



Women's Luncheon

On Friday September 18, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Austin, more than 90 people joined the City of Austin Small Business Development Program (SBDP) for the 6th annual Women's Luncheon Celebrating Women's Entrepreneurial Spirit. This year marked a change of venue for this event, but once again, the luncheon was a smashing success.

SBDP hosts the Women's Luncheon annually to recognize that the struggles facing female entrepreneurs are different from those of male business owners. This year marks the second consecutive sellout for this event.

The 2009 luncheon was moderated by Lolis Garcia-Baab, a business and community leader in Austin, satellite radio personality, and co-founder of the Girls Now! Conference. The 2 panelists were Sharon Mays of Baby Greens and Sharon Schweitzer of the Protocol & Etiquette Academy. In response to Lolis' thoughtful prompts, Sharon "Salads" and

Sharon "Manners" provided their personal histories and tales of entrepreneurial evolution. The panelists shared their moments of epiphany and advice for other female entrepreneurs. The audience posed questions to the panel about the timeline from start-up stage to exhalation, and methods of employee empowerment.

Sharon "Manners" cited one of her biggest "Lessons Learned" as being to stay engaged and excited when facing challenges. Pat yourself on the back; work out, take care of yourself first, before you try to take care of others or of your business. Sharon "Salads" learned, by doing, that you should always tell everyone you know about your venture. "You never know where help or your next referral will come from."

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Martinez and Council Members Laura Morrison, Sheryl Cole, and Randi Shade all attended the luncheon. Council Member Shade reminded the attendees that the Austin City

Council has decided that small business is important in our community and has made a conscious investment in that choice by having SBDP in place to offer services without charging fees to the public. Mayor Pro Tem Martinez thanked SBDP for another great event. And Council Member Cole provided an anecdote about how she considered no longer having to wash and re-use foil or freezer bags as a personal milestone in her small business success timeline.

Overall, the 2009 Women's Luncheon was an extraordinarily successful event for SBDP. The food and setting were sublime. The camaraderie and networking combined beautifully with the panelists' insights.

For information about this or other SBDP events, please call 974-7800 or visit us online at www.austinsmallbiz.org.