

SPOTLIGHT ON KEHAU KALI, Hawai'i State President, CEO Space & IBI Global
By Sandy McKee, Hawaiian Bureau Chief

I was browsing the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i website (www.cochawaii.org) and I noticed an announcement for a Business Coaching and Networking Workshop hosted by CEO Space & IBI Hawai'i. Wanting to learn more, I went to the website for IBI Hawai'i (www.ibihawaii.com) and read that in addition to the twice monthly workshops, they also hold Mastermind Networking Luncheons every other Wednesday. The combination of two of my favorite words ("networking" and "luncheon") prompted me to call up Kehau Kali, the Hawai'i State President of CEO Space and IBI Global, to secure a spot for myself at one or both events.

Kehau had just returned from an IBI Free Enterprise Forum in Los Angeles and was not holding an official luncheon that Wednesday. We decided to have lunch anyway and talk about what she's focusing on in Hawai'i for the next few months. We met at Kincaid's in the Ward Warehouse (www.kincaids.com), which has been a favorite spot of mine for more than 20 years. We settled in over lobster ravioli and an ahi burger and got to know each other better.

The first thing that impressed me about Kehau's conversational style was her word choices. She uses bold, empowering language. For example, shortly after we sat down, she looked me straight in the eye and asked, "So, what's your genius?" I'll admit that caught me off-guard and I am thankful that I had swallowed my sip of iced tea, otherwise it might have gotten spewed across the table.

Genius? Me? My mind went blank. She was staring at me, so I knew I had to come up with an answer---quickly! I started to replay my life in my mind. If you've ever sat at a microfiche machine and pressed rewind and watched the film whirl swiftly backwards, then you'll have an idea of the images going through my head at that moment. I gave it another second, hoping she'd be distracted by the waitress or something. No luck. She was still waiting patiently for my answer. Given that she had said it in an interested, supportive tone of voice, I decided to be honest. "Writing," I said. Shameless, delusional self-promotion. No, I'm not above it.

Kehau's genius, as it turns out, is helping CEOs, entrepreneurs, inventors, artists, professionals, and other business people to take their success to the next level through more precise planning techniques, improved team building, problem solving, and networking. In addition to the periodic workshops and luncheons, there is an online CEO-to-CEO forum at www.ceospace.biz that offers practical networking opportunities to its members. By practical networking, I mean problem solving in real time, as opposed to simple meet-and-greet sessions.

Membership in IBI Global and CEO Space is not for everyone. It takes dedication and a willingness to help others. Kehau looks for three things in a prospective member:

- a. are they seriously committed to their own success and the success of their company?
- b. are they able to operate in a collaborative and cooperative environment?

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c. are they coachable and willing to accept advice and input?

Prior to dessert (we shared a most excellent bread pudding), we were joined by a prospective new member, Mr. X (obviously, not his real name). He was scheduled to meet with Kehau after our luncheon. Incidentally, that is a smart networking and time management tip: schedule back-to-back meetings in the same location. It saves travel time and gives two members of your network a chance to meet and possibly further expand their networks. Of course, the idea is for the first party to leave at their appointed end time. However, I lingered over the bread pudding in hopes of getting a glimpse of how Kehau works "in real life." Again, shameless.

Fortunately, Mr. X was an agreeable person and didn't mind my attendance or my quest for a story, provided I keep the details confidential. It didn't take me long to see that Mr. X fits all three criteria for IBI Hawaii membership: he is serious about the success of his business, he appears to thrive on working cooperatively with others, and he is willing to seek and accept solid business advice. Mr. X shared with us the current issues with his widget company and the decisions he was considering. Kehau asked a few questions and was able to reflect back to Mr. X (using her empowering language) the gist of what was troubling him. His face lit up as if to say, "Finally, someone understands!" Kehau was able to relate Mr. X's situation to that of a business person she knew from the Mainland and used that example to help Mr. X see an array of possibilities that he should consider. I left them in the middle of working out who he should connect with to seek further practical solutions. Even though I don't know the end of Mr. X's story, I am confident that his future is bright. Kehau really is a genius.

The next IBI Free Enterprise Forum will be held in Los Angeles from May 13-20, 2007. If you'd like more information about that or if you are located in Hawai'i and you'd like to attend any of the CEO Space & IBI Hawaii events, please contact Kehau Kali at (808) 342-0375 or via email to Kehau@ibiglobal.com.

With aloha,

Sandy McKee