July Lincolnshire chef Rachel Green, above left, swap ups and advice at the business conference held at Lincoln's DoubleTree



provided with a game-changing tool. It can be done very easily and badly or it can be done properly with the help of

experts. The event, on Friday, September 14, gave food producers, restaurateurs and hospitality professionals advice on how to take advantage of modern plat-

The global online brand manager of DoubleTree by Hilton, US to give tips to the guests. Ms Plazas gave examples of how her company had like Facebook,

mastered the social media plat-Foursquare and Twitter She added there was a higher level of Twitter users in the IIK as percentage of the nation's population, than anywhere else in the world. "Social media has made

brands extremely transparent," she said.

"It bears all of your dirty laundry but it also allows you "How do you want people to

to provide a solution. perceive your company? "Social media allows you to convey that message."

Everybody has the oppórtunity on social media to promote their business

Lincolnshire chef Rachel Green

Ms Plazas said she believes companies' responses to customer messages on online platforms could be improved. She revealed they typically

only respond to 30 per cent of could send out a message about feedback and take an average

of 26 hours to do so. However, she urged firms to integrate the tools into their business strategies as a way to connect with customers and humanise the face of their

"Make it a key part of what you are doing and make it part of your routine until it becomes effortless," she said. Lincolnshire chef and farmer Rachel Green said many of the county's wide array of food and drink businesses could bene-

"Everybody has the opporfunity on social media to promote their business but sometimes it can be some of the more unexpected companies. "For example cafe owners

what they are cooking in the morning and people may see it and decide to come in a try something. "I know a group of farmers

that use Twitter to share information on the weather. which shows how it can be used for companies to collab-

"It's not always about the immediate results, it can also be about the long-term bene-

The event was sponsored by a string of local bodies, including the Select Lincolnshire and Tastes of Lincolnshire partnership.

Mr Le Santo, one of the dir ectors of LincUpLive, was among a number of industry figures to speak on the day

First Person

Wendy Spalding-Siracusa is a Partner in the commercial team of Sills & Betteridge Solicitors and co-founder of Angels



The 'who you know' is likely to be a high powered businessman

he European Commission recently raised the issue of compulsory targets to increase women's presence on

corporate boards. Today, despite years of pressure, only 15 per cent of the top 100 companies'

directors are women. I think it is safe to say that this figure is mirrored in

No woman who has worked her way up in business on her own merits would want to see a token female parachuted in, and my initial thought on quotas was that it was unfair

and would create a backlash. However, at the rate of

current progress, it will take

more than 40 years for women to hold 40 per cent of board

And if you think about it again, why do quotas cause so Isn't it the way of the world that the majority of selections

are influenced as much by who you know as what you know? But at the moment the "who you know" is likely to be a high powered

businessman. It's this logic which has led six European countries to introduce quota laws. As Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner, has said: "I am not fond of quotas, but I very much like what quotas do." The sudden influx of female

labour MPs in the late 1990s. patronised as "Blair Babes" or the "Stepford Wives" and later copied to some extent by the "A list" system introduced by the Conservatives, has brought other women up the

We've seen in the Olympics just what great effect positive role models have. That's how quotas should work: like a stone tossed into a pond

sending out ripples before sinking out of sight and laving the foundations. They should last long enough to make people

working hours and lack of appreciate that a critical mass support around work/life of women at the top actually leads to mixed boards making decisions more balanced than

those made by boards full of

Quotas would give women the chance to prove themselves; ultimately they have to succeed on their own merits, but as with so many things in life, what most people ask for is the

opportunity to show what they are capable of. But most business women recognise that one of the most significant blocks to women making it to the top in business is trying to raise a family and continuing to work

in a male culture of long Can this really be addressed by quotas or will they just act as a sticking plaster over the leaky pipe of businesses haemorrhaging women from middle management?

I am going to be controversial and suggest that if companies had to meet quotas, they would be incentivised to take measures to stop their rising female stars falling off the career

ladder after having children. Instead of seeing quotas as a threat or a token effort, why not consider them as a way to kick-starting a cultural change that ultimately is going to benefit working fathers as well as mothers throughout a company not just those on the board.