



# WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Central Alabama Women's Business Center

**The Newsletter for Women Entrepreneurs in Alabama**

**January/February 2006 Edition**

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CAWBC's annual Women in Business Conference "Making Connections that Work" is quickly approaching! The conference will be held March 6 and 7, 2006 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Hilton Birmingham Perimeter Park Hotel.

On March 6, an all-day Business-to-Business Matchmaking Event will match small business owners to buyers from large corporations and government agencies. If you are a small business owner looking to sell your products or services, CAWBC's Business-to-Business Matchmaking Event will allow you to network with a variety of purchasing agents.

March 7 will kick-off with CAWBC's popular "Breakfast with Success," followed by a number of workshops on topics relevant to business success. Kennette Reed of California-based Kennette Reed and Associates will serve as the keynote luncheon speaker, and will speak on the topic, "Discovering Your Passion: The Thing that Makes Your Heart Sing." Reed will also be presenting an afternoon workshop.

Register for the Women in Business Conference by March 1 to receive a discounted price. For more information, call the Center at (205) 453-0249.

*Do you have questions, comments or story ideas for your newsletter? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact CAWBC newsletter editor Julie Moore at (205) 453-0249.*

## CAWBC Welcomes New Executive Director



**Judy Moriarty Lewis**

After six years of serving as CAWBC's Executive Director, Founder Trudy Phillips is announcing her retirement. She has vastly contributed to the success of the Center's clients, providing counseling services and valuable advice and direction to entrepreneurs and business owners.

In her place, the Center welcomes new Executive Director Judy Moriarty Lewis. Ms. Lewis began *(Continued on back page)*



## Business Resolutions

Written by: Edith Ingram

### 1. Focus on customer retention

As we all know, it costs more to find new customers than it does to maintain them. If you haven't done so already, begin to collect your customers' information and input it into a database. Simple computer solutions include Excel or Outlook. You may also consider more specialized software such as ACT.

### 2. Expand your business network

Join organizations such as chambers or associations. These are ways to develop prospects, referrals or business relationships that can open a number of doors for your business.

### 3. Take control of your bookkeeping and records

If you don't know how much money you're spending, where it's going or how much is coming in, it's time to gain control. The same can be said for those who use a shoebox, or not much better, a file-the-receipt system. You don't need to become a CPA *(Continued on back page)*



## You Go Girl!

Featuring: **Terri Sullivan, owner of Sullivan Communications, Inc.**

*Sullivan Communications has been in business for 12 years and provides wireless solutions to business and government entities. Product offerings include Motorola Two Way Radios, Sprint/Nextel phones and data cards, GPS Vehicle Tracking Systems and Wireless Broadband (transmit voice, data, and video via unlicensed spectrum). Sullivan Communications also offers consulting services, system design and maintenance and repair on wireless systems.*

**Q: What do you enjoy the most about being a woman business owner?**

**A:** I enjoy having the freedom to meet customers' needs with wireless solutions tailored specifically for them. As the business owner, I can be flexible and make decisions promptly without having to submit special requests through layers of management.

**Q: What key words of encouragement can you pass along to entrepreneurs in regards to obtaining contracts from government agencies and corporations?**

**A:** Perseverance will pay off.

**Q: What obstacles have you encountered in tackling this type of market (i.e. government agencies and large corporations)?**

**A:** It is difficult to get a face to face meeting with a decision maker. Most meetings are with information gatherers who relay the message to their manager. Success is much greater when the sales presentation is made directly to the decision makers.

**Q: How was participating in the September 2005 CAWBC Business-to-Business Matchmaking Event beneficial to your company, and did you receive a contract from participating?**

**A:** We were able to get face to face with large corporations and government entities. So far, one of our contacts has resulted in a contract.

*New Executive Director, continued*

her career as an economist for Southern Company. She was recognized as a leader in her field, lecturing to industry groups and publishing articles in national trade magazines. She also served as the first woman president and board chairman for the company's National Management Association chapter.

In 1991, Ms. Lewis ventured out as an entrepreneur and started a computer consulting company. Since that time, she has formed a real estate LLC, and most recently, has been owner and president of Lineage Group Inc., which manufactures and wholesales a product to gift and bookstores.

Along with her experiences as a business professional and entrepreneur, Ms. Lewis has been a volunteer to many nonprofit organizations. She participated as a Big Sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for 10 years and served as an officer and board member. Other volunteer positions include: Junior Achievement volunteer, a United Way Loaned Executive and a Visiting Allocation Team member, a member of the Women's Exchange Advisory Board and a McWane Center Paleontology Lab volunteer.

*Business Resolutions, continued*

or fire your bookkeeper; it's just good to know what's going on in your business financially.

**4. Fail-safe your business**

From basic tasks as backing up your computer to periodically analyzing your insurance policy, it's good to develop a plan and put it into action. Consider backing up your files, protecting confidential hard copy items, changing legal structure, developing an employee handbook, enhancing your insurance policies and more.

**5. Develop standard operating procedures**

If you've been in business at least one year, it's time to develop some standard operating procedures. As things progress and become more complex, always add and update what you have. You will be the wiser for it and your employees will have more focus.

**6. Coordinate your marketing materials**

Consistency is key! Make sure your business cards, letter head, brochures and even your web site look consistent. To do this, consider such issues as font type and size, logos and tag lines, as well as colors. Also, determine if the message in your brochure is consistent with your web site and other media materials.

**7. Update your web site**

Freshen up the look of your web site and update any dated information. Also, make sure your web address has not expired.

**8. Start a tax and cost savings plan**

Talk with your accountant and determine ways to save on taxes as well as eliminate and save on everyday business expenses.

**9. Increase sales**

Don't go for broke, just realize that slow and steady usually wins the race. Look at last year's sales and consider strategies that will help boost them between three and five percent. Consider strategies such as: add more customers, cross-sell your present customers, increase prices, lower costs or all of the above.

**10. Enhance your business knowledge**

Keep up with the happenings in your own industry; gather new business ideas or even become certified. Attend conferences, seminars and trade shows. Talk to experts or business advisors to stay current and knowledgeable.

**11. Finish that business plan**

Updating or completing your business plan will help keep you on track and goal-oriented.

**12. Make time for you**

Self explanatory!

**Edith Ingram is the business coach for CAWBC. She provides one-on-one business counseling for existing and start-up entrepreneurs. To schedule your appointment, please call the Center at (205) 453-0249.**



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