

**OFFICE ATTITUDE**

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Mary Jane Paris, owner of Positive Impact Consulting Services LLC, leads a seminar Tuesday at the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce in Shelton. She recently wrote a book titled 'A Positive Workplace Means Business! It Just Makes Cent\$!'

## Author: Happy workers make 'cent\$'

By Pam Dawkins  
STAFF WRITER

SHELTON — Mary Jane Paris spent a decade staying home raising her children, then several years working for someone else and is now three years into her life as an entrepreneur.

"My life has been a series of reinventions," said the 61-year-old Shelton resident and owner of Positive Impact Consulting Services LLC. "It's kind of cool now, looking back."

After a divorce, and time at Housatonic Community College brushing up on her typing and shorthand skills, Paris went to work as an administrative assistant, then became a manager with Olsten Temporary Services. Fifteen years in banking — as an account executive with what was Bank of Boston Connecticut and then as branch manager, recruiter and teacher in the corporate university at People's Bank — culminated with a layoff from People's in February 2006.

Her decision then, Paris said, was simple. She could either be a victim or use the severance money to start a business, sharing the lessons she's learned about making connections

and creating a positive work environment.

"We still have choices" about how we react to bad news in this economy, she said.

Much of her working time was spent managing the people who dealt with the paying customers, Paris said. She can help her clients create better relations with these workers, which improves their business. Paris has been teaching as an adjunct in Housatonic Community College's business department for five years. After the layoff, she started an electronic newsletter and began speaking on workplace and other issues.

Now, in her latest reinvention, Paris has pulled all that into a book, "A Positive Workplace Means Business! It Just Makes Cent\$!"

Chapter content include office attitudes and etiquette, and Paris also featured interviews with leaders of five successful area businesses: Jill Leonard Tavallo of Stew Leonard's in Norwalk; Patrick Charmel of Griffin Hospital in Derby; Robert Scinto of R.D. Scinto Inc. in Shelton; Cindi Bigelow of R.C. Bigelow Inc. in Fairfield;

and Larry Janesky of Basement Systems Inc. in Seymour.

She asked each five questions about their approach to diversity and their philosophy.

"She saw that we live a lot of the things she's writing about," Janesky said. Employee turnover is expensive, he said, so it's better to keep people happy, which creates better workers and results. Employee longevity also will make a good impression on customers, he added.

"You've got to develop a culture that pays for results," not only time, and employees will step up to the plate, he said.

Paris used the online publishing site Lulu to create and print her book, which retails for \$14.95. She spent \$99 to purchase an International Standard Book Number, which means retailers can sell it. The book is available on Amazon.com and as an audio book. Her target audience is small and mid-sized businesses without training departments.

"It's been an evolution, finding my authentic voice, and I think I nailed it this year," she said.

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