

MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

The American Business Council-Kuwait held its October General Meeting in the Crowne Plaza hotel, Farawaniya. The keynote speaker for the evening was Mr. Naem Mirza, Head of Corporate Sales at Al Wataniya Telecom, who offered a wide-ranging and informative two-part presentation on social and business etiquette and developments in the telecommunications industry.

For those new to Kuwait, the opening section of Mr. Mirza's presentation was particularly useful. Beginning with some Ramadan-specific guidance, he outlined some of the key features of expected behavior in a range of social and business situations. These included tips on how to respond in situations such as meeting someone for the first time, to gift giving and dining etiquette.

Of even greater interest was the section on the development of good business relationships. Mr. Mirza was keen to stress how much local businessmen prefer to deal with people whom they know personally and so spending time getting to know a prospective client is vital.

Mr. Mirza also placed great emphasis on the need for patience in dealing with local businesses and the people who run them. Kuwait is an event-driven rather than a time-driven society and its people are far more interested in the outcome rather than the timeliness of the event. Attendees were also reminded that the decision-making process in Kuwait can take some time and that trying



Naem Mirza presenting



Attentively listening to the presentation



to rush things can cause offence and put a business relationship at risk.

Also likely to cause offence is an individual's use of high-pressure sales tactics. Such an approach, Mr. Mirza warned, is highly likely to prove counter-productive in a society which takes offence at such methods.

Mr. Mirza's final piece of practical advice on this matter was a simple reminder: always give a business card to someone whom you meet for the first time and always ensure that it is translated accurately into Arabic.

Having looked in detail at aspects of effective social communication and integration, Mr. Mirza turned his attention to the range of ways in which Al Wataniya can facilitate better communication through its provision of a range of products and services.

