



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer Small Business Forum Highlights Role of Social Media in Marketing Small Businesses

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Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) and the Women's Enterprise Development Center (WEDC) hosted a successful Small Business & Economic Development Forum on Tuesday, October 23rd at the White Plains Public Library. This was the Senator's 21st small business conference, which has been co-sponsored for a number of years by WEDC with the generous support of Capital One Bank.

A capacity crowd filled the library auditorium to hear keynote speaker, Kris Ruby, President and Founder of Ruby Media Group, a premiere full service Public Relations and Social Media agency, discuss the state of social media and small business in today's digital age. In a talk punctuated by sound, practical advice, Ms. Ruby encouraged small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to incorporate social media into their overall marketing and communications strategies. As a first step, small business owners should identify their objectives in using social media, whether it be to increase sales, improve customer service, increase traffic on the company's website, public relations or search engine optimization.

Businesses should devote approximately six hours per week on social media, advised Ruby, but the rewards of that investment could be significant. Social media sites are two times more likely to generate leads than traditional marketing, and women between the ages of 33-55 – a prime demographic for many businesses – is the fastest growing population on Facebook.

Ms. Ruby's informative presentation focused on ways that a small business can generate fun and engaging content, encouraging followers to interact with the company on its social media sites. Social media content differs from traditional marketing in that not every post is promotional. Ideally, said Ruby, only one in ten messages should directly promote the company's products or services. Anything more could be a turnoff to potential consumers.

"Social Media should be an integral part of your Public Relations campaign – it goes hand in hand. In 2013, the question will no longer be – Should I be on social media? Rather, the focus will be on 'What is my social media strategy for the upcoming year?'" said Ruby Media Founder Kris Ruby.

"To say that the Internet and social media have revolutionized the way we do business would be a gross understatement," observed Senator Oppenheimer. "Thank goodness we have experts like Kris Ruby who can help small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs navigate today's rapidly changing marketplace."

"We thank Kris Ruby for providing us with an informative and interesting presentation on effective uses of social media to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses, said Anne Janiak, Executive Director of the Women's Enterprise Development Center.

As this is final small business forum for the retiring Senator Oppenheimer, WEDC presented the Senator with a Certificate of Appreciation in "recognition of her many years of dedicated public service and her ongoing commitment to promote small businesses and economic development opportunities in the community." Senator Oppenheimer, in turn, thanked WEDC for helping to empower "thousands of women in our area to realize their dreams of owning their own businesses."