

Focused Activity and Solid Gains at 2015 Parnassah Expo

SHIMMY BLUM

"This is the only Jewish community expo of this sort out there. You have to have a presence here if you want to deal with our community. I meet people here year after year, and develop great relationships," stated David Konigsberg, CEO of Optimal Targeting, while standing at his booth and speaking to a stream of attendees. This was David's fourth consecutive time exhibiting at Parnassah Expo-Nationwide Business Networking Event, and his sentiment was shared by practically every other exhibitor on the floor.

Another Year, Another Milestone

The expo, hosted by a person who walked around the main B2B networking floor couldn't help but be enamored of the variety of cutting-edge community businesses who service every sector.

Exhibitors raved about all the existing and potential new customers who stopped by their booths, and launched or strengthened a business relationship. More than the quantity of traffic, it was the quality and seriousness of this year's attendees that made the greatest mark.

"This Expo was the first time that I actually got to finalize a deal with a new client on the floor," says Chaim Sofer, senior marketing strategist at reSMART Marketing, "and we did six of them!"

Regardless of what service they had to offer other businesses, exhibitors felt that they were talking to all the right people. His first time at the Parnassah Expo, Matthew Putnam, vice president of government guaranteed lending at North Carolina-based Yadkin Bank, remarked, "The people here are educated; they have the need for your services; and they have great questions."

Another expo section that saw significant accomplishment was the career and education center. The center featured a wealth of information and resources to help people gain the skills and connections for a secure career. "We appreciate that Duvi Honig has put this expo together, so that we can help people," says Chaim Shapiro, assistant director of career services at Touro College, which sponsored the center.



Parnassah Expo, hosted by the Parnassah Network-Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce, at the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center.



L-R: Zev Brenner, Usher Labin, Duvi Honig, Ezra Friedlander, Charlie Harary, and Turx.



Auctioning off a Tesla car at the Parnassah Expo.



L-R: Accelerator Investor panel members Gedalia Weinberger, Chesky Kaufteil, A.J. Ginsburg, Duvi Honig and Danny Lemberg.

Business Conference Center

In addition, the business conference center saw a flurry of activity on both days; seminar after seminar, panel after panel, topic after topic — over 60 seminars in total. Attendees took advantage of the rare opportunity to hear from so many leading experts in their respective fields. There was so much substantive knowledge to gain for their individual endeavors.

"There was lots of audience input and we received excellent feedback," says Mrs. Leah Zigelbaum, director of communications for Agudath Israel of America, who was featured on a "Women in the Workforce" panel. "About half of the women in the audience came over to me afterwards and asked to continue the conversation."

Hershel Leiner, president of H. Leiner and Co., expressed a similar sentiment after delivering his well-attended seminar on

fundraising. "I found the crowd to be even more engaging, and younger, than in previous years," he observed. "This is the future of the *frum* community's workforce."

Towards the end of each Expo day, attendees were treated to an exciting program in the conference center's main auditorium.

On Tuesday, it was the CEO panel. On the stage were Duvi Honig, founder and director of Parnassah Network-Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce (OJC); Ezra Friedlander, CEO of the Friedlander Group and vice president of the OJC Public Policy Committee; Chaskel Bennett, proprietor of MBA Supply Company of New York and member of the OJC Public Policy Committee; Hershel Leiner, president of H Leiner & Co., and Mark Herskovitz, wealth manager at Bank of New York Mellon.

The panel was moderated

by the renowned Mr. Charlie Harary, who fielded a variety of questions from members of the audience that covered topics ranging from business leadership, tackling unexpected challenges, balancing business and public interest, financial planning for young couples, and charting a fresh career path at middle age. Perhaps the most memorable line came from Mr. Harary himself, when he advised, "Make sure that your wife approves of your business. If you lose out, she's all you've got!"

The finale of the second day — and the expo — was the much-anticipated "The Accelerator Investor" panel, a project of the Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce's Business Brokerage and Investments (BBI) service. The investors on the panel were Reb Duvi Honig, Rabbi Gedalia Weinberger, Chesky Kaufteil, A. J. Ginsberg,

and Danny Lemberg. The panel discussion was moderated in a most entertaining way by Mr. Shea Rubenstein.

A total of five innovative businesses, from the U.S. and Israel, presented their plans for a new product to the investors. Two of them — an instant securities processing service and a promising natural remedy company — received a total of over \$1 million of capital from the investors in exchange for a share in the company. The other presenters were referred for future negotiations with the investors once their projects progress and crystalize.

After the expo wrapped up, Reb Duvi Honig was proud of all the many months of hard work that his team — Mrs. Esther Honig, Mrs. Devorah Wahl, Reb Mutty Tress, Mrs. Tova Herskovitz, and others — invested to make it a reality.

"Based on the feedback we've been receiving throughout the expo, it's clear that many businesses saw solid progress here," says Reb Duvi.

Parnassah Network-Orthodox Jewish Chamber of Commerce has further solidified its status as the premier infrastructure that unites our community's businesses, and a growing force in the business and political spheres. Scores of businesses signed up for OJC membership throughout the expo. "When we do things together, it is a great *kiddush Hashem* and we all gain."