

DEVELOPMENT'S THE KEY: Beverly Kaye, founder of Career Systems International and a bestselling author, spoke at a Strategic Capability Network (SCNetwork) event about the importance of career development and the changing career path. For more information, visit www.scnetwork.ca.

Career planning no longer 'nice to have'

At most of the Strategic Capability Network presentations, the focus tends to be more on the information conveyed than on the individual saying it.

But when Beverly Kaye gets up to speak, it is hard to separate the message from the person. For decades, she has hammered home the message to organizations that career management is important.

In her seminal 1980s book, *Up is NOT the Only Way*, she identified the symbiotic relationship between an individual's career development and an organization's strategic plan.

Now, Kaye is taking this further by asserting that weaving career planning into a company's very fabric is a matter of survival if it wants to stay competitive and get the most out of its people by doing more with less.

This contention is bolstered by others. The primary reason employees stay at an organization is because of the work, and the major reason they leave is for enhanced career opportunities, according to a 2011 survey by Blessing White, a long-time player in the career planning field.

Career development and training are the top two factors contributing to employee engagement, a finding that is consistent with their previous research in this arena, according to the 2011 *Global Engagement Report* from Blessing White in Princeton, N.J.

This year, numerous speakers have discussed the value to their organizations of



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integrating career discussions into every aspect of the employee lifecycle, from hiring to retiring. As we heard at SCNetwork's July session on the connection between "employee care" and the "customer experience," the metrics are in — employee engagement drives customer satisfaction which, in turn, results in higher financial earnings.

It's a puzzle then as to why many organizations treat career management as a "frill" — great to have when things are going well and less so when they aren't.

Career planning gurus, from Edward Schein to Kaye, have encouraged companies to integrate effective career practices into employee support systems for decades. But when the economy goes sour and companies look for places to cut costs, career planning programs are inevitably one of the first ca-

sualties.

One of the most egregious moves by organizations in the past was handing over all of the responsibility for career planning to employees under the guise of "employability." While the approach advocated by Kaye does not shift the onus back to employers, it does emphasize they have a critical role to play in recognizing and supporting career programs and, in doing so, they will be rewarded in measurable ways.

Kaye's new book deserves wide praise for simplifying the formula for implementing career-based programs. One can only hope that the fact it is written in a practical, straightforward manner encourages organizations to finally come to their senses and to give it a try. Framing and aligning employee career options within the context of business plans makes sense — it creates a win-win for employees and the bottom line.

Barbara Kofman is SCNetwork's lead commentator on organizational effectiveness and founding principal of CareerTrails, a strategic career coaching and HR solutions organization committed to providing clients with the personalized processes and information they need, to achieve the individual and organizational outcomes they are seeking. She has held senior roles in resourcing, strategy and outplacement, and taught at the university and college level. Barbara can be reached at (416) 708-2880 or bkofman@careertrails.com.