

## Leading Effectively e-Newsletter - November 2008 Issue

# LEADING Effectively

think and act beyond

November 2008

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### Bad Economy? Talent Still Counts

Good economy or bad, employees have choice. Sure,

they may be less likely to quit a job when unemployment is on the rise and economic predictions range from bad to dire to disastrous. Even so, just because they show up doesn't mean you - the manager - have the upper hand.

Employees can work hard or back off.  
They can learn or stagnate.  
They can help you or hurt you.

"What choices are your employees making?" asks Beverly Kaye, founder of Career Systems International (CSI) and co-author of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay*. "And what are you and others in your organization doing to keep good people engaged and part of the team?"

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"As a manager, it is one of your responsibilities to keep talented people. This may be especially important now when much of the economy is weak," says Kaye. "While retention may be a greater challenge in a strong economy, good retention practices are the same ones that allow you to motivate and engage your people in these uncertain times."

In *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*, Kaye and her co-author Sharon Jordan-Evans offer 26 strategies to help managers - and their organizations - make the most of valuable talent.

"People want three things from their work," says Kaye. "One, to know they have a career and that it is going somewhere. Two, a good relationship with their peers and their managers. And three, the chance to do their best work."

"Of course, you can't guarantee anyone a job, but you can help them build the skills and gain the experiences that will give them interesting work now and career options in the future," she notes.

During a recent interview with CCL, Kaye focused on five things you should be doing, one-on-one, to keep your people engaged, learning and contributing.

### **1. Talk about the changing business landscape.**

Employees need to understand your perspective as to what's going on in the organization and in your industry. Talk about the trends and forces that are at work. What is changing, where are the big challenges, how might the culture shift? This is a very important conversation in light of the current economy and its short-term and long-term effects. Help each person to see how those forces connect to his or her career path and development.

[Developing Leadership Talent](#)

[Filling the Leadership Pipeline: The Discipline of Development](#)

[Making the Most of Talent: Tools, Techniques and Tactics](#)

### **Related Assessments**

CCL's 360-degree assessments, feedback process and customized services will help measure where you are - and find ways to help you achieve more than imagined. ([learn more...](#))

### **Related Publications**



Of course, you won't have all the answers, but you can't be afraid to have the conversation. Share information, discuss scenarios and speculate. Be candid about what you know and what is a good guess or hunch.

"These are important conversations," says Kaye. "If managers don't have them, employees find information through other sources. Employees will do their own speculation and act on it."

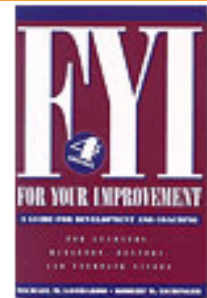
**2. Get a solid picture of talents, wants and needs.** A recent study conducted by CSI revealed that 77 percent of employees believe they have more abilities than they are currently using. Certainly, employees should be communicating their skills and interests, but are you paying attention? Be curious. Ask each person what skills they are using and not using. Listen to what they say about their strengths and weaknesses, interests and dislikes, wants and needs.

"Have these conversations with the mindset of being open to seeing new paths," says Kaye.

**3. Let them know what they don't know.** Share your perceptions about development gaps - what do employees need to learn or change? What are they missing? Savvy managers also know that their opinions aren't the only ones that matter; they help their employees see themselves as others see them. Send them to others in their career audience for additional input. Offer your encouragement and ideas for exploring and reconciling gaps.

**4. Consider the possibilities.** The next step is to explore possibilities for movement in the organization. How might the organization (not just your own unit or department) use this person differently? How might he or she gain new

## [Developing Leadership Talent](#)



### [FYI For Your Improvement](#)



### [Individual Development Guidebook Package](#)



### [Filling the Leadership Pipeline](#)

experiences and learn new skills? Don't limit your thinking to strategies for advancement. Instead, help employees answer four questions: What can I master? What can I broaden? What do I want to specialize in? What do I want to experiment with?

**5. Co-develop a plan.** In a study of the 2,500 employees over several industries conducted by CSI in 2008, only 39 percent of managers said they know how to help people put together a realistic career plan. Here's the good news: once you have discussions about the work environment, the employee and the possibilities, creating a plan won't be so daunting. Your job isn't to give them a plan; it is to support them. Help them consider goals and action steps for achieving goals. Together, think through potential obstacles and make contingency plans.

"Employees need to safely be able to talk about their career needs and future options, without having you think they are disloyal or not dedicated," says Kaye. "It's important to create an environment where talking about development is mandated and managers are held accountable."

### **Loving Your Job in Tough Times**

Unhappy with your job, but grateful you've got it? Now may not be the time to change jobs, but don't resign yourself to the status quo. "There are many steps you can take that will improve your short-term worklife and your long-term prospects," says Beverly Kaye, co-author of *Love It, Don't Leave It: 26 Ways To Get What You Want At Work*.

"Look at what you have in the current organization. Find out how you can build on that and turn more of

what you're doing into more of what you want," suggests Kaye. Start having conversations with your boss, peers or mentors to help you clarify where you are, where you could be in the future and how you can gain the experience and skills you'll need to get there. Learn to:

- **Articulate your abilities.** Understand the strengths you bring to your current job as well as your other abilities. Be able to describe them and discuss how you might deploy this talent in the future.
- **Ask for what you want.** Don't assume your boss knows what interests or motivates you. Figure out what you're after - more responsibility, less frequent travel, a chance to learn something new - and ask your boss to help you find a way to make it happen.
- **Have a "receiving mindset."** Be open to hearing the opinions and ideas of others. Don't be on the defensive about the ways you need to grow and develop. You should be able to say, "I don't like everything I've heard, but I get the picture and I will own what I need to change."
- **Be opportunity minded.** Seek out ways to move across the organization to expand your knowledge base. Or find ways to add new skills, duties and responsibilities to your current job.

When times are tough and the economic picture is bleak, loving your job may be a stretch. But if you are able to learn and try new things, chances are both you and your organization will benefit.

## Resources

Dr. Beverly Kaye is an internationally recognized authority on career issues and retention and engagement in the workplace. Hear more from Dr. Kaye by tuning in to her [CCL Webinar](#) on the career dialogue as a critical engagement tool - held live December 2, 2008, and available on demand any time afterward.

Founder and CEO of [Career Systems International](#), Dr. Kaye is the co-author of several best-selling books, including:

- [LOVE 'EM OR LOSE 'EM: GETTING GOOD PEOPLE TO STAY](#) (Berrett-Koehler 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008).
- [LOVE IT, DON'T LEAVE IT: 26 WAYS TO GET WHAT YOU WANT AT WORK](#) (Berrett-Koehler, 2003).



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