BANYAN BALL RECAP

The Banyan Ball 2014 was a great success! The event was sold out and exceeded expected attendance with over 420 in attendance. We thank all our table sponsors, attendees, and all others who helped make it a great event. The evening started with a cocktail reception set to live music in the background and great networking. The main event was emceed by Stacie Schaible – Emmy nominated News Anchor- of WFLA Channel 8 in Tampa. The keynote speaker, Dr. Raj Ambay captured the audience with an inspiring talk detailing his life and service in the US ARMY. Dr. Ambay served in Afghanistan and Iraq and supported Special Forces, infantry soldiers and the counterintelligence community. His story backed by hundreds of images from the war zone provided a new perspective for the audience.

During the Banyan Ball, Indo-US presents the annual awards.

This year's award winners are:

1. **Businessman of the Year: Sanjay "Jay" Madhu**
2. **Businesswoman of the Year: Shephali Rele**
3. **Community Service Award: Dipa Shah**
4. **Young Businessperson of the Year: Gurus - Prem Thomas & Joe Choorapuzha**
5. **Founder's Award - posthumously – Namrata Amin**

We congratulate all the winners and invite all to submit your nominations for the next year.

Indo-US chamber will hold its Diwali Social on October 15th at the WXYZ lounge located inside the Aloft Hotel Tampa Downtown. This new waterfront hotel is located at 100 W Kennedy Blvd, Tampa, FL 33602. The event will begin at 6:30 pm. While it's not required, we encourage attendees to bring canned food items to be donated to Metropolitan Ministries. We will have a drop off box at the event. Indo-US Socials are great events to network with like-minded people in the area and expand your business and personal network. As always, no RSVP is required and this is a FREE event. We hope to see you there.

The event featured great entertainment including a fashion show featuring collections from Jasmine's Design, dances from Kismet Dance Company, Radhika Mehrotra, Music by DJ Phillip Blessen all set to a great ambiance by exquisite décor from Rtti Couture by Lakshmi Sastry.

The event ended with a great dance floor and a continued networking opportunity. For those of you missed the event, be sure to check out our website and facebook page for pictures. We look forward to seeing everyone at the next Banyan Ball.

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SHARING KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO BETTER DECISIONS

By Harvey Mackay

Do you have a tough decision to make? Or are you trying to build consensus among other employees? If so, you might want to follow the way bees make their decisions, because according to researchers, human beings can learn volumes from bees when it comes to making group decisions.

Cornell University biologist Thomas Seely, in a Cornell Chronicle Online story by Susan S. Lang, explains how bees build coalitions until a quorum develops. Seely says bees rely on disagreement and contest, whereas humans often rely on consensus and compromise.

Researchers know the bees make excellent decisions because they set up situations that offered choices to the bees, some superior for bees and others not so great. The bees almost always chose the superior sites.

A swarm of perhaps 10,000 honeybees decides where their next new home is going to be by sending out a few hundred scouts to look at real estate. If one finds a site it likes a lot, it begins dancing, which is the scout's way of advertising the site to other scouts. Then the scout will revisit the site frequently and dance all day.

Other scouts select other sites and advertise those to other uncommitted scouts as well. Bee scouts build up at the best sites quickly, because they grade the level of recruitment, which is directly linked to site quality. When 15 or more scouts have gathered around a particular site, the scouts then signal home to the others to get ready to fly to the new home.

So what should humans learn from the bee dance? For starters, that frank discussions and disagreements coupled with some friendly competition might just help human committees achieve a little collective intelligence and avoid collective folly, researchers say.

Information hoarding is counterproductive in any organization. Knowledge sharing is central to companies' success, and generally encouraged by management. But often, employees are reluctant to give up what may be their best bargaining chip – some particular piece of information or expertise – and thereby maintain job security.

Or perhaps there is an element of revenge or payback, trying to get even with the company or other employees that they feel may have wronged them.

In any event, the end result is lost productivity and mistrust. How do you know this is happening? Your colleagues refuse to help, blaming the boss for not wanting the information to come out. Or they ignore you completely. The situation becomes toxic when the organizational culture promotes secrecy.

Managers need to encourage knowledge sharing if they want their companies to be successful. They must promote positive relationships among employees, making sure employees understand the benefits to everyone in the organization. Fair and respectful treatment of all employees is critical, because employees sense when management plays favorites and suddenly the atmosphere goes from cooperation to competition.

In short, management should not underestimate the importance of giving employees a real sense of ownership in the organization.

To help feel actively committed to success, management strategy should be based on the acronym STALL:

- **S: Share information.** Financial information is crucial, of course. But operational information is just as vital. Employees should understand how one person's work affects others in the organization – the domino effect. Other information to share: strategies, successes (especially employee success stories), setbacks, and internal and external pressures.
- **T: Teach.** Employees may not be aware of everything they need to know about company operations. Explain what the numbers on the financial reports mean, and show how individual efforts affect budgets and revenues in different areas.
- **A: Ask.** Ask for the workforce's full participation. If trust is high between management and workers, the organization probably has high levels of participation already. If not, ask employees to offer suggestions on how to improve operations.
- **L: Listen.** To foster a sense of ownership, commit to being open to new ideas from unexpected sources. Reward employees for their ideas. And don't be surprised if their insights provide new perspectives that hadn't been considered.
- **L: Learn.** Talk to staff and learn who the most influential employees are, who the "squeaky wheels" are, and how to bring them on board.

Finally, don't stall on the decision making. It will only frustrate employees and engender mistrust. And then you're right back where you started.

Mackay's Moral: *Knowledge is not power until it is used.*

Started or starting a new Business?

If you have started a new business or planning to start one, chamber events are perfect places to share experiences and learn from others. Indo-US chamber events and the relationships built there provides access to entrepreneurs, seasoned and successful business people, and an open forum for you to discuss your ideas, expand on them and to collaborate. The events are free and so is the membership. We urge you to come out and be a part of it. Together, the future is ours.

INDO US Chamber of Commerce "Together, the future is ours."

Upcoming Indo-US Chamber Events:

Diwali Social

Date: Wednesday, October 15th, 2014
Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Location: WXYZ at Aloft Hotel Tampa Downtown W Kennedy Blvd, Tampa, FL 33602
This is a FREE event. No RSVP required.
We will collect non-perishable canned food for Metropolitan Ministries.

Business & Networking Event

Date: Wednesday, November 19th, 2014
Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Location: HCI Ballroom, 5300 W. Cypress St, Tampa FL 33607
Speaker: Hill Ward Henderson – Law Firm.
This is a FREE event. No RSVP required.

INDO-US CHAMBER MISSION

"To provide an active forum in which Asian American professionals and business owners, through an exchange of ideas, with a unified voice, can communicate, interact, and secure a position within the business industry and become a source of inspiration by promoting professionalism and excellence through education and community involvement."

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