

Converting contacts into contracts



FLO members attending the workshop of Shital Kakkar Mehra, Corporate Etiquette Practitioner, International Protocol Consultant and Author.

Most businesses can survive the threats of competition, economic cycles, changes in technology and other factors, but the inability to network can devastate the business and tear apart its client base.

In the words of Peter Drucker "More business decisions occur over lunch and dinner than at any other time, yet no MBA courses are given on the subject". Turning contacts into contracts is what makes business happen. It is just one part of the overall marketing strategy for a business. Unfortunately, most businesses do not utilise their contacts fully.

Given this backdrop, FICCI Ladies Organisation organised an interactive session on 'Convert Contacts into Contracts' with Shital Kakkar Mehra, a renowned Corporate Etiquette Practitioner, International Protocol Consultant and Author.

The key takeaway from the session was the importance of using social media and exchange of business cards for networking, things to avoid talking about during networking and ways to follow-up once a business contact is established.

In her welcome address, Neeta

Boochra, President, FLO, said, "In this age of globalisation, ability to develop and use contacts has indeed become an art and an important skill. Relationships are the catalyst for success as people do business with those they like and trust."

Talking about the two key skills for successful business networking, Mehra said, "Networking is the combination of both communication and public speaking skills. These two skills are important to both your life and business" and added that "Unfortunately, Indian education system never focuses on the development of these skills and are completely ignored."

Speaking about why one should network, Mehra said, "It is one of the most effective ways of expanding your database of business contacts. With networking, possibilities are plenty."

Talking about how networking is perceived in India, she said, "In our culture, networking is like farming. It takes investment of your time and energy and years later, you get the return in form of an opportunity or business deal."

Mehra spoke about the importance of a business card,

how it plays an important role as the most economic form of an advertising tool. She also stressed on the need to have an updated LinkedIn profile as it acts like a permanently updated black book of information for the world.

The session provided a wonderful opportunity for the members to gain insights into Women and networking; Small talk - topics to talk about and topics to avoid; Barriers and roadblocks to networking; Body language and the importance of staying in touch and how to follow-up.

Archana Garodia Gupta, Senior Vice President, FLO, gave the vote of thanks. Sandhya Sethi, Governing Body Member, FLO, coordinated the programme. ■

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