Message from Mr. Yazdi Tantra, Global Vice President

There are many questions raised about what is WZCC all about and why should one become a member. The underlying thread in all the questions is “What’s in it for me?” or even “Is it for me?” We have had several instances where potential members have asked:

• “I am not an Entrepreneur or a Businessman, why should I join?”
• “How will I benefit by becoming a member?”
• “Does WZCC give financial support? If not, I do not want to waste my time”

…… the list goes on and on.

So, I thought it would be appropriate to clarify what WZCC really is and what it stands for.

Any Zarathushti who is into any commercial activity, and wants to enhance professional growth and competency, will find benefit by joining WZCC. It is a global networking platform for Entrepreneurs, Professionals and Salaried employees, which stands for:

• An excellent learning platform. Several talks and training programs are organized by the Chamber. Members get to meet experts in various fields like Finance, Marketing, Production, Services, etc., and can get insights into the working of their own enterprises.
• With more than 15 Chapters worldwide, WZCC is an awesome networking tool. One can connect with other like-minded Entrepreneurs and Professionals from across the world to promote one’s products or services and / or just share ideas and inspire new ones.
• WZCC affords multiple opportunities across boundaries. In today’s scenario, the world is your market, whether for products or services. Salaried employees are also global citizens and need to explore opportunities far beyond their local reach.

• For Professionals who need multiple skills for managing their own businesses, large or small, whether financial or marketing, WZCC offers guidance from accomplished professionals who have been there, done that.
• Salaried employees, who are in charge of their own affairs / divisions in large corporations are intrapreneurs in their own right. They too need skill sets to grow their careers and contacts for the betterment of their organizations. WZCC is a great platform to acquire these, on an ongoing basis.
• For accomplished Businessmen and Professionals, WZCC is an ideal platform to share the secrets of their own successes and guide youngsters. Their expert inputs would help GenNext to avoid the mistakes that were committed in the past and grow at a much faster pace, with the benefit from their guidance and experience.
• WZCC honours Businessmen and Professionals every year, bringing to fore their successes and recognizing their talent. There is a special award for a Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur / Professional of the year. Such recognitions have boosted the morale of great achievers and driven them to reach greater heights in their chosen fields.
• WZCC has a strong web-presence through its website www.wzcc.org and its Facebook Page. This accelerates the connect between multiple chapters across the world.
• Periodic Newsletters and Annual SynergyZ Magazine are the printed material emanating from WZCC, which talk about success stories, events and much more.
• In short, WZCC brings together like-minded businesses and professionals on a single common global platform so as to benefit all those who come there, seeking success in their own ventures.
• There is another more important aspect of membership of WZCC; that is, giving to Members or sharing what you have, in terms of:
  • Knowledge, insights and wisdom
  • Experiences from which others can benefit, in Networking programs.
  • Promoting the value of membership of WZCC
  • Recommending appropriate programs
  • Contributing articles of value to members, for the Newsletter
  • A team member of Fund Raising programs
  • Organising and promoting programs of value for the younger generation
  • The role of mentoring for those who want to succeed in their career or want to start a business or take the business to the next level.

When we do something that has value for others, we get a “heightened vitality of what it means to be human”. This is more appropriately expressed in the words of Winston Churchill:

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

WZCC is not a Financial Institution – but will guide those in need of finance, on how to go about preparing a good business plan which is bankable and capable of getting finance. There is no innovative project in the world which will not take off, just for the sake of finance. WZCC does not participate in your enterprise. WZCC is just a catalyst which will hasten the path to prosperity.

WZCC is not a religious body – no talk on religion or religious overtones will be heard. WZCC is non-controversial and apolitical. Community controversies and community politics are unheard of.

WZCC is a non-profit making Organization trying to be self-reliant through its own efforts and accepting support from its well-wishers.

This is the only Chamber of Commerce existing in our community to proliferate Trade, Business, Commerce, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Professionalism. WZCC is all about encouraging the community to strive for economic prosperity in their respective chosen fields – WZCC enjoys doing so and you will love being with us!
Ms. Rashna Engineer

Rashna Engineer is an Individual Annual Member of WZCC. She is the founder of “INCLUDE” – a company which specialises in the development of products that help to create an ecosystem of accessibility for people with physical limitations.

She has a M.Sc. in Human Factors for Inclusive Design (Ergonomics) from Loughborough University, UK. She has been in the field of design and research for healthcare and inclusive design since the past few years.

Her Company’s first product line aims at spaces in our metros where building a ramp plus stairs become impossible due to laws or tight entranceways. Include’s ramps can be easily folded and stored near the entrance in easy reach for when a wheelchair user visits.

It also markets braille signage that aids the visually challenged population. These can be kept up at restrooms, emergency exits, etc. at restaurants, hotels and other buildings.

“INCLUDE” plans to develop many more mobility and accessibility aids like walking sticks and daily living aids.

Website: www.include.co.in
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/creatingaccessibility
Mobile: +91 9930077517
WZCC-NY convened on February 5, 2017 for the Chapter’s Winter Quarterly Meeting. We met at the Arbab Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr in Suffern, New York in conjunction with ZAGNY’s adult lecture series. The Chapter also welcomed new members of the IZA community in the USA from Yazd, Iran.

