

Jerusalem businessmen take on 'hasbara'

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The conventional formula for business success is to think big, but former Jerusalem Post columnist Ron Dermer, who at the beginning of March takes up his new position as Israel's commercial attache in Washington, this week told a group of Jerusalem businessmen to think small.

The advice was given in relation to an additional task that all were prepared to take upon themselves when conducting business abroad – and that was to combine business with diplomacy.

Dermer and others explained that most people think Israel is a very large country. Some even think that because Israel is in the news so frequently it must have a population of between 15 million and 500 million.

All speakers pointed out that businesspeople have credibility because they are not the agents of their countries.

Dr. Emmanuel Navon, the CEO of Business Network for International Cooperation, advised speaking on issues on which there is national consensus. That way, the business-diplomat does not fall into the trap of being apologetic.

Navon quoted surveys indicating that 62 percent of Europeans have a negative opinion of Israel; 59% think that Israel is the world's most dangerous state; and in France, 62% believe that Israel does not want peace.

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