BMA, HCCI, AND HCDC HOST WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND NYC BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

By Peter Cooper/ Photojournalist

A wonderful workshop and conversation ensued around How To Capitalize on Social Networking and NYC Business Solutions on June 20th at the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building. The informative session/workshop took place in the Harlem Community Development Corporation, HCDC, space and was organized by the Bradhurst Merchants Association, BMA, and Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, HCCI.

Malcolm Punter, Director of Real Estate Development/Asset Management HCCI and VP of BMA, gave a welcoming address on behalf of BMA. Curtis Archer, president of HCDC, urged all in attendance to introduce themselves, expressing how important it is for one to know who one is in the room with.

Mischa Byruck proceeded to give a presentation on NYC Business Solutions, a free initiative by the City of New York which helps businesses start, operate, and expand. A few services offered are startup consultations, business courses, legal assistance, contract and lease reviews, consultations on financial assistance process, tools to navigate government, recruitment assistance, and training grants. *For more information go to nyc.gove/nycbusiness.*

The social media workshop entitled 'How to Capitalize on Social Media, Highlights and Understanding Social Media Influencers' was led by CCNY Professor Alicia Evans. Evans dove into the role of authentic communication and how to apply it to one's business.

Beginning with the definition of social media as, "anything that uses the Internet to

Mischa Byruck, account manager NYC Business Solutions, gives valuable information on resources available through NYC Business Solutions

Mischa Byruck, account manager NYC Business Solutions; Malcolm Punter, HCCI, BMA; Professor Alicia Evans, creator of the Social Media Strategies Class CCNY; Victoria A. Gordon, Director of Weatherization HCDC; Patreinnah Acosta-Pelle, HCCI, BMA; Curtis Archer, President HCDC

facilitate conversation between people." It is important to note that social media, as Evans explained, is two-way and involves both listening and engaging. With over 150 million Americans logging onto social media sites in any given day, the power and influence of social media is only growing. In the business realm it has been proven that consumers are more likely to buy a brand's product after 'liking' or following a brand/business on Facebook or Twitter.

Evans then went on to explain some dos and don'ts of Facebook, Blogging, LinkedIn, Pintress, YouTube, Twitter, and Podcasting.

Facebook: A good place to start is 2 - 3 posts a week. Posts should always educate the public, humanize the brand, and stimulate/prompt conversation. Evans shared that Friday is the day Facebook users are most likely to engage. Some notable Facebook's to gain inspiration from are Dove, Coca-Cola, and Verizon.

Blogging: Blogs tend to be informal, informative, entertaining, and personal (in the voice of 'I' or 'We'). You can start your blog on Blogger, Tumblr, or Wordpress.

YouTube: With 60 hours of video uploaded every minute, YouTube is a force to be reckoned with! A key with videos, as Evans expressed, is 'Shorter the Better' with the suggestion that if you have a fifteen-minute video, you should split it into four parts. Also remember to "tag" your video so people can find it through searching.

Twitter: can you believe there are over 100 million active Twitter accounts?! Evans suggested using a management applica-

tion for Twitter such as TweetDeck.

Podcasts: When starting off, keep podcasts no longer than 10 minutes. Evans revealed one of the best kept secret s of podcasting to be www.blogtalkradio.com. Also, when asking questions remember to make them open-ended, i.e.; 'how did you feel about ___?' ' what happens next ___?', etc.

All in all, the power of social media to engage, promote, and produce tangible results for your business is more powerful than ever before. So take a deep breath and dive in.