

## 6 Women Share Keys to Success

By Patricia Moore  
Staff Writer

Success comes with self-assurance and a fair dose of humor, five women business owners and a U.S. Senate candidate demonstrated Thursday.

The key is trusting your instincts in business decisions, the women explained at the Entrepreneurial Women's Conference.

As fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg whimsically described the process, her biggest mistake and success came from being impulsive and instinctive. The greatest surprise was discovering that it worked.

The conference, sponsored by the Women's Business Development Center and the Chicago Sun-Times, drew 1,000 participants to a day of seminars and the luncheon panel discussion at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Barbara Proctor, the first black woman to found a nationally recognized advertising agency in Chicago, said success comes with "not winning the war but the day. Get a good night's sleep and wake up the next morning to go one more round." She started Proctor and Gardner in 1970.

Mary Ann Jackson, founder of My Own Meals and the youngest of the panelists, said her greatest surprise was discovering banks don't loan money on the basis of an

entrepreneur's business idea. "You have to go to everyone you know to get money and then to their friends and so on. I spend 50 percent of my time raising money."

Capital raised for the Deerfield-based business is exchanged for equity, with Jackson retaining 70 percent of the voting stock.

My Own Meals is carried in 1,000 stores.

Frances Lear, who founded Lear magazine with the proceeds of her divorce settlement from TV producer Norman Lear, was the oldest participant at age 69. She also has started a consulting firm for women in public works projects and the first executive search firm for women.

Barbara Levy Kipper, chairman of Charles Levy Co., said her first task was proving herself as the third generation and first woman to head the circulation and distribution firm.

Senate candidate Carol Moseley Braun related a Ginger Rogers story.

When Rogers was interviewed after the death of her famous dance partner, Fred Astaire, the interviewer talked only about Astaire's greatness. Finally, Rogers reminded him that she had to do everything Astaire did—and do it "backwards and wearing high heels."

The panel was moderated by Cindy Richards, Sun-Times reporter and writer of the "Working Women" column.