

Recession Proof Careers

Tuesday May 19, 2009 – The Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston hosted a career seminar “Recession Proof Careers” at the Westin Oaks, Galleria hotel. The Panel discussion ‘Recession Proof Careers’ focused on professional careers that can withstand economic turmoil. The event enabled attendees to network and discuss different career options.

The event was sponsored by The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Catherine Simpson, Diversity Relationship Manager, Prudential started the discussion by expressing her appreciation of the chamber and saying that “the IACCGH is an invaluable friend to Prudential.”

The panelists were Terri Carter, Director, HR, St. Luke’s Episcopal Health System, Gigi Do, Director, Office of International Initiatives, Houston Community College System and Tracy Fredericks, Director of Diversity, Prudential Insurance.

Indira Vishnampet, CEO, Hydus was the moderator for the discussion and explained that though 100 percent recession proof careers do not exist but there are sectors like healthcare, education and government which have not been significantly affected by the slowdown in the economy. She also said that contrary to the general consensus, financial sector is also one of the recession proof sectors that is not only offering jobs but also paying higher wages in a downward economy.

When asked about entry level career options in healthcare, Ms. Terri Carter mentioned that there were a number of positions available in healthcare sector that required minimum of high school diploma. She said, “Positions like patient care associate, technician, registration and clerical support are a few jobs that do not require a college degree. If you like a dynamic environment and are passionate about health care, then this is the right sector for you.” She also mentioned that St. Lukes’ new branch at Lakeside is starting in September 2009 and will be offering many job opportunities. More information about clinical and non-clinical opportunities at St. Lukes can be found at www.giantcareers.com

Ms. Tracy Fredericks spoke about the existing job opportunities in the financial sector. She said that “inspite of the recession; people in financial sector are voluntarily moving and choosing the company they want to work with. The demand for financial planners and advisors has increased substantially in today’s scenario. One of the reasons for the demand is the increasing baby boomer population who is controlling a huge chunk of money and need it to be managed. Also adding to the demand are the companies who are cutting 401K support leaving people to manage their own money.” She explained that financial advisors manage money as well as relationships so great communication skill is a pre requisite for the job. She concluded by saying that “Prudential is hiring and that there are various entry level positions available where the company is willing to train the employees”.

On the education sector, Ms. Gigi Do explained that Houston Community College (HCC) has seen a tremendous increase in enrollment numbers since past few years. In spring 2009 as many as 60,000 students enrolled across 27 HCC campuses in Houston. She said that many students have come back to school to combat recession and there has been an increase in the demand for instructors as well. She also said that HCC is working closely with institutions like Texas Medical Center to update their programs so that they can address student's areas of interests.

The session was interactive with several questions from the floor addressed by the panelists focused on opportunities available in the healthcare, education and financial sectors and the skills required to acquire the jobs.

The session concluded by awarding books and door prizes to attendees who completed the survey forms and ended with networking between the attendees and the industry professionals.