

[Asian Women in Business Panel: Reinventing Yourself at Any Age](#)

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On Thursday, August 21st, [Asian Women in Business](#) held an event called “Reinventing Yourself at Any Age” at the Office of The Manhattan Borough President. The event introduced five Asian businesswomen who underwent a career change and in favor of starting their own businesses. Headed by Bonnie Wong, the event introduced the stories of the five women entrepreneurs and was also open to questions from the audience.



Julie Azuma

One of the speaking guests was Julie Azuma, a working mother who left the apparel industry after discovering that her adopted daughter, Miranda, was autistic. She then formed [Different Roads to Learning](#), Inc., a company that specializes in educational products for children diagnosed with autism. For over 18 years, Azuma’s company has supported, educated and inspired teachers, families and individuals affected by autism all over the world.



Conlyn Chan

Another guest was Conlyn Chan, a former international lawyer at the law firm Hogan Lovells. Unsatisfied with her career in law, she enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology to learn about business, art and design. Using the skills she acquired at FIT, Chan founded [Lawless Accessories](#), a company whose products have been used by the likes of Eva Longoria, Blake Lively and Whitney Port.



Geetha Jayaraman

Geetha Jayaraman, owner of [Grab 'Em Snacks](#), worked 17 years as a financial analyst with Fortune 500 companies. After growing weary of her job, she decided to create a company inspired by her love for making and eating plantain chips. Grab 'Em Snacks produces tasty chips that range in seven different flavors, including Sea Salt, Sweet & Salt, Cinfu! Cinnamon, and FireMeUp Red Chili. Her snacks are available in specialty stores, gift basket companies, and can also be purchased online.



Christine Moran

Another guest was Christine Moran, a former lawyer who decided to take a different approach. Instead of setting up her own business, she became the Director of Business Development at [CBS Local](#) after being recommended to the position by a former co-worker. She oversees the company's digital media, including websites and mobile apps. After having had no prior experience with digital media, Moran was able to easily adjust to her position thanks to some of the skills she acquired as a lawyer.



Cyrilla Suwarsa

The final guest was Cyrilla Suwarsa, a former graphic designer who graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design. After visiting her family in Indonesia, she met a farmer who grew cashew apples. The farmer insisted that she buy the leftover cashew nuts, and after mistakenly buying 200 lbs of them, Cyrilla and her family roasted them using her grandmother's special recipe. It was then that she decided to create [Nuts + Nuts](#), which produces Indonesian cashews in a variety of flavors. Her cashews have been featured in Food and Wine magazine and was recently considered a "Snack of the Day" by Rachel Ray.

After talking about the history of their careers and businesses, each guest gave advice and answered questions from the audience. One important advice was to "believe in yourself," because entrepreneurs often experienced moments when their friends or family would try to discourage them from continuing with their business. They also emphasized the importance of networking, persistence, and maintaining good connections.

After the panel concluded, guests were allowed to chat, network, eat and sample Suwarsa and Jayaraman's snacks at a reception. Both their cashews and plantain chips are highly addicting, and come in a variety of Asian-inspired flavors. Also available was Indian food provided by Rajbhog Foods, a manufacturer of sweets, snacks, frozen appetizers, frozen entrees, beverages and breads.