The speaker was Dr. Cyrus Mehta, President & Co-Founder of Cytel, Inc. and Adjunct Professor of Biostatistics, Harvard University. Dr. Mehta consults extensively with the biopharmaceutical industry on group sequential and adaptive design, and offers workshops on these topics. He serves on data monitoring and steering committees for trials in many therapeutic areas including oncology, cardiology, neurology and metabolic disease. He has led the development of the StatXact, LogXact and East software packages that are widely used by the biopharmaceutical industry, academic research centers and regulatory agencies.

He has over 100 publications in leading statistics and medical journals. He is a past co-winner of the George W. Snedecor Award from the American Statistical Association, is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. He was named Mosteller Statistician of the Year by the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Statistical Association in 2000, and Outstanding Zoroastrian Entrepreneur by the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce in 2002. He has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Indian Statistical Association (2015) and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (2016).

Cytel (www.cytel.com) is a leading provider of software, clinical services and strategic consulting on the design, interim monitoring and implementation of adaptive clinical trials. Cytel was founded 30 years ago as a four-person operation from Cyrus’s home in Cambridge, Massachusetts and has grown to a 700-person company with offices in USA, Europe and India. Although still dazed by it, Dr. Cyrus recounted how it happened, what lessons were learned, and how his Zoroastrian faith has been a guiding source of strength and wisdom through both the good and difficult times.

Cytel provided “Reflections on 30 Years of Struggle to Balance Work, Family and Spiritual Life” in explaining the Cytel story. He began by citing powerful people in his life, his wife Satu, his children Arun and Mira, and the spiritual teachers Swami Sarvagatananda and Swami Adiswarananda. He especially mentioned Professor Marvin Zelen, his colleague and mentor at Harvard, with deep gratitude. With this spiritual tone, Cyrus moved to providing a lucid insight into advanced statistical texting. Exact tests among possible outcomes turn out to be a generalization of a “lady tasting tea experiment” in which a fine lady is able to definitively choose between teas prepared in a precise ways, with milk poured into tea or tea poured into milk. The generalization is described in a statistical paper Cyrus published in the Journal of Statistics with co-author and partner Nitin Patel. The editor of the journal inspired Cyrus to begin developing software which could implement his statistical insights on exact tests.

Cytel launched in 1987 from a first office in Cambridge, Massachusetts with funding from the NCI and devoted itself to developing software for use in medical clinical testing. Venture capital and advanced growth with globally located offices developed after 2006. A CEO was hired, freeing Cyrus to focus on innovation. The company’s strategic consulting offers customized software and consulting services to pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

The services help to identify which drugs work and which do not, allows for mid-course corrections to drug and medical trial designs, increase the sample sizes or change dosages, and identify promising subgroups, and provides scientific representation as regulatory agencies. In the company’s culture, a priority is placed on its people and their growth.

Clients are treated as colleagues, not merely as vendors. Factors for success include building a strong inner life and reliance upon The Gathas. Cyrus praised the Zoroastrian emphasis on Truth, or Asha, as a deep guide and the distillation of his education in India.

WZCC President Edul Daver invited and introduced Cyrus and organized the event. Darius Jamshidian, WZCC-NY Chapter Chair, expressed the Chapter’s gratitude to Cyrus and his wife. Team members Arnaz Maneckshana and Noshir Dutia provided membership information, WZCC periodicals, and recruited new members. Jasely and Kerman Dukandar, along with Sheroo and Vispi Kanga, provided a fine luncheon. Past Chair Rusi Gandhi assisted with tasks and Ushta Canteenwalla was recruited as the Chapter’s Youth Representative. Arzan Wadia recorded and photographed the talk. The event was well-attended. Edul highlighted upcoming WZCC activities, such as a regional gathering in Houston with the FEZANA AGM, a Business Exploratory Expedition to Iran and 2017 AGM in Bangalore.
To celebrate International Women’s Day, this year, Women Entrepreneurs “WE”, the Women’s Wing of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC), organized a workshop in Mumbai on 18th March, 2017 on the topic of “Build Grow & Scale your Business with Digital Media”.

Welcoming the participants, Ms. Homai Mehta, Chairperson, WZCC-WE, Mumbai Chapter, commended them for being on time. She stated that this workshop in Mumbai was an introduction to the digital world for Women Professionals and Entrepreneurs. She quoted Mr. Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google, who believes “Today Anyone can become an Entrepreneur, a Developer or Creator, but it was important they had the right Tools and Skills to DIGITISE.” Hence, WE had taken the initiative to organize the program on Digital Media. She went on to introduce the VIPs of WZCC on the dias and the core committee members of WE. She thanked Capt. Percy Master, President, India Region, WZCC, for the sponsorship of the advertisements in Parsi Times and Jame, which drew in new participants for the program. She urged the participants to become life members as that would be a vote of confidence for WE and would augment the corpus of WZCC.

Mr. Adi Siganporia, Mumbai Chapter Chair and Corporate Secretary, International Board, WZCC, said WZCC, was doing a great job since the last 16 years. Taking up from where Homai left off on punctuality, he recalled what JRD Tata had once remarked, “The only drawback of being on time is that no one’s around to appreciate it.”

