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Women in Lodging group seeks to empower


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CHICAGO—With industry talk focused on the lackluster economy, sometimes its difficult to see past the fog. The American Hotel & Lodging Association's [Women in Lodging Connect](#) group is seeking to keep the conversation focused on positive things—namely empowering women in the hotel industry.



Vicki Gordon

"The origins of the Women in Lodging group are based on the foundation of women helping other women," said Vicki Gordon, WIL chair and managing partner of Collins Gordon Group, at a Hospitality Career Day in late June.

The event at the Chicago Hilton was just one in a series of which WIL has partnered with Dress for Success. Hospitality Career Days also have been hosted in Atlanta, Denver and Washington, D.C. The partnership, announced in November, was a natural, Gordon said.

"It's a good fit," she said. "Their local affiliates gave us the opportunity to involve local hotels and women."

Gordon—a 37-year veteran of the industry, most recently with InterContinental Hotels Group—said it's exciting to introduce women to hospitality.

"It's great to see people look at the job opportunities and salary ranges," she said. "They say, 'Wow!' It really opens their eyes to the industry."

At this event, WIL Connect hosted Stephanie Leese Emrich, chef concierge at The Talbott Hotel in Chicago and personal branding expert.

Emrich's presentation focused on ways women can differentiate themselves by identifying their core characteristics. Some points from her presentation:

- Your "billboard" should be comprised of things that mean something to you. This can be a trademark color you wear or special touches to your resume (which should always be "at the ready" for potential employers). Signature style makes the difference.
- Ask yourself, what would your friends say about you? Choose three words to describe yourself.
- Make sure you know the vocabulary of what you do or what you want to do. Emrich suggested the book "Spoken Like a Pro: An Insider's Guide to the Language of Professions" by Mim Harrison.



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