RECAP: FEBRUARY MONTHLY BUSINESS & NETWORKING EVENT

Congress and the President took actions during the 11th hour to resolve the fiscal cliff, and since then, many questions have been raised as to what can be expected next? What does the deal mean for financial markets and where are the potential opportunities and pitfalls? Furthermore, what is the economic outlook for both the United States and the broader global economy? These very questions were the topic of discussion at last month's business and networking meeting held on February 20th at Homeowners Choice Insurance Corporate Ballroom and sponsored by BNY Mellon Wealth Management. The Chamber was honored to host Regional Director Ray Ifert, Senior Director R. Scott Givens, Senior Director Matthew R. Masem, Jr., and Senior Fiduciary Officer Susan Kubar.

BNY Mellon Wealth Management is not only a global leader, but is also the oldest private bank in U.S. history. With a background in wealth management, investment, banking, and estate planning strategies, each of the presenters has a wealth of experience and knowledge about the topic of discussion. Together, they were able to shed light on the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, and discussed the impact on all wage earners, high-income taxpayers, and taxable trusts. They further discussed the various provisions for individuals and businesses that have been extended through 2013 as a result of the Act. Their presentation also delved into the basic steps that can be taken with retirement plans; for instance, if you change jobs, you can consolidate workplace savings plans by rolling funds over from prior employer's plans by either adding to your new employer account, where permissible, or by adding to an existing IRA if the new plan rollover is not permissible.

With Ms. Kubar's extensive experience in estate planning strategies, she was able to educate our members about the basics of estate planning. According to Ms. Kubar, "estate planning" is simply a name for the process of getting your legal and financial affairs in order. While this used to mean dealing with the way your assets would pass at your death, it now includes dealing with issues that may come up while you are alive, such as mental or physical incapacity, terminal illness, tax planning through gifts to family members or charity, or determining a succession plan for the family business. Ms. Kubar also stated that a properly drafted estate plan achieves the following goals:

- Ensures that your wealth reaches your intended beneficiaries in the manner which you choose;
- Minimizes the impact of federal and state transfer taxes on your estate; and
- Allows you to choose the individuals and organizations that will administer your estate and manage you assets and personal affairs on your behalf.

The presentation concluded with a discussion of what to expect from the actions taken by Congress and the President, including a projection of a weaker real GDP growth in the first half of the year, but a growth above 3% in the second half of the year, with that rate sustained through 2014.

TOP 5 MAJOR THEMES IMPACTING ASSUMPTIONS FOR 2013

- Deleveraging the role and size of government
- Changing demographics and labor markets
- Energy supply and demand
- Emerging markets/Developed markets decoupling
- Excessive optimism on earnings

The Indo-US Chamber encourages all of our members to support the sponsors of February's monthly business networking meeting:

WESTSHORE LIQUORS
3658 S. Westshore Blvd.,
Tampa, FL 33629
(813) 374-0166

Mayuri Indian Restaurant
8447 North 56th Street,
Tampa, FL 33617
(813) 374-0386

RECAP: 4TH ANNUAL INDIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF TAMPA BAY

On February 15-17, the Indo-US Chamber of Commerce presented the 4th Annual India International Film Festival of Tampa Bay at the Muvico Theatres located in historic Centro Ybor, Tampa. The three day festival opened with a red carpet gala and the evening's feature presentation, Listen Amaya (starring Deepti Naval and Farooq Shaikh), garnered significant buzz and was subsequently screened on all three days. This was followed by a variety of feature films, short films, and documentaries from different genres across the Indian diaspora.

The event organizers would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers and the following title sponsors who helped to make this event a resounding success:

- Main Event Sponsor: Drs. Kiran and Pallavi Patel Foundation for Global Understanding and Freedom Health
- Opening Night Sponsor: Homeowners Choice Insurance
- Closing Night Sponsor: Dr. Rao Emandi, Cancer Care Centers of Florida

ON THE MOVE . . .

