



CoreNet Global's Women's Conference Breaks Record

By Chelsie Butler

Last week's **Women of CoreNet Global Conference** – Sept. 25-26 – had the highest attendance of its three conferences to date with 112 registrants from all over the country.

The attendees at the members-only program titled **"Breaking the Code: Translating the Written and Unwritten Rules to Success,"** were entertained and enlightened through dynamic presentations from industry experts, and according to **CoreNet Global CEO Angela Cain**, "The conference marks a strong start to a larger women's leadership initiative by the organization."

The all-day event on the 26th took place at **Hewlett-Packard's** Plano, Texas, location and included five sessions, a tour of the campus at the end of the day and a dinner that evening. The program also included optional daytime activities, a cocktail hour and a dinner on the 25th.

"I thought the CoreNet Global Women's Conference was very beneficial and well done," said **Jill Arias**, Senior VP for **UGL Services – Equis Operations**. "The panel discussions were informative, and the speakers were excellent. The networking opportunities were particularly appreciated."

Starting Monday morning off was **"Mentoring: Necessary, but Insufficient for Advancement. (Why Men still Get More Promotions than Women)"** by **Dr. Nancy Carter**, Senior VP of Research for **Catalyst**. She talked about how women can work together to make advances in the pipeline and said that women do benefit from having a mentor, but not to the same degree as men do. She discussed sponsorship as an alternative, saying that a mentor will listen to you and speak to you, but a sponsor will talk *about* you so that you become a known entity, and they, in turn, gain information and insight that lead to their growth, as well as personal and professional growth that can lead to advancements in their career.

"It's not about compatibility and chemistry in the relationship, it's about the results," Carter said. "Mentoring is nice to do, but there is no accountability."

“Women Who Make it to the Top: Secrets to Breaking the Code,” the second session, was moderated by **Ellen Albert**, Executive VP Core Services for **Viacom/MTV Networks**, and the panelists included **Vickie Berry**, AIA, SLCR, AVP Corporate Real Estate - Retail Operations for **AT&T Services**; **Lucy Billingsley**, Partner with **Billingsley Co.**; **Susan Chapman**, Senior VP, Global Head Real Estate and Workplace Enablement for **American Express**; **Mary Manning**, former General Manager Global Real Estate & Facilities Services with **Conoco Phillips**; and **Louise Matthews**, VP and Global Head of Real Estate for **Avon Products**.

Each woman shared with the audience how they got to where they are today and offered some advice on such things as navigating how a company works and makes decisions, taking risks and making things happen, convincing your client you can enable them to do the business they are meant to do and negotiating next moves.

According to Chapman, it is important never to underestimate the power of a personal relationship, and to get what you need, you need to line up your support before you ask for it.

Berry said one way she came out ahead was that she was willing to do something she had never done before, and Matthews believes you can stay at the top as long as you continue to take on new challenges.

According to Manning, it not just about your number of years of experience, it’s about also about the experiences you have had, and Billingsley said if you want to know the answer before you ask, tell them the answer you want to hear through well-thought-out candor.

Undeniably, the liveliest session was national keynote speaker **Cy Wakeman’s “Reality-based Leadership: Recreate Your Mindset to Achieve Results beyond Your Wildest Dreams.”** Her message of “ditch the drama, and turn excuses into results” delivered what she calls golden competencies that guarantee success, including managing energy in the organization, ensuring the resources you use are done so efficiently, working with employees and giving them more resources to make them more capable and leading first and managing second.

“She is smart, she is direct, she is relevant, and you will want to invite her on your girls’ beach weekend before she leaves,” said conference attendee **Tracy Barnett**, Program Director for **BRG**.

According to Wakeman, engagement without accountability is chaos, and good leaders need to include everyone at all levels of accountability. A good leader helps people change their mindsets so they can impact their own realities.

She has discovered this helpful formula: **Employee value = current performance + future potential – emotional expense** and says the criteria that make an employee emotionally inexpensive are personal accountability, reality-based leadership, organizational alignment, drive for results and change optimization.

“We need people to anticipate change – they should be eating change for lunch,” Wakeman said.

Session four, “**Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know,**” was moderated by **Peter Miscovich**, Managing Director, Corporate Solutions for **Jones Lang LaSalle**, and the panelists included **Dr. Nancy Carter**, SVP of Research for **Catalyst**; **Gayle Fitzpatrick**, Group Vice President of Architecture Services for **Oracle**; **Mark Gorman**, VP, Global Real Estate & Facilities for **Ciena Corporation**; and **Mark Schleyer**, Senior VP, Corporate Real Estate for **AT&T**.

Each panelist shared a few things about their own personal journeys dealing with or without gender bias.

According to Fitzpatrick, diversity helps you be better because you challenge each other, and Carter says when people develop a sense of fair play in the community, they can change gender roles.

The discussion then turned to a competitive advantage around diversity, and how do we motivate managers to engage in fair play?

“AT&T sees diversity as a competitive advantage,” Scheleyer said. “Relocation can be an issue for women trying to balance lives and careers, so we actively push succession planning.

According to Gorman, winning and being successful happens for companies that believe in intense internal collaboration, and Fitzpatrick says it doesn’t matter whether you are male or female, it’s about putting the right people in the right opportunities.

The final session at the packed conference was “**Bringing it all Together: Creating an Integrated Woman’s Leadership Strategy**” by **Jeffrey Tobias Halter**, President of **YWoman.biz** and recent Director of Diversity for the **Coca-Cola Company**. YWomen is focused on helping men (Y chromosomes) and women understand and leash the power of women in organizations.

The discussion centered on the development of a comprehensive plan to win with women – in the marketplace and the workplace. Crucial parts to this plan include operating effectiveness, networking, problem solving, influencing upward, developing marketing plans for women, capturing women as customers and business owners, building sales force readiness, engaging male leaders at all levels and driving a highly engaged work force.

“I hope we can make this an annual gathering and increase our attendance numbers,” said UGL’s Arias. “Whenever you can get more than 100 extremely bright and successful women together to share their stories and empathize with one another it’s a rewarding experience and much needed. I look forward to next year’s conference.”

For more information on this and upcoming conferences, please visit <http://women.corenetglobal.org> or contact Kathy Godwin at kgodwin@corenetglobal.org