

1 Riverway, Suite 1700 Houston TX 77056 E: info@iaccgh.com
Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston

IACCGH WEBINAR

Preparing for ICE Inspections: Best Practices and Compliance Tips for Business Owners/Managers
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CST)



CHARLES FOSTER
CHAIRMAN, FOSTER LLP



AVALYN LANGEMEIER
SOUTHWESTERN ASSOCIATES LLP

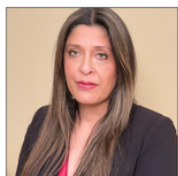
Why This Seminar is Critical for Business Owners:

- **Avoid Penalties:** Understand the risks of fines, business license loss, and potential criminal prosecution for non-compliance.
- **Prepare for Inspections:** Learn how to ensure all required documentation is in order and how to respond proactively during an ICE inspection.
- **Navigate Complex Immigration Laws:** Get expert insights into ever-evolving immigration laws and how they impact business operations.
- **Protect Your Workforce:** Avoid unintentional violations and ensure your business is compliant without discriminating against workers.

In a timely and informative webinar, the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH), in collaboration with partners such as the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce and TiE Houston, hosted renowned immigration experts Charles Foster and Avalyn Langemeier.

The session provided crucial guidance for business leaders on navigating ICE inspections and ensuring I-9 compliance. Key topics included avoiding costly penalties, leveraging digital tools for accurate and error-free documentation, and preparing staff for potential audits. "We aim to empower businesses with the right knowledge," said IACCGH Secretary and Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia. To learn more [Click Here](#).

Saturday, January 25, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5



Member in Focus:

Sonal Malhotra
Executive Vice President-Sales

E|CONSORTIUM

partnering for technology solutions
"Delivering tailored solutions to enterprise customers to drive and accelerate digital transformation"

Executive VP of eConsortium, Sonal Malhotra, joined Open Forum IACCGH Business Hour, on FM 103.5 to share her inspiring journey from an H4 visa holder to a tech leader. She discussed her firm's work in cybersecurity, inclusive leadership, and the role of tech in healthcare. She emphasized the power of innovation, collaboration, and resilience in building a future-ready business. For the full article [Click Here](#).

In this edition:

Celebrating Women of Substance

Diversity in dining: Musaafer - Mithu Malik

Tina Khatri builds with purpose

Anjali Khanna's leadership story

2024 GALA AWARDEES: SPECIAL FEATURE
HONOREES IN FOCUS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR
PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Col. Raj Bhalla

IACCGH Inaugural Reception

IACCGH Small Business Series
Co-Sponsored By
CenterPoint Energy WALLISBANK
www.iaccgh.com - info@iaccgh.com - (713) 621-7031
03/30/25 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM
Wallis Bank
Host & Sponsor: Peggy M. Houston, VP, PMD
FEATURING
Mark Winchester
Senior Advisor, Houston District Office

On January 30, 2025, IACCGH, in partnership with Wallis Bank and CenterPoint Energy, hosted a Small Business Series event featuring Mark Winchester and team from the SBA Houston District Office. Held at Wallis Bank, the session offered valuable insights on SBA funding, lending programs, and business growth strategies. The event drew strong participation and highlighted IACCGH's commitment to empowering Houston's small business community. [Click Here](#) for more.

IACCGH BUSINESS HOUR OPEN FORUM
Update on the H-1B visa situation with Emily Neumann of Reddy Neumann Brown PC
Saturday, February 1, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5
The update will cover:
• Current political climate regarding H-1B visas and impact on employers and workers
• Opportunities and challenges for H-1B visa holders
• Strategies for navigating and timing business
• Key statistics and projections for the upcoming H-1B lottery
• Travel considerations and risks for H-1B visa holders in light of shifting policies and administrative changes
• Anticipated changes to H-1B policies and regulations and their impact on employers and future applicants
• Understanding the Green Card wait for H-1B holders
Emily Neumann
Attorney at Law
Reddy Neumann Brown PC

Immigration attorney Emily Neumann, Managing Partner at Reddy Neumann Brown PC, joined Open Forum IACCGH Business Hour, to discuss H1B visa challenges, green card backlogs, and immigration reforms. She addressed rising fees, lengthy wait times, and the need for balanced policies that protect workers while supporting U.S. industry needs. Her advice offered clarity to both employers and immigrants navigating an increasingly complex immigration system. To read more, [Click Here](#).

