

Doing Business with the Japanese – Highlights

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Following the spirit of the successful Japanese-themed 2017 holiday benefit, FWA presented “Doing Business with the Japanese,” an event hosted by SMBC in their New York office on February 1, 2018.

The event enriched our knowledge of traditional Japanese culture and customs, and broadened our perspectives on women’s role in modern Japanese society. Our International Conference delegates also saw this event as a timely and useful workshop before heading to the Tokyo conference this April.



Lively panel discussion engages the audience

The event started with opening remarks by Stacy Musi, the FWA President, who welcomed the audience. Mr. Nobuyuki Kawabata, CEO, Americas Division at SMBC, followed with additional welcome remarks. Mr. Nobuyuki discussed his critical role in the establishment of SMBC’s Americas Division, and expressed that diversified employee groups and global footprints are essential to a corporation’s success.



Nobuyuki Kawabata, Managing Director and CEO, SMBC Americas Division

Regina Shapiro, Culture and Language Program Manager from MUFG Americas, gave us an interesting and informative lecture on differences between the U.S. and Japanese culture and business etiquette.

The Japanese place a high level of value on business etiquette; it is important for us to show respect by learning these protocols when doing business with them. The audience expressed a strong interest in learning some rules; for example, use both hands when exchanging business cards.



Regina Shapiro, Culture and Language Program Manager, MUFG Americas

After the lecture, Mike Sebring, Head of Inclusion and Diversity, Americas Division, moderated a panel discussion. Panelists Jim Weinstein, Mika Kono, Jeff Zavattono, and Margaret Gleason from SMBC shared their experiences, anecdotes, and interactions with the Japanese on a professional level.

The program ended with an inspirational speech by Keiko Honda, CEO of Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of World Bank Group. Ms. Honda shared her family stories, untraditional career path with McKinsey & Company and the World Bank Group, and her life-long journey searching for the definition of success as a Japanese woman, a mother, and a business professional. Ms. Honda's speech impressed and inspired the audience. The evening concluded with a lovely networking reception with Japanese food and drinks.



We want to thank FWA, SMBC and everyone who attended to make this event successful. We look forward to more events like this in the future.

Photo Credit: Andrew Levine Photography