Behroze Daruwala, Chairperson, WZCC-WE, International Board, highlighted the advantages of being a member of WZCC-WE. If a lady becomes a member she automatically has access to the global network of WZCC consisting of 15 Chapters worldwide. This expands the circle of networking of members and facilitates tapping into the resources of other Entrepreneurs.

Capt. Percy Master, President, India Region, WZCC spoke about the multi-faceted personality of women who not only work hard, out in the world as well as at home, and yet are always smiling and cheerful. He quoted, “Educate a girl child and she educates the world.”

He talked about the global AGMs of WZCC, particularly the last one held in Hong Kong, which was a great success. The next one was scheduled for Bangalore, a fast growing Chapter, which featured interesting Zarathushti Entrepreneurs.

Dolly Dhamodiwala, Committee Member and Immediate Past Chairperson, WE, introduced the trainer, Ms. Mandeep Kaur, Founder of Quarter Pants, an on-line marketing consultancy firm. Mandeep is a Marketing Professional with over 9 years of experience. Her areas of focus are: Strategy Consulting, Online Marketing (Website, SEM, Social Media, Newsletters, Influencer Marketing), Business Development and Training. Her clients have been Sorrento Healthcare, Villgro, HelpyourNGO, STAR Network, Reality Tours, Chic Therapy, Eat Drink Design, Buildmyevent, Matchmecupid, Breakup Helpline.

As we all know, Digital Marketing is a cost effective medium to promote your brand and widen your reach. This workshop proved to be invaluable for the 22 women participants. It was an eclectic group with women from diverse businesses like bakery, art, education, training, consultancy, manufacturing, interior designing, eco solutions, social media and garments. All the participants gave excellent feedback on the Workshop and the trainer’s personalized approach.

The topics covered were:
1. Create a digital marketing strategy for your product or service
2. Promote your brand (B2B or B2C) on social media
3. Effective paid advertising (Facebook ads & Google ads)
4. How to find influencers and reach out to them
5. Setting up newsletter and using it effectively
The audience learnt why it was important for them to have a digital marketing strategy for their brand.

Worksheets and assignments were given to make the participants refocus on their business objectives, their customers and competitors and the differentiating factors of their business before devising a suitable digital media strategy for them. Later actual hands on training was given to set up accounts by the attendees for Google Adwords and Facebook Ads. Guidelines for content creation were provided for both B2B and B2C businesses. Most importantly, personalized attention was given to solve problems faced by each participant and suggestions were given relating to the best media mix for each.

The workshop ended with a Vote of thanks from Veera Mundroina, Committee Member, WE.
The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) arranged a Seminar on "Financial Wellbeing" on Saturday, March 25, 2017 at Shapoorji Bharucha Baug, Andheri, Mumbai for its members and guests who are interested in a scientific way to invest their hard earned money through salary or through business. This Seminar was specially conducted for the third time for our suburban community people. This Seminar was conducted by Mr. Maher Dhamodiwala who is a Certified Financial Planner and the Founder-Proprietor of Financial Artists – a Personal Financial planning firm. He is a regular writer in Jam E Jamshed on financial matters. He is also a Committee Member of the Mumbai Chapter.

Financial Wellbeing is a joint initiative of Professional Financial Advisors, Financial Services Industry and Financial Planners Network of India. This initiative is further supported by National Institute for Securities Markets, Outlook Money (India’s No.1 Finance Magazine) and Investors Awareness / Protection Funds.

Mr. Dhamodiwala appraised the audience on achieving financial wellbeing and guided them to get started with the basic task to manage their personal finances and to achieve fulfillment of one’s financial goals towards long term wealth creation.

He explained to the audience the importance of investing in “Equity” either directly or through Mutual Funds. He also explained that we need to respect the power of compounding and in order to compound your money one needs patience, discipline and delayed gratification.

Ideally one must stick to asset allocation as per one’s own risk taking capacity and rebalance the portfolio when the markets are cheap in valuation and everybody should run a systematic investment plan and earmark it towards their life goals like kid’s education, marriage etc.

The session was well attended and appreciated.

Workshop – “Productivity Apps for the Workplace”

WZCC in its untiring efforts arranged an extremely interesting and informative Workshop – “Productivity Apps for the Workplace” on Saturday, April 22, 2017, best for the benefit of our community.

The program was extremely well conducted by Mr. Yazdi Tantra, Global Vice President of WZCC a successful Entrepreneur. By profession Mr. Tantra is a Chartered Accountant who gradually shifted his interest in software programming and acquired vast knowledge and experience in the application on Computers and Mobile phones.

A large gathering of WZCC members as well as non-members listened to Mr. Tantra with rapt attention. Mr. Tantra’s very lucid explanation on use of Google, Gmail and various Mobile Apps was well appreciated mainly because he showed them in actual practice what needs to be done by the users of Computers/Mobile phones.

He demonstrated how these tiny devices can have optimum utilization and in what way the same can make ones professional and personal life much more convenient and comfortable.

The session helped an interactive element where the participants were free to seek clarifications and ask questions on relevant aspects of his talk.

Since it was just an evening workshop, Mr. Tantra had to restrict his interesting talk to limited applications. However, it was strongly felt by all the participants that a useful event like this should be held once again at various places in North, South and Central Mumbai at regular intervals and that too for a full day.

