

CALGARY BUSINESS

RELATIONSHIPS



Christine Hart often uses the Bean Scene in downtown Calgary as the site for her speed dating service, Six Minute Dates Inc. She claims 23 marriages and engagements to her company's credit. Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald

Speed dating gives you six minutes to impress

Calgary firm allows busy professionals chance to meet

MICHAEL LAU
CALGARY HERALD

Christine Hart doesn't take her introduction service lightly — and for good reason.

The speed dates she arranges for clients can be the most important six minutes of their lives.

Six Minute Dates Inc., the Calgary-based company Hart launched three years ago with co-owner Dana Blonde, has helped spark more than 23 marriages and engagements.

"The main feedback we get from all of these couples is there's no way they would have met had they not come to one of our events," Hart said proudly.

"I love that feeling of helping them meet or creating an environment for them to meet. It's a very warm feeling."

Every event is carefully organized because of the high personal stakes for clients, mostly busy single professionals.

"Dealing with people's personal lives is not all about the party. You have to have a personal touch, a genuine interest in your guests and in their success in the dating world," said Hart, adding the evenings are well structured.

"They start on time and there are no hidden costs. Yet they're very fun and relaxed. Everybody leaves totally satisfied, whether they met their soul mate or not."

The company is active in Calgary

small business

Six Minute Dates Inc.

■ Six Minute Dates is a Calgary-based speed dating service for single Canadian professionals.

■ Since its inception in January 2002, the company has held 300 events, drawing up to 5,000 different participants. It has offices in Calgary and Vancouver.

■ In Calgary, regular events are held at The Bean Scene downtown. Six Minute Dates can be contacted at 243-1456 or www.sixminutedates.com.

and Vancouver.

Regular Calgary events are held at The Bean Scene downtown five to eight times a month, with up to 28 singles (14 men and 14 women) at each evening.

Each event is restricted to one of three age ranges — 25 to 35, 30 to 40 and 35 to 45 — plus or minus three years.

The cost per person is \$45 plus tax, which pays for registration and a drink voucher for coffee, beer or wine.

Participants are seated at tables for two. The men move from table to table every six minutes until they've talked face-to-face with every woman attendee.

After the event, participants must log on, within 36 hours, to the Six Minute Dates website (www.sixminutedates.com) to register their choices.

Once all the choices are in, attendees are notified of any matches and pro-

vided their matches' e-mail addresses.

Hart admits neither she nor Blonde had gone on a speed date before starting their venture.

However, in 2001, while operating a casting service in Toronto, Hart was hired by a reality TV show to research the singles scene.

"One of the events I attended was speed dating and knowing nothing about it, I was really impressed by the whole concept. I could not believe how much sense it made," she recalled.

Hart moved to Calgary in December 2001. Noticing no one had brought the concept to Calgary, she and Blonde started Six Minute Dates in January 2002.

"What solidified it for me was a statistic from 1998 that said 65 new people moved to Calgary per day," Hart said. "The cogs started turning and I thought, 'I can make a business that not only helps busy people but helps people moving to the city.'"

The beauty of speed dating is the efficient use of time and money.

"You can spend a night in a club and easily spend \$45 and try to guess who's single and who's not. Or you can be set up by a friend, and go for dinner, and easily spend close to \$100 and you would have known in the first six minutes that really, we don't have a lot in common or the chemistry isn't there," said Hart.

"People like speed dating because we're finally putting the power back in them. We're not saying 'You'd be good for so and so.' We're going to give you the environment to choose for yourself."

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