

Young workers valuable

Employers learning to better engage their employees

by Neil Scott

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The war to get and keep talented employees is heating up, according to a prominent human resources specialist who was a featured speaker in Regina on Wednesday.

But Eileen Kirton, regional vice-president of career management with the KWA Partners organization, said there is no need for all businesses to struggle along with unfilled positions or with disenchanted employees who can barely get the job done.

“Not the smart ones,” Kirton said, adding that those employers who use intelligent human resources policies can avoid many of the problems faced by unprogressive employers.

In an interview Wednesday, following a presentation at the Regina Inn to about 30 business leaders, Kirton said increasing numbers of employers are getting the message and learning how to better engage their employees.

Working with employees, to help them identify their career goals and how they can be achieved within a company, is key in reducing employee turnover and in making employees more productive, Kirton said.

“Employees are increasingly demanding career development opportunities.”

“They want to learn and grow within their current organization,” Kirton added, in a news release.

“Many peoples’ careers go along quite by accident and by chance,” she said.

“What we are encouraging is for people to spend some time and effort thinking about where they want their careers to go,” Kirton said.

With the Saskatchewan economy booming and with many baby boomers getting ready to retire, it

is especially important for employers to understand their employees career aspirations, Kirton said.

Moving up the corporate ladder might not be the answer for many people, Kirton said.

But there are many opportunities -- through transfers or through modifications of their existing jobs -- for people to find roles within an organization that better meet their abilities or interests, she said.

In some cases people might even be interested in taking lower level but less stressful jobs, she said.

And there might be others, such as older employees nearing retirement, who might be interested in taking part-time jobs, she said.

Wages are often not the main reason why an employee jumps to a new company, Kirton said.

Other issues, like not liking your boss or frustration about the lack of growth, are more often reasons for quitting a job.

Kirton planned to follow up on her presentation in Regina on Wednesday with a similar presentation in Saskatoon today.

In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the KWA Partners company is a division of the People First HR Services company.

The company, as part of its human resource services, offers a six part program that helps employees assess their career goals and how they can achieve them at their workplace. That program involves four half-day workshops plus two one-to-one meetings between each employee and a career consultant.

Career “conversations” between employees and employers are also facilitated.

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