The Workshop was followed by a musical event where Mr. Pesi and Kayo Sidhwa (of Mr. Sam Kerawalla’s group) regaled the audience with golden oldies much to their delight.

All the participants unreservedly expressed their utmost satisfaction and appreciated Mr. Tantra’s talk on this highly inspiring subject.
WZCC North American Regional Meeting on April 27, 2017, started with a tour of Coating Industries, Inc. and J.R. Manufacturing, L.P. owned by our local fellow Zarathushtis and WZCC members, Mrs. Aban Rustomji and her son Mr. Arish Rustomji. Over 50 participants from across USA and Canada were present.

Mrs. Aban Rustomji welcomed the attendees and made an inspiring presentation on how her late husband Mr. Purvez Rustomji founded the business in 1982. Starting with a small farm house and 9 acres of open land, the Coating Industries, Inc. is now spread out into several large buildings capable of treating huge industrial components. Their main business of corrosion protection coating service caters to industries like oil & gas, subsea, wastewater treatment, shipbuilding, pipelines, etc. Mr. Arish Rustomji’s presentation covered the growth and expansion of their business over the last few years. It was heart warming to see the next generation entrepreneur raise the company to a new height.

The J. R. Manufacturing, L.P., with 45,000 sq. ft. plant is located across the Coating Industries, Inc. It has been serving the onshore and offshore oil & gas industry since 2006. They provide their customers with turnkey fabrication and packaging services that include structural and pipe fabrication, assembly, paint, etc. At the end of the exhausting tour of the two facilities, thanks to Aban & Arish Rustomji, everybody was treated with a sumptuous lunch.

Afternoon session started with short welcome speeches by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston Chair, Mr. Aderbad Tamboli and the WZCC Global President, Mr. Edul Daver. The moderator Mr. Pradeep Anand was introduced by Mr. Rustom Engineer. Mr. Anand has been a keynote speaker at many business workshops and conferences in North America, UK, Continental Europe and India. His consulting business Seeta Resources, helps clients accelerate their firm’s revenue and growth margins.
1. PANEL DISCUSSION: FINANCIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESSES

The first panelist, Ms. Deborah Mansfield is a Director of a business accelerator in Houston and she spoke on Flavors of Crowd Funding for Innovation. She described different avenues of acquiring crowd funding such as donations, rewards, debt, and equity. She also described the pitfalls of Crowd Funding, such as businesses acquiring crowd funding based on a good idea, but not being able to transform the idea into a successful venture due to lack of a sound business model. Ms. Mansfield also provided several contacts and resources related to Crowd Funding.

The second panelist, Mr. Tim Jeffcoat, is a District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and he elaborated on How to Secure Funding from the SBA. He described various services provided by the SBA, and provided tips on how to obtain SBA loans. He also shared statistics such as the SBA providing 7 loans per day in the Houston area in 2016, which illustrated the high level of loan activity for the Houston office. Several business owners in the audience also shared their past experiences with the SBA.

The third panelist, Mr. Hossam Elbadway, is the President and CEO of O&G Technology, a Houston based technology incubator focused on the oil and gas industry. He conducted a very informative session on Venture Capital (VC) Funding. He stressed the importance of alignment between a business owner and the VCs. For instance, a VC firm may be looking for specific business entry and exit points, whereas a business owner may have a long-term vision for the company. He also discussed the importance of selecting the right VC firm that is a value-add investor, and provides not only the capital but creates differentiation by introducing new networks, additional sale channels, etc. The session was very stimulating and educational. Based on the never-ending questions and comments from the audience, it was a great success.

The session ended with Q&A followed by presentation of trophies by past and present WZCC office bearers.

2. KEYNOTE SPEECH by EDUL DAVER – WZCC Global President

After a short tea-break (courtesy: Nazneen & Kershaw Khumbatta), the next session started with a benediction lead by WZCC founding member Mr. Kaemerz Dotiwalla. Mr. Jehangir Mistry introduced Mr. Daver, who presented WZCC goals with 8 areas of high priority. They were, Chapter Growth and Sustainability; World wide Communication; Focus on Fiscal Discipline; Website Development; Iran Business Exploratory Expedition; Socio Business Project (Solar Energy and Clean Water); WZCC Business Venture Fund and Expand Reach (working closely with local Zarathushti Associations, Youth Organizations and the newly created WZCC youth group).
He announced the creation of the WZCC Business Advisory Group consisting of Yazdi Tantra, Phil Kharas, Percy Master, Sam Balsara and himself. The group is looking at Equity Financing in which individuals would place their individual investments in start-up for a short duration of 3-5 years. An experienced part time professional would help to monitor the entire process, starting with search for the right business opportunity to exit with profit and then reinvest in other companies.
Mr. Daver emphasized the need to involve more youth at all levels in WZCC. He concluded the presentation by reminding everybody that Not “Failure but Low Aim is Crime”.
Since the successful completion of the WZCC Regional Meeting on April 27, 2017, we have been receiving many comments encouraging us to pursue the goals we have set for WZCC.
WZCC’s commitment to Health & Happiness – Organized by Bangalore Chapter: India

Event held on Saturday, April 29th 2017 from 10.30 am to 2.00 pm.
Held on the grounds of The Green Pocket Nursery School owned by our Committee Member, Anahita Batha

The event was organised by the Committee to give its members an insight into Fitness for everyday living. We invited five professionals who held an interactive session with our members and their guests through a very informative and enjoyable afternoon.

