

***Unsuccessful Negotiation skills are cited as very real issues for South African Businesswomen.
Where do you fit in?***

(Johannesburg—October 9) On September 30, 2014, Accenture and WEConnect International in South Africa welcomed close to 30 women business owners at Accenture offices in Johannesburg to participate in a Negotiation Skills Programme.

According to research conducted by The Human Edge, women in South Africa face various **gender-related** challenges at work, mainly centering on unsuccessful dialogue among co-workers and bosses. This study has revealed the top five challenges faced by South African women in business today – with unsuccessful negotiations and discussions being cited as very real issues. With this in light, WEConnect International in South Africa felt compelled to address this challenge by developing a negotiation skills programme.

The aim of the training programme was to address the hurdles that women business owners face when trying to negotiate their business objectives in a working environment, and to help them find acceptable solutions to these challenges.

The programme was headed by thought leaders from WEConnect International in South Africa and Accenture, namely: Dr. Nathalie Chinje, Executive Director of WEConnect International in South Africa, and Ms. Linda Basson, Head of Procurement for Accenture, covering South Africa and other key markets in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ms. Basson welcomed the guests and provided the audience with a few insightful opening remarks on the procurement procedures of Accenture SA and how certification of women-owned businesses will play a major role in securing better procurement opportunities with Accenture.

The programme was then facilitated by Mr. John Watling, Executive Director of Resources at Accenture South Africa, who provided the women business entrepreneurs with an introduction to the art of negotiation. Mr. Watling, who, apart from providing an incredibly interactive and open workshop, also explored the concept of BATNA—best alternative to negotiating agreement, an aspect of negotiating identified by Harvard Business School, which intrigued the attending guests and sparked a plethora of dialogue between the women business owners and him.

The women business owners thoroughly enjoyed the event and had very positive feedback to share. Ms. Stephina Lekgale, owner of Lakgale Mahlako Trading, believes that the workshop was highly informative. “It gave me a clear understanding of how to go about negotiating business”, she said. Kim Vermaak, Director of Beautiful Corporate Gifts said “I learnt a lot that I could share with friends and customers who are in female owned businesses”.

To start the certification process, please click here: <http://weconnectinternational.org/en/get-certified>