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BUSINESS/TECH Denton Business

Business conference brings women together

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By Rachel Mehlhaff / Staff Writer

Women of all ages from all types of business backgrounds gathered at Texas Woman's University on Friday for the first Women in Commerce Conference.

"I think it's amazing when you get a room of women like this in Denton," said attendee Mindy Bruce, banking officer at First United Bank.

She's already hoping for a follow-up event, which she thinks would require a bigger room.

The conference will "bring new women into the fold," said Bruce, a member of the Denton Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber, Sally Beauty Supply LLC and TWU sponsored the conference.

Speakers including Sandra Yancey, CEO of eWomen Network; Ross Manning, senior vice president of Tuesday Morning; and Becca Bowen, owner of The Clothes Coach, addressed topics ranging from networking to dressing for success.

Ann Hughes, director of the TWU School of Management, said more than 150 women attended the event. The chamber's Women in Commerce Committee, which organized the conference, hopes to have another event in the spring.

"This has been a wonderful partnership between TWU and the chamber," Hughes said, adding that it helps the university serve the community.

Alicia Brosey, the chamber's director of membership and programming, initiated the idea for the committee, which is composed of nine women from businesses in Denton.

Brosey said the committee plans to get feedback from attendees, assess the needs of local businesswomen and tailor future events to those needs.

"That's the whole thing — helping women no matter what age," said Brosey, pointing out a table of Ryan High School students who attended.



DRC/Barron Ludlum
Financial planner Joy Kirsch speaks at the Women in Commerce Conference at Texas Woman's University on Friday.

Lizeth Acevedo, a Ryan Spanish teacher who brought the girls, said they are part of a group called Mujeres con Sueños, which means “women with dreams.”

“It’s just a great opportunity to see women in leadership positions,” she said.

The group has been around for three years, and its objectives are scholarship, leadership and community service.

“We try to find mentors for the girls to encourage them to go to college,” Acevedo said.

Speaker Joy Kirsch talked about personal finance and how people make choices. The Kirsch and Associates financial planner called her presentation “Women, Love and Money.”

“We need to understand how we make decisions,” Kirsch said, talking about how stress affects decision-making and causes people to make emotional decisions instead of intellectual decisions. She said women tend to concentrate on one piece of information and miss the bigger picture.

Kirsch also discussed how men and women think differently and therefore approach finances differently. Women associate money with security and men don’t, she said.

She said men make quick decisions about money, while women look at the long-term plan for their money.

Kirsch said there’s a need for both types of thinking.

“That balance tends to make better decisions than we make on our own,” she said.