1. Godrej Rustumji - Safety and Self Defence
Godrej is a WZCC member of the Bangalore Chapter and is an International Close Protection Officer catering to foreign national protection in India. He is also a firearm instructor. Godrej held the audience’s attention with some verbal pointers on how to be alert and observe one’s surroundings along with exciting self defence manoeuvres with volunteers from the audience. We saw quite a demand for more such sessions in the future.

2. Dr. Prathap - Chiropractor
Dr. Prathap is one of 10 practicing chiropractors in all of India and has his own wellness centre in Indiranagar. Originally from Canada, Dr. Prathap completed his doctorate in New York and strongly believes that prevention is the best cure for any health related issues. Many in the audience were not aware of what and how a Chiropractor works, so the talk by Dr. Prathap was enlightening to many. He brought along “Alfred”, his partner in crime (!) - a skeletal spine, to explain the physiology angle of his work. He demonstrated a few exercises that all of us could do on a daily basis to reduce the stress of long hours at a desk. His light humour entertained the audience through the 20 minutes he was on the dais.

3. Siddharth & Shaila - Fitness Trainer & Zumba Instructor
Siddharth comes from an IT background but decided to switch careers because he wanted to help people live a healthier lifestyle. He is a Crossfit Level 2 coach and a personal trainer who also helps in rehabilitation workouts for sports injuries. Shaila is a Zumba instructor and full of life and vitality. Siddharth took the audience through the necessities of working out and remaining fit, showing the audience what can be done even if one does not have the facilities of a gym. Shaila took us through a fun Zumba workout which got everyone ready for eats.

4. Farzin Sholapurwala - Certified Yoga Therapist and Trainer
Farzin is a Life Member of the WZCC and has been practicing yoga for the last 15 years. She had founded her own yoga centre and taught over 7100 students till date. She took the audience through some breathing techniques for glowing skin, the benefits of yoga and then practiced the Suryanamaskar along with members of the audience who were keen to know the correct way of performing it.

5. Red Fork had arranged the snacks:
A Millet Salad and a Pasta Salad, two kinds of sandwiches and baked yogurt with granola. Everyone enjoyed it thoroughly and Chef Xerxes spent time explaining how one should eat balanced meals, avoid yo-yo diets and how millets are the new in-ingredient and can be used in many ways.

Despite the small numbers it was a successful event.
Coffee with WZCC

Coffee with WZCC is an innovative initiative of the WZCC Mumbai Chapter which offers an open networking platform to enthusiastic Professionals and Entrepreneurs on the last Monday of each month. Idea being to network and touch base over a self bought cup of coffee.

The event has been well received by Entrepreneurs as well as Start-Ups and has successfully nurtured matured discussions on business models, management style, business needs, financial assistance opportunities, business opportunities and much more.

The base premise is to build a sense of camaraderie and share experiences on what kind of start-up issues each person is facing. It has been a great balance of experience and young start-ups and professionals who have attended the past three events.

The feedback currently is positive and we are seeing the relations being built. These relations will enable the participants to leverage the strength of the group as a whole. This will now be a monthly feature and will be available to all (members and non-members). Non-members after attending this event are slowly being drawn into the WZCC circle and realizing the advantages of being part of a reputed Chamber of Commerce like us.

Currently the participants network at the Horniman Circle Starbucks after business hours and interact with each other. They also stay in touch over a Whatsapp group specifically created for the purpose.

The participants have the unique opportunity to mention their specific business needs and build contacts with fellow Zarathushti Entrepreneurs and Professionals, thereby promoting business within the community. Having seen great value, participants have been enthusiastic about the initiative and look forward in making the most of this opportunity.

By Xerxes Dastur
In keeping with the vision and mission of WZC - to facilitate networking, enhance Trade and Commerce opportunities and to re-energize the Zarthashtian entrepreneurial spirit; the Dubai Chapter of WZCCME held its first meeting on 29th April, 2017, at the Park Regis Hotel - strategically located on the Sheikh Zayed road. The event was a success and attended by over 35 members.

Porus Guzder, President WZCCME, in his opening address, welcomed the gathering and shared the vision for the year 2017, assuring members that 2017 will be yet another productive year just like 2016, and an array of value based programs shall be offered to members. Support shall be extended to young talent to channel their creative spirit towards entrepreneurship.

Reflecting on 2016 programs, Porus said, whether it was the Wills and Probate program; the Training Skills program; or the Dubai Pravasi Yatra program ... they were all very successful programs conducted by WZCCME. He was particularly pleased with the performance of the DPY program, as it turned WZCCME into an engine of growth, with several businessmen returning to their destinations with business leads in their pockets.

To paraphrase an old saying – “the only constant in life is change,” Porus said, that the theme of the evening’s program was founded on ‘Change’ as certain changes are expected to be implemented in the UAE; starting next year. These are in keeping with the fast pace of growth in this region. The words that resonated most from his speech were - “We will keep what is good, fix what is wrong and unlock a great performance in 2017.” He, thanked those who were present at the meeting and said, togetherness is an important ingredient of WZCC and together we shall achieve a lot.