IACCGH Small Business Series
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03/20/25 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM
Elite Restaurant
Host & Sponsor: Ingrid Robinson, VP, PMD
FEATURING
Ingrid Robinson
Houston Mayor's Office
Brandon Davis
Houston Mayor's Office
Houston Minority Supplier Development Council

At its second Small Business Series of 2025, IACCGH welcomed HMSDC President Ingrid Robinson, who spotlighted the \$20.2B economic impact of MBEs and the power of certification, development, and corporate partnerships. Co-sponsored by Wallis Bank and CenterPoint Energy, the event emphasized HMSDC's role as a matchmaker for minority-owned businesses and highlighted its strategic relationship with IACCGH in advancing supplier diversity. To read, [Click Here](#).

OPEN FORUM IACCGH BUSINESS HOUR
Saturday, February 22, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5
Member in Focus:
Anjali Khanna
VIVALDI Lifestyles
JEWELRY SUPERSTORE

On the Open Forum IACCGH Business Hour, Anjali Khanna shared her journey from microbiology to founding Vivaldi Group—a leading name in Houston's home design industry. What began as a granite supply business evolved into a full-service remodeling enterprise. Khanna credits IACCGH for helping forge valuable connections, and her family-run company now offers everything from countertops to cabinets and appliances. For full article, [Click Here](#).

IACCGH Shell USA, Inc. Women Mean Business
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kim Tran, DVM
Founder & Chief Operating Officer of VetVet, a leading veterinary practice in Houston
Moderator: Malisha Patel, FACHE
Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer of Shell USA, Inc.
Media Sponsor: Shell USA, Inc.
Junior League of Houston, 4815 Baker Oaks Lane, Houston TX 77027
Registration at iaccgh.com by February 15, 2025

IACCGH, in partnership with Shell USA, hosted its much-anticipated "Women Mean Business" event celebrating female leadership and entrepreneurial grit. Moderated by IACCGH President Malisha Patel, the conversation featured keynote speaker Dr. Kim Tran, who shared her inspiring journey from student to veterinarian to business owner. Attendees left with insights, lessons in resilience, and powerful reminders of purpose-driven leadership. [Click Here](#) to read more.

OPEN FORUM IACCGH BUSINESS HOUR
Saturday, March 22, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5
Ashish Mahendru
Founding Partner
Business and Commercial Litigation Attorney
Mahendru, P.C. - The Litigation Group

On the Open Forum IACCGH Business Hour, leading litigator Ashish Mahendru offered sharp insights into business disputes, arbitration myths, and the evolving legal landscape. "As litigators, we're creators of risk," he noted. From humorous courtroom tales to AI's growing role in law, Mahendru's candid reflections, legal wisdom, and personal stories made for a compelling conversation that resonated with Houston's business community. For the full article, [Click Here](#).

IACCGH Small Business Series
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03/26/25 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM
Elite Restaurant
Host & Sponsor: Jennifer Kallough Holmes, Ed.D.
FEATURING
HCC
Jennifer Kallough Holmes, Ed.D.
Executive Director Goldman Sachs 10KSB
Houston Community College

IACCGH's Small Business Series featured Dr. Jennifer Holmes of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program, who emphasized, "Every small business is a story of perseverance, innovation, and relentless pursuit of success." Alumni shared powerful stories of growth and transformation. The event highlighted IACCGH's ongoing commitment to equipping entrepreneurs with the tools to scale and succeed in Houston's business ecosystem. To read more, [Click Here](#).



HOUSTON, TX – Leadership, legacy, and collaboration took center stage at Houston City Hall's Legacy Room as the IACCGH ushered in a new chapter with its 2025 inaugural reception. The event marked the formal induction of Malisha Patel as the new president, celebrated the Chamber's ongoing impact, and highlighted strong partnerships across business, government, and community sectors.

Malisha Patel, Senior VP and CEO of Memorial Hermann Southwest and Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Hospitals, opened her address by expressing heartfelt gratitude. "It truly is an honor to stand before you as the incoming president of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston," she said. "This organization holds a special place in my heart, and I'm proud to represent its rich legacy."

