

'No limits' for women in management

By DAVID J. GLENN

Lee Miller was "too stupid" to know the right way to go about getting a book published.

So of course, his book was published.

Actually, Miller is hardly stupid. He's a graduate of Harvard Law School, and is the managing director of the Advanced Human Resources Group, a career consulting company.

He and Andrea Eisenberg, a managing principal of Right Managing Consultants, were the featured guests earlier this month at the season-kickoff dinner of Stamford-based Women in Management (WIM).

Some 50 women who had reached higher corporate rungs, who were running their own businesses, or were "in-transition" victims of corporate layoffs, dined on chicken and fish at the Stamford Yacht Club and had the chance to pick the brains of Miller and Eisenberg.

Miller began his address by describing how he had the idea for a career-management book, but he didn't want to spend months writing something he didn't know would be published. So he outlined a table of contents, wrote an introductory chapter, and brought it to a publisher.

The publisher gave him the go-ahead to write it — and an advance. Miller discovered only later that except for very well-established writers or celebrities, it was unheard of to walk into a publisher and get an advance on a yet-to-be-written book. "I was too stupid to know the right way to get a book published," he told the corporate women. "I didn't know there were limits."

That was the point, he said. "There really are no limits if you don't believe there are limits."

Falling in love

Miller challenged another aspect of the conventional wisdom of career-chasing. "There's a common misconception that in a sagging economy, companies don't have to pay as much to get the talent they need." there may be more people out there looking for jobs, he said, but matching the position with the candidate is still difficult, and companies still have to be ready to pay for what they want.

This is why, Miller said, that people seeking an executive position should not talk about compensation at the outset, but first get the company to "fall in love with you."

“What does a car salesman want you to do before anything else?” Miller asked.
 “Take a test drive. He’s hoping that you’ll fall in love with the car, and be willing to pay even more than you planned, just to get it.”

It’s the same with career negotiation, Miller said. The time to bring up compensation is when the company has narrowed you down to its best candidate, and would be ready to pay even a little more than budgeted to get you on board.

“Be prepared, be confident, and be willing to walk away,” Miller said.

Be clear

Eisenberg had some advice for the women at the dinner who were in business for themselves — about half the attendees. “Distinguishing yourself is the key,” she said. Entrepreneurs should be able to convince prospective clients why they should patronize them instead of their competition. “Be very clear why you’re in your own business. Be sure you love the business,” she said.

Eisenberg is a managing principal with Right Management Consultants with responsibility for the New York region, including offices in Manhattan and Melville, N.Y. She provides coaching and consulting services to corporate clients, including offering career-transition services for employees affected by downsizing, acquisition or merger.

She also has extensive experience advising employers on the effective use of executive coaching, career decision processes, performance management systems — including “360-degree feedback” and change-management programs for leaders, managers and individuals.

Before joining Right in 1993, Eisenberg spent more than 13 years in marketing and sales with Matthew Bender & Co., a Times Mirror subsidiary.

Negotiating seminar

Miller, managing director of the Advanced Human Resources Group and co-author of “A Woman’s Guide To Successful Negotiating,” specializes in helping individuals and companies get what they want by advising them on negotiating and by providing executive coaching, human resources consulting and training, using his “Convince, Collaborate and Create” Negotiation Plus program.

He has also developed a negotiating seminar based on research from “A Woman’s Guide To Successful Negotiating.” These programs teach participants how to sell more, negotiate better prices, close the deal, ensure repeat business, work more effectively with co-workers, recruit and retain the best employees and manage employees to get the most from them.

Women in Management is a business association for women business owners and corporate executives in Fairfield and Westchester counties. The not-for-profit organization welcomes women from diverse industries and businesses of all sizes who want to network, gain professional development, and give back to others through community service.

For more information on WIM contact Karen Orphanos at 662-0263 or women.in.management@snet.net, or visit the Web site at www.wimweb.org.

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