Firdaus Irani, Chapter Chair - UAE, made a crisp presentation highlighting the events lined up for the year 2017. Members expressed happiness as the calendar included interesting programs such as the exciting Skills Building Program; Speed Networking - that will bring members from specific industries to discuss business offerings in smaller groups over coffee evenings; Edutainment Quiz Field Trip to Abu Dhabi; Entrepreneurship Skill Building Event for the kids and more... He urged the community members to help increase the membership of WZCCME - which offers valuable benefits and welcomed the three new Youth Sub Committee Chairs - Jasmin Tavadia, Urvashk Tantra and Hanoz Patel who will work alongside with Cyrus Debara, the Youth Director of WZCCME adding zest to activities and bringing more youth into the fold of WZCCME. He concluded by saying – “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success” –Henry Ford.

The speakers for the evening were introduced by Jasmine Tavadia.

**VAT:**

The most awaited talk on “VAT” was delivered by Girish Chand of MCA Consultancy. Girish explained the concept of VAT, its implications, and how businessmen should prepare themselves as VAT will be implemented at the rate of 5% in the UAE, starting Jan 1, 2018. His presentation was impressive as it contained illustrative examples of how VAT will affect various sectors and work as the general consumption tax and apply to majority of transactions in goods and services as well as areas of imports/exports.

The interest could be gauged from the volley of questions fielded by members that related to non-payment of VAT, existing/pending contracts, free zone regulations and the extent of jurisdiction. Some questions were too early to be asked, so Girish explained, that the impending legislation once in place, would provide better clarity in all areas.

**Showcasing of ‘Imperial Avenue’ property – by Shapoorji Pallonji Group:**

Shapoorji Pallonji Group, whose name is synonymous with the construction industry, and have been in the GCC for over 50 years, made an impressive presentation by showing a film on their state-of-the-art property “Imperial Avenue” - a luxury residential project which is under construction in the Downtown Burj District, in Dubai.

Harneet Singh, the Assistant General Manager, Sales and Marketing, SP Group said that, the 45-storey residential tower will offer one to four bedroom apartments; three to five bedroom villas; and 4 and 5 bedroom penthouses surrounded by amenities with infinity pools, outdoor kids play area, recreation area, private movie hall, family pool and more... The sustainability features of solar panelled roof top, grey water harvesting and 6D BIM for facility management will be added benefits.

Most members at the meeting were amazed by the presentation and approached Rayomand Dastur, Director Sales and Marketing, SP Group, who was present at the event and Harneet Singh with their queries.

Imperial Avenue offers an excellent opportunity to all members either for living or investment and should not be missed!

**Immigration:**

The last presentation was a talk on Immigration. It was by Ms. Rashmi Vijay - Deputy General Manager of WWICS - a world leader in immigration assistance. Rashmi touched upon the options for emigrating to Australia, UK, USA and Canada available through self-funding program and Investors program with government/private sector. She also spoke on best countries to buy second passport, residency and recommended certain names in the Caribbean. “Many families in the world, are keen to buy a second citizenship that offers them a whole lot of benefits, from visa-free travel to better quality of life,” she said. Several queries were raised by members after her presentation and all of them were answered professionally.

Jimmy Dadrewalla, Global CFO, of Advanta Seeds Ltd., was invited to say a few words so Jimmy introduced himself to the members. Jimmy comes with a wide experience in driving organisation growth, corporate finance, international tax, Insurance & audits and has recently moved from the UK.

An announcement on Homai Bilimoria’s Food catering service in Dubai was made at the meeting and her Menu Cards were distributed to members. Homai was present at the meeting to interact with members.

The engaging sessions ended with a vote of thanks by Jasmine Tavadia.

This was followed by felicitation ceremony for the speakers by Meher Bhesania (Founding Director, WZCCME), Jimmy Kotwal - Senior Executive Emirates, and Firdaus Irani, WZCCME Chapter Chair - UAE.

The evening ended with networking over refreshments indicating when strength meets speed you grow faster.

**With best wishes and look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting...**

**Team - WZCCME**
Pictures from the WZCCME Event held at WZCCME Board Members the Park Regis Hotel on 29th April, 2017

WZCCME Board Members

Porus Guzder
President, WZCCME & International Director WZCC
Business Profile: Managing Director, Incentive Connections Tourism LLC & Ahura Transport & Limousine Services.

Firdaus Irani
Chapter Chair, WZCCME
Business Profile: Founder & Managing Director, EMDI Institute of Media & Communication.

Nowshir Engineer
Director, Business Development, WZCCME
Business Profile: Guzder & Managing Director, EMDI Institute of Media & Communication.

Cyrus Debara
Director, Youth Affairs, WZCCME
Work Profile: Sales and Business Development Manager, DNATA, Dubai

Kashmira Kotwal
Treasurer, WZCCME
Business Profile: Director, Cordoba Institute, Dubai

Wahbeez Wankadia
Board Secretary, WZCCME
Work Profile: Assistant Marketing Manager, MENA region NALCO Champion, an Ecolab Company.
Noteworthy Information:

GOODS & SERVICES TAX

In India because of its complex tax system, it becomes impossible for new businesses and startups to navigate through various direct and indirect taxes. Constant changes to taxes like Service Tax make things worst. A businessman finds out that when he has his final product ready he will have paid the Central and State Governments at least 10 different taxes not all of which are exclusive of each other. On diving deeper he finds many cases where a tax is also taxed by the government. But now, the things are set to change with new Goods and service tax – commonly known as GST.