Reflecting on her professional journey and its intersection with the Chamber's mission, Patel added, "As a healthcare leader, I see firsthand how access to quality healthcare and economic development are closely tied. A healthy workforce is essential for a thriving business environment—and vice versa." She also emphasized a commitment to "empowering the next generation of leaders," expanding programs like the Small Business Series, NowGen, and Women in Leadership, and deepening the Chamber's focus on healthcare and community well-being.

Houston Mayor John Whitmire, who was warmly welcomed at the event, praised the Chamber's contributions to the city's growth and diversity. "Chambers like the Indo-American Chamber are doing missions that government quite often does not address," he said. "You certainly couldn't have chosen a better incoming president—certainly with a healthcare background—because that's one of our challenges."

In an impassioned call to action, Mayor Whitmire noted, "Let's celebrate our greatness and our successes—but also know we have a lot of work left to do. If we collaborate with different levels of government, and we don't worry about partisanship and politics, the people expect us to govern."

Consul General of India D.C. Manjunath emphasized the strength of Indo-U.S. relations and recognized the Chamber's pivotal role in business diplomacy. "The relationship between our two nations continues to grow stronger with very strong bipartisan support," he said. Praising the IACCGH's impact, he added, "Under the leadership of past president Rajiv Bhavsar, the Chamber has made remarkable progress in building collaboration, supporting businesses, and strengthening Indo-American leadership."



Manjunath also acknowledged the contributions of founding Secretary and Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia, saying, "Perhaps I will not be wrong in saying this—he was the one who brought the Chamber to where it stands today." Ahluwalia later shared his thanks, noting, "We are proud to be serving the business community for over 25 years. Our presidents are the building blocks on which our Chamber stands." He highlighted the Chamber's consistent engagement with local and international partners, and its commitment to visibility and opportunity for members and young professionals alike.

Outgoing president Rajiv Bhavsar, who served for two years, reflected on the Chamber's growing influence. "We have been very successful in doing all the events... and we have seen growth in all small businesses because the SBA is also supporting our events," he said. "IACCGH stands between India and the U.S. for all the success stories we've seen—and will continue to see."

With its 2025 agenda centered on collaboration, health, and leadership development, IACCGH continues to build a resilient and prosperous business community. "Together," said Patel, "we will build on our legacy and create a thriving business environment for all."

MITHU MALIK: ELEVATING INDIAN FINE DINING WITH VISION, DIVERSITY, AND EXCELLENCE



Mithu Malik, CEO, Musaafer



Mithu with husband - Entrepreneur and Co-Owner of
Musaafer, Shammi Malik



Mithu at Musaafer

In the heart of Houston's vibrant culinary scene, Musaafer stands as a testament to both heritage and innovation. At the helm of this Michelin-starred Indian fine dining destination is Mithu Malik, a visionary entrepreneur whose leadership has transformed the restaurant into more than just a place to dine—it is an immersive journey through flavors, culture, and diversity.

Recently, Malik was honored with the Diversity in Business Award by both the Houston Business Journal (HBJ) and Michelin Guide, a recognition that highlights her unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity in the hospitality industry.

"It is fabulous to have received this honor," says Malik. "Diversity and inclusivity are causes that are close to my heart. When we envisioned this restaurant, it wasn't just about delivering a high-end dining experience; it was about creating a space where people from all backgrounds could bring their unique perspectives, shaping the journey of every diner who walks through our doors."



Interiors of Musaafer

Her commitment to inclusivity is evident in Musaafer's team, where women hold key leadership positions, and staff members come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Malik firmly believes that this mix not only enriches the dining experience but also creates a workplace where individuals can thrive based on their abilities alone.

Looking ahead, Malik envisions Musaafer continuing to push boundaries, redefining what Indian fine dining can be. She emphasizes that true success in hospitality comes from a deep love for the industry and a commitment to constant innovation.

"You need to love everything that comes with this industry—only then can you truly succeed," she advises aspiring restaurateurs. "A progressive mindset, the ability to adapt, and a genuine passion for creating exceptional experiences are essential."

With Michelin and HBJ's Diversity in Business Awards recognizing her contributions, Malik stands as a trailblazer in Houston's culinary scene. Musaafer is not just a restaurant—it's a journey, a celebration of cultures, and a testament to the power of inclusivity in fine dining.