In 1978, young immigrant entrepreneur Ghanshyam Patel moved to Tampa to purchase the American Motel in South Tampa. Today, Inspire Hotels LLC, a Tampa-based hotel management, investment, and development company that operates several economy and mid-scale hotels in the Tampa and St. Petersburg market. Co-owners include Nilesh Patel, Jay Patel and Dave Patel. Inspire Hotels has announced the acquisition of the Wingate Inn in New Tampa by one of its affiliates, GSNP FLORIDA LLC. The 4 story, 85 room limited-service hotel has been converted to a La Quinta Inn & Suites, and will be managed directly under contract by Inspire Hotels. The company plans an extensive interior and exterior renovation of the property to convert the hotel into La Quinta's "Living Modern" prototype. The hotel will remain open for business during renovations. Dave Patel, managing partner of Inspire Hotels, remarked, "We are very excited to be in the New Tampa market. La Quinta is one of the fastest growing brands in the industry, and offers an excellent product. We look forward to making a great property even better with the conversion and renovations, and adding it to our growing portfolio."

If you know of a new business, professional recognition, new hire or promotion that would be of interest to the Chamber's members, then please reach out and email info@indo-us.org.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS NETWORKING ETIQUETTE

You're standing in the middle of a crowded room trying really hard to escape the feeling of insignificance that has started to permeate your entire being. Your throat is dry, your palms are sweating, and you're starting to wonder whether you should have worn that other shirt, or more appropriate heels. You're listening to the conversation next to you, wondering how these two strangers are able to talk to one another with complete ease. You start to feel as though you are the only person in the room who doesn't quite fit in.

That is the experience many people have when they first attend a networking event. The purpose of networking is to build enduring relationships that are mutually beneficial, and one of the Chamber's objectives is to educate and create opportunities for our members by forging business relationships that are built to last. Small talk and "working a room" at a networking event can be a great way to start building relationships, however, it can also be an awkward experience for some. Often times individuals are at a loss as to what to say, or which jokes are appropriate to make. Even on a more basic level, some people can feel self-conscious about how much eye contact they should make at these events, or even how close they should lean in to talk to the other person.

According to Aviva Shiff, a certified expert in North American Business Etiquette, it is difficult to stand out from a networking crowd as a polished, professional, and endearing individual. However, if you can accomplish this, then it "gives you an edge to make an outstanding impression and outclass your competition." Ms. Shiff provides the following tips to enhance the understanding of business networking etiquette and to help others realize that there is no need to be intimidated by networking events.

Jump on the "Brand Wagon"
It is important to really think about what personal branding message you want to send and how you want to be perceived by your audience. Do you want to be known as a problem solver? Creative? Aggressive? Dynamic or Disciplined? The most important thing to remember is that in order for your audience to receive your intended message, it must be genuine.

Ms. Shiff states that it is important to "[t]ake your true skills and strengths, combine them with your passions and identify your unique promise of value to your clients, your employer, colleagues and other contacts. This message becomes your personal branding statement." For instance, when you are networking, one of the first questions asked is what you do. This is an opportunity to communicate your personal branding statement. Rather than simply stating your job title, focus on the value you bring to your client. It will leave a much more memorable impression.

6 BUSINESS ETIQUETTE TIPS THAT WILL HELP YOU STAY ON TOP IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

1. Be on Time
2. Remember Names
3. No Technology
4. Be Prepared
5. Business Cards!
6. Look the Part

Why does appearance matter?

First impressions are the most lasting. As human beings are very visual, more than half the impression you make is based on what people see. In order to make a more positive visual impression, you have to ensure that you are well groomed and that you feel good about what you are wearing. More importantly however, if you feel that you are appropriately dressed for an occasion, it inspires confidence and enables you to hand whatever comes your way. If you do not feel good about your appearance, then it can inhibit not only your confidence, but the way you come across to others.

