

Ongoing Webcast series on growth brings invaluable information to the office



Women entrepreneurs benefit from IBM and Catwalk Consulting partnership



Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Develop a cost-effective, accessible, growth-focused program to bring an internationally known expert to busy entrepreneurs across the country

■ **The Solution**

A series of Webcasts featuring topics on growth—and supported by Catwalkconference.com powered by IBM Lotus® Instant Messaging and Web Conferencing solutions

■ **The Benefits**

An interactive, ongoing series with an 85% attendance rate and 0% drop-off rate once attendees logged into a session

When it received a \$60,000 grant from the Annenberg and Edward Lowe Foundations, the Women Presidents' Organization (WPO) faced an exhilarating challenge: how to use the grant to develop an educational program specifically to help companies, especially those led by women, drive and manage growth. The WPO is a nonprofit membership organization whose members are a select group of entrepreneurial women presidents who have guided their businesses to generate at least \$2 million in gross annual sales (or \$1 million for a service-based business).

This national peer advisory organization for women business owners had already developed a successful roundtable series. With this grant the WPO saw an opportunity to complement and extend its educational programs—and leverage advances in technology—to give more members easier access to the information they need to move their businesses to the next level.

The answer came from WPO member and IBM Business Partner Angelika Coghlan of Catwalk Consulting and Patti Ross of IBM. The proposal: a series of Webcasts featuring Dr. Jana Matthews, an international expert on entrepreneurial leadership and growth. Through the Webcasts, WPO members could:

- *Attend monthly sessions with invaluable curriculum, covering topics such as getting employees to think like owners, employee retention, training, supporting rapid growth and delegation.*
- *Ask Dr. Matthews questions in real-time using instant messaging.*
- *Gain real insight into driving and managing growth.*
- *Save considerable time and expense by attending all sessions from their own offices—or wherever they happen to be.*

“Start-up companies have many resources available to them, and it’s important to help them get over the ‘survival barriers.’ But once they face the issue of growth rather than survival, the resources dry up. Large corporations can, of course, create their own educational programs and employ consultants.”

– Mark Lange, executive director, Edward Lowe Foundation

An unbeatable partnership

Catwalk Consulting, which offers solutions that help companies use technology more effectively, provided CatwalkConference.com, a Web-based interactive communications service that makes it easy for businesses to conduct secure, productive online meetings. This solution integrates data, voice, video and live interactive within a standard Web browser. It is also powered by IBM Lotus Instant Messaging and Web Conferencing, which helps ensure state-of-the-art reliability and performance.

More cost effective than face-to-face meetings and conferences, events run by CatwalkConference.com allow dispersed workgroups to collaborate or help keep customers and partners up to date on new products and services, all without the need for travel or special facilities.

The right people and processes

As project leaders, Catwalk president Angelika Coghlan and IBM Market Development Executive Patti Ross knew that technology alone would not make the educational series a success. To that end, they wanted to make sure that the right people and processes were in place so that everyone—WPO members and Dr. Matthews—would be comfortable with every step of the Webcast series. In order to ensure attendance, enable seamless exchange of information and questions and prevent technical difficulties, IBM and Catwalk:

- *Sent attendees an email notification embedded with an iCal file, which would enter the Webcast date into online calendars—saving busy entrepreneurs a step.*
- *Included configuration tips and instructions in the email to speed setup and troubleshoot problems.*

- *Embedded all emails with instant messaging features so attendees could interact directly with Catwalk staff without having to make a phone call or send an email.*
- *Called attendees to walk through the details of attending and participating in the online meeting. This guaranteed that all participants were ready and able to attend and participate in the meeting.*
- *Used the full capabilities of the technology to enable real-time interaction with the use of instant messaging, so members could both submit questions to Dr. Matthews and ask for technical support.*
- *Integrated security features into the Web conference, allowing the WPO to see that only registered attendees were participating in the seminar.*
- *Embedded polling questions into the presentation to gauge the success of each session for future revisions.*

The technology behind real-time collaboration

Behind the scenes, IBM technology helps provide a security-rich, collaborative environment. The IBM technology used included IBM Lotus Instant Messaging and Web Conferencing, an advanced platform

for real-time collaboration based on three on demand concepts:

- *Presence awareness, allowing users to see, in advance, whether a colleague or application is available to collaborate, share information and take an action.*
- *Instant messaging, which enables participants to converse virtually by exchanging text-, audio- and/or video-based information in real time.*
- *Web conferencing, which lets everyone share information, an application or an entire desktop and even engage in “white boarding.”*

The IBM Lotus Instant Messaging and Web Conferencing solution also takes advantage of audio integration capabilities that provide a single, unified interface to both audio and Web conferencing. Web conferencing includes icons that give the meeting moderator complete control over audio, helping to minimize distractions and improve the effectiveness of the Web.

The IBM commitment to women entrepreneurs

IBM has long been recognized as a leader and innovator of programs and policies that reflect the changing needs of women throughout the company. As such, IBM has a genuine interest in playing both direct and

indirect roles in the future successes of women entrepreneurs. The company is dedicated to improving the business and personal lives of women entrepreneurs through technology by providing specially tailored goods and services appropriate for the women's market.

IBM believes that key to serving markets is understanding them and that understanding comes from employing people who represent those markets. Diversity is our source of innovation, opportunity and competitive advantage. It is our key to continuing

success. Toward that end, IBM has introduced practices and policies that encourage workforce diversity and equal opportunity.

For more information

To learn more about IBM Instant Messaging and Web Conferencing, visit the IBM Web site at www.lotus.com/products/product3.nsf/wdocs/homepage. Or contact an IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

To learn more about Catwalk Consulting, visit www.catwalkconsulting.com.

“This grant, coupled with the expertise of Jana Matthews and the Edward Lowe Foundation, will enable the Women Presidents’ Organization to serve women entrepreneurs even more effectively. This exciting program will bring knowledge that will help them take their companies to the next level of success.”

– Marsha Firestone, PhD
Founder and President, Women Presidents’ Organization



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2005

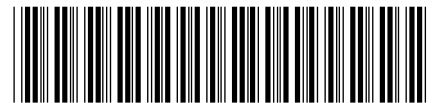
IBM Corporation
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589
U.S.A.

Printed in the United States of America
07-05
All Rights Reserved.

IBM, the IBM logo and Lotus are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

♻️ Printed in the United States on recycled paper containing 10% recovered post-consumer fiber.



GXXX-XXXX-XX