The restaurant's very name, Musaafer, meaning traveler in Urdu, reflects this ethos of exploration and inclusivity. Every detail—from its opulent interiors to the personalized service—aims to transport guests through India's vast culinary landscape, while the team behind Musaafer represents a melting pot of cultures, each contributing to its dynamic energy.

Despite Musaafer's success, establishing a name in the highly competitive hospitality industry has not been without its challenges—especially as a woman entrepreneur. Malik acknowledges that while she has experienced strong support and acceptance in the U.S., the journey has required resilience.

"In industries that are not female dominated, you often have to work harder to prove your credentials," she shares. "Respect doesn't come automatically—you have to demonstrate your expertise, commitment, and ability to lead. But this experience has shaped my leadership style in a way that reinforces my belief in equality. I've always strived to create an environment where people are valued for their talent and dedication, regardless of gender, background or personal identity."



Mithu Malik

TINA KHATRI: PIONEERING LEADERSHIP IN CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

In an industry traditionally dominated by men, Tina Khatri has carved a distinguished path as a leader, innovator, and advocate for diversity. As the CEO of TDK Construction, a Houston-based commercial general contracting firm, Khatri has transformed the company with a vision that blends tradition with modernization, all while championing leadership roles for women in construction.

Khatri's journey began in finance and consulting after earning her degree in Finance and Accounting from The University of Texas at Austin. In 2008, she transitioned into the construction business, a move that required not just technical expertise but also the ability to establish credibility in a male-dominated field. With determination, she modernized TDK Construction's operations, introduced efficiency-driven project management systems, and expanded the company's scope to include design-build and value engineering services.



**Tina Khatri, CEO,
TDK Construction**



Empowered and inspiring—Tina Khatri, CEO of TDK Construction, honored for her role in reshaping the construction landscape.

One of the most defining moments in her career was leading to the construction of the Eternal Gandhi Museum Houston, a landmark project dedicated to peace and nonviolence. Her dedication to the project extended beyond construction, as she was later invited to serve as a Board Trustee for the museum.

Her involvement in the community does not end there—Khatri is also a co-founder of the South Asian Women Entrepreneurs Alliance (SAWEA), a private networking group aimed at empowering South Asian women leaders and business owners. Additionally, she plays an active role in Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW Houston), where she co-chairs the Groundbreakers Committee, working to expand diversity in the industry.

Khatri credits organizations like the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) for fostering a professional network that has been instrumental in her growth. Leaders like Rajiv Bhavsar and Jagdip Ahluwalia have been strong allies, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to build connections and share knowledge. For Khatri, these relationships have reinforced the importance of mentorship and collaboration in achieving long-term success.

Under her leadership, TDK Construction has not only grown in scale but also in impact. By embracing technology, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to excellence, the company continues to take on larger and more complex projects. Yet, Khatri remains steadfast in her belief that growth is not just about expansion—it is about building spaces that create lasting value.

As a leader in construction and an advocate for women in business, Khatri's advice to young professionals, particularly women entering male-dominated industries, is simple: "Put yourself out there. Build relationships, get involved with organizations, and don't wait for an invitation—step in with confidence and make your presence known," she said.

Her remarkable journey has not gone unnoticed. Recognized for her leadership and commitment to diversity, Khatri was recently honored as the winner of the Houston Business Journal's Outstanding Head of Diversity award. This recognition is a testament to her resilience, vision, and unwavering commitment to breaking barriers while building a legacy of empowerment.



A proud moment for Tina Khatri—recognized for leading with purpose in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

With her eyes set on the future, Khatri remains dedicated to fostering leadership, strengthening industry networks, and continuing to drive TDK Construction forward—all while ensuring that the next generation of women in business has the support and opportunities to thrive.

Anjali Khanna: A Leader in Diversity and Management



Anjali Khanna, CEO, Vivaldi

Khanna's resilience shaped her into a determined yet empathetic leader. "I've learned to lead with strength while also fostering understanding. I prioritize relationships, encourage my team and never lose sight of the bigger picture." Khanna credits organizations like the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) for helping her business flourish.

"IACCGH played a key role in expanding our network and unlocking new opportunities," she shares. "I'm especially grateful to Jagdip Ahluwalia, the founding secretary and executive director for his support, as well as Ingrid Robinson from the Houston Minority Supplier Development Council (HMSDC) for opening doors to future growth."

