

Workshops explore ways to improve business

By SARKIS KHOURY

With the formalities of opening the conference over and the key speeches delivered, the focus switched to the start of workshops hosted by sponsors and associate sponsors of Business Sydney's 1998 NSW 500 Summit Conference.

The workshop presenters attracted the attention of delegates through well-presented discussions of pertinent issues affecting the functioning of small businesses today.

A total of 16 workshops held throughout the Fairmont Resort's conference facilities commenced Friday May 1, with four workshops held during each session.

The issues covered throughout the workshops ranged from information technology, banking and finance, industrial relations, exporting, training, management, superannuation, marketing, investment, government relations and improving customer service.

Among the four morning sessions was a popular discussion of equity capital and

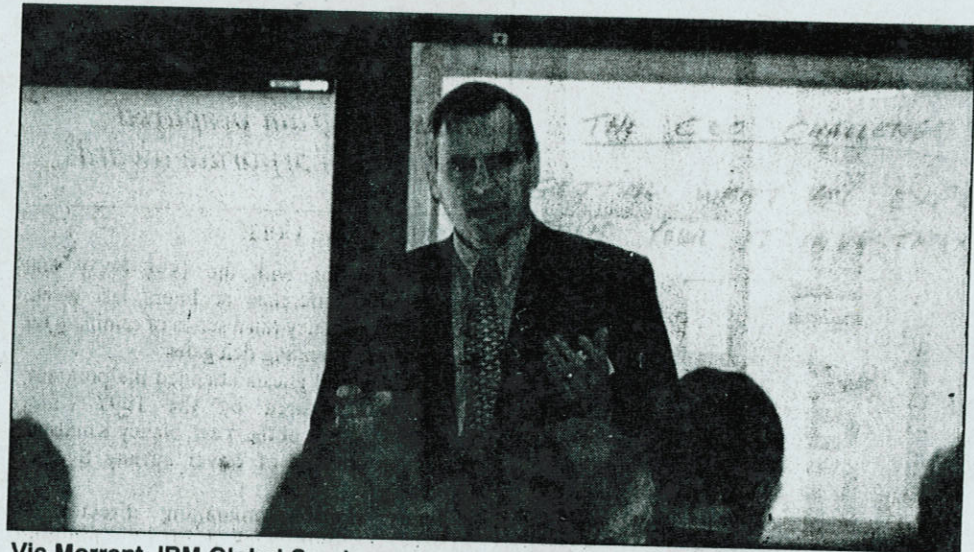
management of the take off in high growth Companies, presented by James Pulsen, investment facilitation manager at David Millhouse & Associates Pty Ltd.

Pulsen discussed how private companies become ready for investment and how they can use equity markets for their businesses through public and private models.

He said to achieve this, businesses were required to conduct a business readiness or planning program within their own companies, which provided the necessary preparation should the decision to access equity funds be made.

The importance of using equity capital was that it provided a more strategic way to grow and develop company operators, providing a more liquefied asset in the future when the decision to sell the company is made, he said.

Howard Herman, Millbank Properties Pty Ltd's finance director who attended the workshop said the information was very useful, introducing some new ideas which he was unaware of before the workshop.



Vic Marrant, IBM Global Services

Herman said the workshop showed him "what was required to be implemented beforehand and would be looking closely into it."

With the break for morning tea over, the second session of workshops continued to draw large attendances. The presentation on innovation to grab new global markets, conducted by Richard McKie, senior manager of business services, from the New South Wales Department of State and Regional Development, was one of the popular sessions.

McKie discussed how to attract global markets by positioning the business and the necessary strategies required to be successful.

The afternoon sessions continued to be well attended with many delegates attempting to attend several sessions being run simultaneously.

MarketShare's presentation by Michael Walker, general manager, on new marketing was one of the busiest sessions of the afternoon. Walker discussed the idea of creating a value monopoly of the business' products and services to provide them with their own industry category.

Walker also discussed Edward de Bono's concept of "surpetition" which refers to being above competition and having the individual business compete in its own race rather than in competition with other companies.

He also discussed the four main values which determined market decisions, which are: convenience, quality of life, self importance and distraction. He said by understanding these principles it enabled the business to target its products more effectively.

Kerry Pidcock, managing director of Big River Timbers Pty Ltd, said he was quite happy with the presentation and that it was highly effective and very useful.

"What we learnt we will be able to adapt to our business and I dare say we may well be using them in the future," Pidcock said.

Other presenters of workshops throughout the day included: National Australia Bank, Coopers & Lybrand, Corrs Schneider, Australian Business Ltd, Corrs Chamber Westgarth, IBM, Microsoft, OzEmail and Australian Business On-Line.



Derek Volker, Chairman, Government Practice Group, Corrs Chambers Westgarth