Women's Forum.

Viviane de Beaufort, Professor of the Jean Monnet Chair for the European Commission, Co-Director of the European Center of Law and Economy (CEDE) at ESSEC and Director of Law track, highlights the need for **"an accompaniment and training designed to help women implement creative, ambitious projects."** The program was launched during a period of change during France with the aim to reawaken the desire for entrepreneurship.

The course covers the legal fundamentals, marketing, accounting and strategies for launching and funding projects. The course is taught on a part-time basis over approximately six months in order to enable students to pursue a professional activity at the same time. The participation of several professional women's networking groups brings real added-value to the course and provides students with practical support and networking opportunities.

Marie-Christine Oghly, President of the Association of Women CEOs and President of MEDEF for Ile de France, was present at the ceremony as the official patron of the Class of 2008. She reinforced the importance of female networks and her desire to continue bringing women together in an attempt to reverse the tendency towards male-dominated management. Today, only 27% of CEO's in France are women.

### **Coming out on top**

United by a desire to "work together, share, create networks and eliminate isolation", the Class of 2008 and 2009 have quite different profiles. The Class of 2008 consisted of women who were generally younger with entrepreneurial profiles. The second intake of the course is a slightly more mature group, often including women contemplating a career change, motivated by a common ambition to come out on top.

**These new "pioneers" have launched a group initiative: "TALONS HAUTS & Cie"** ("High Heels & Co"), a community website which aims to increase the visibility of the program and the individual projects in order to help them gain access to competitions (BCG, Awards de Cartier du WF), to facilitate communication between the participants and to promote the program's partnerships. The site should be up and running soon.

## Outline of Business Start-ups

### “IRRESISTIBLE”\* So French, So Chic, So Romantic!

IRRESISTIBLE is an entertaining live production about French culture, likened to a luxury ‘product’, such as a perfume, that is designed to be made accessible to all. Self-proclaimed as the cabaret of “tomorrow”, this playful and innovative, “French Cirque du Soleil” will make its debut in Paris, before hitting the rest of France and the international market.

The project’s goal is to produce an entertaining contemporary event that brings together well-known French designers who are involved in different types of disciplines. The result is a vibrant insight into French design, including theatre, gastronomy, plastic arts, and decorative arts to promote the French art of living, resulting in a visually and intellectually sensitive production about women.

#### Tentative Calendar:

- 2008 Finalize concept; Complete scope document; Identify partnerships  
Cursus ESSEC Entreprendre au féminin ; Tools ; Validation.
- 2009 Writing; Finalization of business plan (small, medium, large scenario); Approach investors; Create pilot committee.
- 2010 Realization and production of the event; Debut autumn.

(\*code name)

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Andrée Fraiderik-Vertino created Business Madame Medias in March 2008, based upon the concept of creating a career, life management magazine for women. It discusses commercial subjects with a feminine slant and includes features on the ‘art of living’. The website, [Businessmadame.com](http://Businessmadame.com) is currently being updated; however, a temporary blog has been put in place and provides up-to-date daily information.

**Highlights:** New executive appointments, the latest studies, an events calendar, and entrepreneur and/or director profiles. Partnerships with other websites and networking groups are in the negotiation process.

“Whilst studying marketing at ESSEC, I was able to take advantage of a new program, *Entreprendre au Féminin*” and share project ideas with other women. Even though I had already established a network of contacts, working alongside fellow entrepreneurs in an academic context and brainstorming on practical problems was a very valuable experience. I really benefitted from the support of ESSEC’s network to move forward with my own projects.”

Website in progress: [businessmadame.com](http://businessmadame.com) / Blog: [businessmadame.wordpress.com](http://businessmadame.wordpress.com)

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**HuitAvril**

Céline Aich, 34 years old and a graduate of *Métiers de la Communication*, joined the world of entrepreneurs in January 2009, accompanied by a team of image experts. She decided to enroll on the “Entreprendre au Féminin” program in order to pursue the realisation her own project. Céline launched « HuitAvril », an image and communication consultancy based in the heart of Madeline (Paris VIIIèmè), dedicated to corporate image optimization. The company targets organizations who aim to boost their performance and creates solutions which respond to the specific needs of each client. The recruitment of “visible minorities », inspired HuitAvril to launch a session focused on the integration of new employees into the business environment (including strategies on company know-how, corporate dress codes etc.). The company is currently filling a niche gap in the luxury market.

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### **About ESSEC**

Founded in 1907, ESSEC ranks amongst the top management schools in the world. Driven by a clear set of values (innovation, responsibility and humanism), the school fosters a tradition of academic excellence and cultivates a spirit of openness. Via a comprehensive range of programs, ESSEC’s mission is to produce responsibly-minded managers who are aware of the world around them. Comprising three campuses (in Cergy, Paris and Singapore) with a total of 3 700 students, 6 000 participants in executive education, and a network of 27 000 alumni across the world, ESSEC has a unique reservoir of talent to offer. For more information, visit: [www.essec.edu](http://www.essec.edu)

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