Vivaldi is now actively working toward HMSDC certification, a step that will help them connect with larger markets and reinforce their commitment to supplier diversity. At the heart of Vivaldi's success is a commitment to customer-first innovation.

Under Khanna's leadership, the company transformed its showroom into a one-stop destination, ensuring clients don't have to spend time running between multiple vendors.

In a world where leadership is often shaped by tradition, Anjali Khanna, CEO of Vivaldi, has built a legacy of transformation and inclusivity. Recently honored as an Outstanding Diversity Champion, she continues to break barriers, redefining what it means to lead in a male-dominated industry.

For Khanna, receiving this award is more than just recognition—it's a validation of her journey. "Every award strengthens a company's credibility, but this one holds special meaning," she says. "It highlights the importance of diversity, trust, and inclusion in business, while also giving us a competitive edge."

Launching Vivaldi in 2002 was no small feat. The industry was largely unwelcoming to women entrepreneurs, and Khanna found herself navigating a landscape where acceptance did not come easily.

"When we started, it wasn't common to see women at the forefront of businesses like ours," she recalls. "I had to fight for credibility—not because of my skills or my company's capabilities, but simply because I was a woman leading it."

Beyond skepticism, she also encountered blatant discrimination, including offensive language and dismissive attitudes. "I won't lie—it was tough. There were moments when I was in tears," she admits. "But I realized that the only way forward was to let the quality of my work do the talking."



At the forefront of inclusion—Anjali Khanna, honored as an Outstanding Diversity Champion.

"When designing spaces, people often face decision fatigue. We wanted to eliminate that," she explains. "By offering a vast range of products—including natural stones like granite and marble, as well as engineered options like quartz—we make the process easier and more enjoyable."

This thoughtful approach has positioned Vivaldi as a leader in high-end surfaces and design solutions, making it the preferred choice for contractors, designers, and homeowners alike.

Looking ahead, Khanna is committed to paving the way for more women leaders in business. "Resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering belief in oneself are key to success," she advises.

With her Outstanding Diversity Champion recognition and a thriving business, Anjali Khanna is proving that leadership is not defined by gender, but by the ability to create change.



Anjali with family

A Humble Hero of Service **COL. RAJ BHALLA**

IACCGH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR PHILANTHROPY AND SERVICE 2024



At the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston's 25th Anniversary Gala in September 2024, the spotlight quietly but powerfully fell on Col. Raj Bhalla, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award for Philanthropy and Community Service. At 94, Col. Bhalla is the embodiment of quiet generosity, humility, and a lifetime of service—not only to his country but also to his community.

A veteran of the Indian Army and a long-time resident of Sugar Land, Col. Bhalla has always lived a life of discipline, duty, and deep compassion. Together with his wife, Mrs. Kanwal Bhalla, now 88, the couple made a heartfelt decision in their later years to give back to the community that had become their home.

"There's really nothing extraordinary about what we did," Col. Bhalla said modestly, when approached for an interview. "We simply set aside a little over the years. And when we reached an advanced age, we decided to liquidate the funds and support our local hospital."

That local hospital turned out to be Methodist Hospital in Sugar Land. When asked by the hospital's foundation why they chose to donate there despite having no personal connection, Col. Bhalla responded with characteristic simplicity: "We don't know anyone, but since we live in Sugar Land, we think we should support the local hospital."

This sense of grounded giving, driven not by recognition but by responsibility, echoes the values that Col. Bhalla believes are rooted in Eastern teachings.

"We, belonging to the East where the major faiths of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity originated, are taught the duty of giving," he reflected. "We all do our bit—to religious causes, to the sick, the poor, to education. When you feel God has given you enough, you need to share it."

Col. Bhalla's life story is not one of grand gestures but of deep, sustained purpose—of a man who served with honor and who now chooses to give with grace. For the Chamber, honoring him was a recognition not of wealth, but of values—the kind that shape communities and inspire generations.

The Chamber's gesture may have surprised him, but for those who know his story, the honor was more than deserved.

"In the end," said Col. Bhalla, "we came naked, and we will go naked." And in between, he and Mrs. Bhalla chose to give.

