

Here's an opportunity for business women



The Smart Market region is about to get smarter thanks to the 14th annual Business Women's Forum at the Farm Show Complex on Thursday. With 1,200 women from across the state expected, this is the single, largest one-day business women's professional development event in Pennsylvania.

Its core mission is to provide women a powerful cocktail of speakers, presentations, networking, business building and leadership skills all in one venue. It is a day of opportunity for women to begin to lead, influence and discover career opportunities on a new level. As the 2008 chair, I volunteered for this position because I am acutely aware of the advantage to our business community to grow and thrive through an event of this magnitude and caliber. I look for this type of forum every day in my own career.

Imagine, a full-day program that develops leaders, challenges career choices, shortens the business learning curve, provides networking at every professional level and increases the skills a woman brings to the workplace. Imagine, determining the pulse of the women's business community with over 1,200 attendees to talk to, listen to and learn from.

Not sure how to market to women? Ask them on Thursday. Not sure if they buy

ON THE WEB

For more information on the Business Women's Forum, visit www.businesswomensforum.com.

your products or services? Ask them on Thursday.

The BWF is not untypical of other regional programs that require modification and restructure to remain effective. In order to reinvent and redesign a program of this amplitude successfully, the key is to assemble an extremely talented, dedicated, forward thinking, and creative team. I have worked with national and international event organizers, and I am astounded by the caliber of talent and professionalism that makes up this volunteer steering committee.

They are not only vision driven; they are task driven. They can dream it; and they can do it. Comprised of all women, they measure success by results. With a take-no-prisoners approach to marketing, programs, sponsorships and logistics, these successful businesswomen take charge with humor and kindness — and deliver results!

As an employer of 90 people, I encourage my team to attend this forum. It is a day for them to refine their skill sets and relax; it is a day for them to network and appreciate our marketplace; it is a day for them to grow in their careers and laugh while they learn; it is a day for them to meet hundreds of new

associates and create new business bonds. Dollar for dollar, this is the best investment I can make for my company because they are indeed my most valuable assets.

My desire to continue learning and enhancing my own leadership skills never stops. It drives me to seek out the best and the brightest speakers to learn from.

We certainly achieved that this year by securing Courtney Lynch as our luncheon keynote speaker. Courtney is co-founder of Lead Star, a consulting company dedicated to the leadership development of women. She is also co-author of *Leading from the Front*, a book created from her service and experiences as a captain in the Marine Corps. Her message of "lead as you are" will captivate, inspire, and challenge every attendee.

FOR THOSE WOMEN — and men — who are interested in making connections that lead to success, that influence the way you grow your business, and that help you discover how to get ahead, we look forward to seeing you on Thursday. With 12 professional development sessions to choose from and more than 50 vendors, there is insight and opportunity for every attendee.

It's not only a good business investment, it may become your competitive advantage.

JENNIFER DELAYE is president and CEO of JDK Catering, Camp Hill.