5th Anniversary of Business Matters

Sri Lanka’s first Television business program celebrates five years on 7th October, 1996. The Business Community has been privileged to have a voice in the media through *Business Matters* during its five-year existence. Business Matters is now recognised and acclaimed for its extensive and in-depth coverage of the business sector in Sri Lanka.



The life behind this program, are the program presenters, two very dynamic ladies, greatly different in personality and approach, but both with the same determination to make Business Matters the best business program found in today’s television media. *Ajita Kadirgamar and Sharmini Serasinghe* devised the program in 1991, and during the ensuing years they moulded it into the most informative and in-depth business program to be aired on local television.

Business Matters has featured almost every leading corporate firm, but they have not forgotten the small and medium-scale entrepreneurs. Indeed, Business Matters has striven to highlight the efforts of these enterprising persons, providing them with valuable exposure, especially within the business community.

Business Matters has also featured investigative reports on current business-related issues, some of which have been pioneering efforts at investigative journalism Interviews, both with local and visiting foreign business personalities and experts, have also given depth to the content of the program National Business Exhibitions and Trade Fairs, particularly highlighting small-scale business ventures from rural areas of the island, have given the public an opportunity to see the varied facets of the business trade as well as offering the entrepreneurs the much-needed exposure. Business Matters also provides an update on the Securities and Currency Exchanges on each program.

Having been aired on Rupavahini, the government-owned television network which is the only station to have clear reception across the island, Business Matters has reached the average viewer. While the business community has been keenly following its progress, the most avid audience has been the general public. Many viewers have written in to say that the program has been very informative and has greatly enhanced their knowledge of the business trade and the corporate world. “We had not realised that our larger audience was the average Sri Lankan until we had letters coming in to tell us how much they appreciated the program. Students have written in to tell us that the program has helped increase their knowledge and has been an aid to their studies. Others have written in to say that they now know so much more than ever before of the different businesses and the inner workings of the corporate world” said Ajita Kadirgamar.

“It has been a pleasure to be able to allow the program to voice many different view points. We appreciate the freedom given to us by the Rupavahini Corporation, especially since one has to be very careful to have no bias or prejudice when featuring the business community”, explained Sharmini Serasinghe. They have successfully balanced their views, projecting the realistic current situation of the business community.

“We have tried to give a voice to the new businessmen and the entrepreneurs. We have placed special emphasis on women entrepreneurs, pioneering efforts in different industries and the small and medium-scale exporter”, said Ajita.

While Ajita has been handling the investigative stories, Sharmini covers the corporate news and stock market and currencies exchange. This positive working partnership has been the key to the success of Business Matters. Ajita Kadirgamar has been a television producer for more than 14 years, and has a wealth of experience which has been directed entirely towards the program within the last

five years. Sharmini is a well-recognised and popular news reader, whose keen “business sense” and experience as a producer has greatly enhanced the program content and presentation.

Though the production techniques of Business Matters could be described, at best, as unsophisticated, its essence and the varied coverage has brought it international recognition and acclaim. Ajita and Sharmini state that several items initiated for Business Matters have been made into contributions for the CNN World Report.

Business Matters has been sponsored by the Hatton National Bank during the last year, and a renewal for another year of sponsorship has already been agreed on. This has affirmed the value of the program to the business community.

The tremendous success of Business Matters has prompted Rupavahini to telecast a Sinhala version of the program, the first of which will be aired on October 14th, 1996.

Business Matters is currently aired fortnightly over Rupavahini on Mondays at 9.15 p.m.