Educational Workshop Explores Added Value Through Portfolio Management

More than 70 CoreNet Global NYC Chapter members turned out for the Education Committee's recent workshop entitled "Better Solutions for Workplace Optimization: From Tactical to Strategic - Adding Value Through Portfolio Management." The event was held at Steelcase's showroom near Columbus Circle.

The workshop was led by Jane Mather, Ph.D., the founder of Critical Core, a consulting and software company that provides clients with tools and techniques for analyzing, planning, and making decisions regarding the critical core assets that support their organizations—employees and real estate. Mather, who has taught CoreNet Global workshops throughout the country for many years, earlier served as a professor of economics at The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, Dartmouth College, and Zhongnan University of Finance and Economics in Wuhan, China.

The workshop emphasized the importance of moving from "tactical" to "strategic" in corporate real estate and establishing a long-term perspective on the overall business. She used various analogies that compared common challenges faced in her second and third occupations as ski instructor and rescue dog trainer, to those in the corporate real estate industry.

Mather discussed how CREs should familiarize themselves with the functions and needs of their companies' various business units by reviewing revenue forecasts and speaking with employees and senior executives. She demonstrated various graphs relating to overlapping business-unit needs that can to be extremely valuable in both short- and long-term space planning.

Mather also took a look at cost-cutting in today's economic environment. Through innovative formulas and graphs, she revealed many ways to evaluate real estate cost savings that do not negatively impact productivity.

"When you organize your data, make graphs to visualize the point you are trying to make rather than having pages and pages of numbers that don't really mean anything," Mather advised the audience. It is much easier to make a case to senior executives when you have a picture right there, she said.

Mather also opened the discussion to audience members, who were then able to share with their peers the ways their companies' policies have impacted workplace strategy and which initiatives have proven to be the most successful.