Let's understand what is GST, how it is different from other taxes, GST applicability, GST rates, its impact on your business and latest updates about GST bill.

The Goods and Services Tax promises to alleviate this problem among many others. It is being hailed as the game changer for India's economy and is being labelled as the biggest change in the Constitution since India's independence. The Goods and Services Tax or commonly referred to as the GST will replace the indirect taxes levied by the Central and State Governments and provide for a single and streamlined process. It presents India as a unified market to business owners and also aims at bringing a lot of black money back into the mainstream economy. The tax will be implemented at every step of value creation.

Example Of GST Calculation

Let us assume that the GST is set at 20%. Suppose that the manufacturing cost of a Product A is 100 and assuming a GST of 20% the total amount is Rs. 120. The next step of taxation would be when the Product is sold to consumers, let's say at a price of 150. So the GST will charge another 20% on just the difference of Rs. 150 and Rs. 120 i.e. only 20% on Rs. 30 which is equal to Rs. 6. So the final price is Rs. 150 + Rs. 6. Unlike the case of petrol pricing there is no tax on a tax now. This eliminates the cascading effect of taxes which is very prevalent in our economy and has been simplified to an elemental level in the example.

Since the GST will be applied at every step of value creation it will be very difficult for black money owners to participate anywhere in the value chain with the GST without accounting for all other transactions. The GST is estimated to provide an immediate boost of 0.9% – 1.4% of the GDP.

10 FAQs About GST Bill
1) What are final GST rate slabs?

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be levied at multiple rates ranging from 0 per cent to 28 per cent. GST Council finalised a four-tier GST tax structure of 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%, with lower rates for essential items and the highest for luxury and de-merits goods that would also attract an additional cess.

Service Tax will go up from 15% to 18%. The services being taxed at lower rates, owing to the provision of abatement, such as train tickets, will fall in the lower slabs. In order to control inflation, essential items including food, which presently constitute roughly half of the consumer inflation basket, will be taxed at zero rate.

The lowest rate of 5% would be for common use items. There would be two standard rates of 12% and 18% which would fall on the bulk of the goods and services. This includes fast-moving consumer goods.

Highest tax slab will be applicable to items which are currently taxed at 30-31% (excise duty plus VAT).

Ultra luxuries, demerit and sin goods (like tobacco and aerated drinks), will attract a cess for a period of five years on top of the 28% GST.

The collection from this cess as well as that of the clean energy cess would create a revenue pool which would be used for compensating states for any loss of revenue during the first five years of implementation of GST.

Finance minister said that the cess would be lapsable after five years.

The structure agreed is a compromise to accommodate demand for highest tax rate of 40% by states like Kerala. While the Centre proposed to levy a 4% GST on gold but the final decision on has been put off. During a press conference, finance minister Mr. Jaitley said, “GST rate on gold will be finalised after the fitting to the approved rates structure of all items is completed and there is some idea of revenue projections”.

The principle for determining the rate on each item will be to levy and collect the GST at the rate slab closest to the current tax incidence on it. The GST will subsume the multitude of cesses currently in place, including the Swachh Bharat Cess, the Krishi Kalyan Cess and the Education Cess. Only the Clean Environment Cess is being retained, revenues from which will also fund the compensations.

2) What are CGST, SGST and IGST?

India is a federal democracy that is one which has clear demarcation of powers, responsibility and revenue collection between the states and the centre in its constitution. For example law and order falls under the state’s jurisdiction while the nation’s defence is the centre’s responsibility. The GST too needs to have clear provisions on what areas the centre and the state are allowed to collect revenue from taxation to prevent an overlapping.

The Central GST or CGST is the areas where the centre has the powers and State GST where the State has taxation capabilities. The IGST or Integrated GST is for movement of goods within the states of the Indian union. This will be collected by the union however will be transferred over to the states. Thus it is essential that if and when the GST comes out it is rolled over in the entire nation simultaneously.

3) What are the differences between the UPA’s GST and the NDA’s GST?

Below are the primary differences:

- Petroleum sector has been kept out of the ambit of GST
- Liquor for human consumption is exempt however tobacco and tobacco products will fall under GST
- There is a 1% tax on top of the GST for inter-state movement of goods and services.

4) What are the taxes that GST replaces?
The GST replaces numerous different indirect taxes such as:

1. Central Excise Duty
2. Service Tax
3. Countervailing Duty
4. Special Countervailing Duty
5. Value Added Tax (VAT)
6. Central Sales Tax (CST)
7. Octroi
8. Entertainment Tax
9. Entry Tax
10. Purchase Tax
11. Luxury Tax
12. Advertisement taxes
13. Taxes applicable on lotteries.

5) What will be the short-term impact of GST?
The GST will fuel inflation for the short term. The GST rate starts at 5% and 18% taxation services such as restaurants, movies etc. are bound to increase prices. Another problem with the GST that many pundits feel is not including liquor and petroleum under GST’s ambit. These are major revenue sources for the government and experts feel this is being done due to a few crony capitalists who need some time to funnel away their black money as the GST promises to widen the tax paying population.

