

PWIPM Meeting, Pest Ex 2009, Wednesday 22nd April

The UK **Professional Women in Pest Management** group held their second meeting at **Pest Ex** on Wednesday 22nd April. This meeting aimed to bring together women from throughout the industry to network and share ideas on how to move the industry forward.

The meeting started with a short presentation from Sabra Fearon, **Killgerm Group, PWIPM USA**, welcoming everyone and explaining the aims of the group. Sabra said that this group should be led by its members, mentoring and developing women as well as moving the industry forward. Sabra then introduced guest speaker Judy Dold, President of Rose Pest Solutions, in Chicago and former President of the National Pest Management Association in the United States.

Judy started her presentation by explaining the benefits of Dress for Success, **PWIPMs** designated charity. Dress for Success is a charity which helps women from disadvantaged backgrounds gain a new start in life. They offer interview coaching, helping women to gain the confidence they need to enter or re-enter the professional world, along with an all important outfit for them to wear to an interview. **PWIPM** is currently collecting these outfits and during the event members dropped their contributions off.

Judy outlined her background and whilst her father-in-law and husband worked in Pest Management, as a retired High School English teacher she had little to no experience of the industry. In fact whenever her husband, Bob first approached her to work within the company as an Interim Manager in their smallest office she was viewed as a 'spy' by her colleagues. However, 26 years on she gained their trust and is now widely recognised face within the industry, shirking the 'Good old boy' network that existed.

Judy said that she still attends many meetings and sits on boards where she is the only woman and at times it is presumed that she is the secretary. Judy said that gender is unimportant to people's abilities but we can be more successful if we acknowledge there is a difference and from her experience, those who object to women within this industry are usually threatened and insecure, especially if that woman is strong, vocal and articulate.

Judy has found that as a woman it is important to think about your communication in order to ensure you achieve your goals. Always listen to people and make time for people but remember your focus and do not let people's negativity or 'can't do' attitudes get in your way.

It is clear that Judy is a positive person and the importance of this, especially in a world where she was not always welcome, is something she promoted throughout her presentation. She emphasizes that you need to appear confident stating 'the appearance of power, is power' and to acknowledge your skills, develop them and then market them. Let people know what you are good at; push yourself forwards and volunteer for things, but when you do make sure you deliver and be great. Ok is not good enough, women do not have the luxury of 'winging' it if they want to contribute, you need to stand up be noticed and be remembered.

Judy's contribution to her company has evolved through her years in the industry and she has become much more of a mentor, supporting her team, making sure they feel important and most importantly making sure they feel their issues have been resolved after the event. Judy believes that mentoring is very important and whilst President of the NPMA she set up the national mentoring scheme, which proved to be very popular and is still in place today.

Judy concluded that you can be who you want to be, just embrace your opportunities and do what you want to do. She applauded the organisation in the UK and believes it can grow to become a great support network.

It was decided that the next National meeting would be held at Pest-Tech but further regional meetings would also be held throughout the year.

Thank You

Thank you to all that attended and to our kind sponsors

