

ENERGY BOOST - Upcoming series of workshops is geared to `generating employee power' - By Rod Lee

Local business stalwarts Fern Nissim, Irene Tolman and Jeannie Hebert have taken the lead in trying to inject a positive into an economy that is viewed negatively in many circles.

Nissim is principal and founder of IM Source, Round Pond Group LLC (RPG) and Startups Marketing. Tolman is an entrepreneur and owner of *Coffee News*. Hebert is president/CEO of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. Nissim has more than 18 years of award-winning senior experience in the strategic marketing field. Tolman's expertise includes corporation training and individual coaching for all levels of employees with an emphasis on personal assessment, skill development, marketing, planning and follow through.

Nissim said the AME program was developed by a team of professional consultants from RPG who believe they have the ability to "help turn the tide of a down economic situation by sparking energy (within) local businesses." The concept of "teach them to fish" resonates more than ever in this environment, Nissim said. "There is value in so much that we do, but many people don't know how to translate that into tangible benefits for themselves and their business."

RPG "AMEs" to do that through a series of workshops co-sponsored by the BVCC together with a series of interactive articles in the pages of d.b.a. Nissim said the AME program is also a cost-effective way for companies to get a valuable return on their "employee capital" by engaging RPG consultants to bring the program and philosophy "in-house."

Nissim, Tolman and Hebert say the AME workshop series, which begins Tuesday, February 3 at the BVCC offices in Whitinsville, represents an alternative approach to "developing business in a tough market. Becoming AME-certified means you have acquired the skills and techniques to proactively market yourself and your business or nonprofit."

The other dates in the series are Tuesday, February 10, Tuesday, February 24, Tuesday, March 10, Tuesday, March 17 and Tuesday, March 24. All sessions will run from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

The first session's topic will be, "Getting Started and Exploring the Energy Source."

The women said participants will walk away with an individualized marketing plan and the skills and tools that will empower them to:

- Utilize their core competencies to promote both themselves and their business;
- Build new prospect relationships;
- Strengthen their present customer relations;
- Develop proactive marketing skills;
- Developing marketing materials that fit in a dwindling budget;
- Become known as the expert in their field;
- And, most importantly, shift their mindset to become aware of the opportunities around them and their value.

The benefits will make the series a "win-win" for all involved, Nissim said.

Nissim, Tolman and Hebert said the target market consists of two segments: 1) employees of small companies who want to get training, tools, resources and skills and confidence for sales; and 2) the person who owns his or her own business.

After all, Tolman said, "we (i.e., small business) run this state."

Interested companies and individuals can sign up by calling 508-234-9090 or by going to blackstonevalley.org or alternativemarketingenergy.com for further details.



From the left, Irene Tolman, Fern Nissim and Jeannie Hebert are collaborating on a series of Alternative Marketing Energy (AME) workshops to be hosted by the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce as a way to "generate employee power." (Rod Lee photo)