6) When will GST be implemented?
Its widely assumed that GST rollout will start only after 1 July 2017.

7) What is a constitutional amendment?
A Constitutional Amendment as the name suggests is any change in the Constitution. A democracy like India derives all its rules and laws from the Constitution and hence any change in the Constitution is a change in the fundamental fabric of the country. The GST is the One Hundred and Twenty Second such proposed amendment and hence is named The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Second Amendment) Bill, 2014.

In simple terms bills other than the Constitution Amendment Bill are just modifications to topics that area already mentioned in the constitution. The introduction of a few new IIFs is a perfect example. All these require are a simple majority in both the houses and the President’s Approval. However the GST requires a Constitution Amendment Bill which is a direct change in the Constitution and requires two-thirds of the votes in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

8) What are the finer points in the implementation of the bill?
Several committees were setup to evaluate the feasibility and implementation of the GST. Some fine points which were considered are:

1. The problem of separating the taxation powers of the state and the centre which resulted in CGST and SGST.
2. Exemptions from the GST which currently includes Petroleum and Liquor for human consumption.
3. The GST will be applicable on imports too along with the Basic Customs Duty which has not been scrapped.
4. The GST will be applicable at the point of sale. In comparison the Value Added Tax is a destination based tax while excise duties are taxed at the origin.
5. The workings in the implementation of IGST.

9) What is the Empowered Committee?
The Empowered Committee is a committee of the Finance Ministers of the states. It was set up by the Vajpayee Government to look into the Value Added Tax model. The committee has had an influential hand in shaping and structuring of the GST.

10) What will become costlier and cheaper?
According to experts, these items could become costlier:

- Cigarette prices likely to go up as GST rate for tobacco will be higher than current duties
- Commercial vehicles such as trucks will become costlier
- Mobile phone calls may get costlier as service tax will go up
- Textile and branded jewellery may become costlier

And these could become cheaper:

- Auto: Prices of entry-level cars, two-wheelers, SUVs may fall
- Car batteries likely to get cheaper
- Paint, cement prices likely to fall
- Movie ticket prices likely to fall as entertainment tax will come down
- Electronics items like fans, lighting, water heaters, air coolers, etc. will get cheaper

Courtsey : ProfitBooks
WZCC launches a new website – www.wzcc.org

Our website (www.wzcc.net) has been the focal point for our Chapters sharing their programs and resources as well as for individual members networking and connecting with businesses and professionals across the globe. Most of our programs are posted on the website, in addition to our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/wzcc.net/). It is also a repository of resources for WZCC including the Mission, Charter, Bye-Laws, Archives of Newsletters and Synergyz.

With the growth of technology and growing aspirations from our Chapters and Members, we have now launched our spanking new website which features the following upgradations:

1. Enhanced look and feel, in keeping with current trends – browse through the website for a bright and modern look. Get all existing features at easily locatable links
2. The website is compatible with mobile accessibility – it is responsive – you will get the same enhanced experience while browsing the website on your mobile phones.
3. Members can now subscribe to the Newsletters and E-Blasts instantly online.
4. Chapters have now been empowered to manage their own pages on the website. Any event announcements, reports, photos, etc. can now be uploaded directly by the individual Chapter webmasters – no waiting and no errors! Members can now get instant updates.
5. Chapters can solicit ads for the website to augment their own resources. These could be local ads which are directly relevant to the Chapter or Region. The ads could be for products / services offered or wanted. These ads can literally pay you, for using the website!
6. We now have a Jobs Portal, listing Jobs Available and Jobs Wanted by Region or Globally. Those wanting to recruit can place WANTED ads and those who need jobs can put up their brief profiles for other members to view and offer jobs. Professional exchanges can take place in field of common interest too.
7. There is a discussion area for members who can post their own Business Related questions and seek answers from experts or seniors. This is one of the live interactive areas where members can share experiences, seek advice and network with peers and seniors. The more you use this section, the more benefits will accrue to you and your business.
8. Besides, all existing features on our earlier website, including member search, Bye-Laws, contact details of Committee Members and Directors, Photo Gallery, etc. continue to be carried on the website.

All Chapters and Members are encouraged to use the website effectively to enhance their Networking and Business Interests.

Also, don’t forget to join our Facebook Group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/wzcc.net/

If you have any questions, suggestions, feedback or comments, please E-mail on webteam@on-lyne.com.
Re: Suggestions for obtaining Feedback through the Newsletter

The following thoughts came to mind about getting Feedback from readers of the Newsletter. The basic purpose being to generate more value from the Newsletter.

“Keeping in mind that WZCC is a Chamber of Commerce, we will be grateful for your feedback to improve the value of the Newsletter for members and readers;

1. What other items or subjects in the Newsletter will help you in your career, profession or business.

2. What are you looking for?
   • Mentoring for scaling up your business;
   • Management Skills;
   • Networking Opportunities;

3. Are you a Member - if YES then are you - * Annual * Life * Corporate

4. If NO – The reason for not enrolling.

5. The Application Form for Membership is available on our website – wzcc.org ➔ Chapters ➔ Mumbai Chapter.”