Small Talk– the rule of thumb for eye contact and personal space

According to Ms. Shiff, "the purpose of small talk is to break the ice and build rapport. Without rapport, there is no foundation to develop a relationship." Begin with an introduction and handshake, and then follow up with "positive observations and questions about your immediate surroundings. Keep your body language relaxed and confident, and lean in to show interest, but respect individual personal space."

The rule of thumb for maintaining eye contact is 60%. This means that you should look the other person in the eye 60% of the time. When you are not looking directly into the eyes, you can rest your gaze on the eyebrows or mouth, but don't let your eyes stray too far from the face because it can imply that you are disinterested in the conversation. Encourage the other person to talk about themselves and spend 80% of your time listening and 20% talking. It is much easier to build a rapport with someone if you remind them of themselves, so try to match the pace and volume of speech, as well as the other person's body language.

"Work" the event
The purpose of networking is to meet a number of people, so it is important not to monopolize any one person's time. Rather, "aim to spend a maximum of 10 minutes with each person." A gracious way to end a conversation is simply, "It was a pleasure meeting you, perhaps we could have a coffee in the near future." Remember to keep your hands free so that you can shake hands and gesture. Also, carry your drink in your left hand, so that your right hand does not become wet and clammy from the glass.

Places, please!
Despite the fact that people often congregate by the bar, it is not a good place to engage others in conversation. If you stand near a food or dessert table, you will find that people are more open to talking because people like to chat during meals.

Keep in touch
While your connection may begin at a networking event, the relationship itself is built over time. It is important to follow up the first meeting in an appropriate fashion to keep the momentum, and this can be achieved through email or a personal note.

Take it to the next level
Lastly, "the most important business relationships are often created and maintained outside the traditional work environment." According to Ms. Shiff, 'understanding and applying networking etiquette will empower you to build and nurture your own network. These lasting, mutually beneficial business relationships begin with projecting an outstanding impression, but are sustained through trust and the investment of time and effort to help others."

(Article citation: Shiff, Aviva. "Networking Etiquette." The Sideroad. http://www.sideroad.com/Business_Etiquette/networking-etiquette.html).

MARCH SOCIAL EVENT: PRACTICE YOUR NETWORKING ETIQUETTE SKILLS!

On Wednesday March 20th, the Indo-US Chamber of Commerce will host its first social event of the year, in lieu of the traditional monthly business meeting. The event will be held at the Oxford Exchange in Tampa, which is home to a book store, a restaurant, Buddy Brew Coffee, TeBella Tea Company, home décor shop, and private office suites. Located across from the University of Tampa, the Oxford Exchange has been described by Tampa Bay Times food critic, Laura Reiley, as "reminiscent of some of London's poshest cafes."

The purpose of the Chamber's social events is two-fold. The primary purpose of such mixers is to connect members of the Chamber with the mainstream Tampa Bay business community and allow members to get to know one another in a more informal environment. The secondary purpose of such events is to expose the Chamber's members to different parts of the Tampa Bay area that they may not otherwise encounter.

The Chamber has provided a platform to forge (and more importantly maintain) such relationships for over a decade, and we continually strive to create an inclusive atmosphere for students, business owners, professionals, and entrepreneurs alike. We invite you to join us at our March social mixer to meet and build relationships with some of the emerging minds that are helping to shape our local economy. Come and meet potential referral sources for your business or to identify your area of expertise to our broad member base. Moreover, come and practice your networking etiquette skills! The Chamber encourages you to reach out to one of our Executive Committee members if you have any questions about the format of our meetings or to simply offer feedback on how we can make the experience more meaningful to you. As is customary with all our monthly business networking events, there is no cost to attend.

(Article citation: Reiley, Laura. "Oxford Exchange Offers Slice of Sophistication." Tampa Bay Times. 30 October, 2012. http://www.tampabay.com/features/food/restaurants/oxford-exchange-offers-slice-of-sophistication-in-downtown-tampa/1258719).

Upcoming Indo-US Chamber Event:

Quarterly Mixer and Networking Event

Date: Wednesday March 20, 2013

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Location: The Oxford Exchange (420 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606)

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."

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