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Executive: Human resources managers must know business strategy

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Norwich, Conn. — Human resources managers need to become more knowledgeable about business strategies amid a shaky economy, an executive at one of the region's largest employers said.

"The recovery will be more difficult than the slide," Ann Beinart, vice president of human resources at Mohegan Sun, said Wednesday at the annual meeting of the Human Resource Leadership Association of Eastern Connecticut. "You need to get with what the business strategy is."

Employee relations workers are in for difficult times in the next two years as companies remain cautious about adding workers and boosting salaries.

"If we thought it was over, it's not," Beinart said in her speech, titled "Today's Economy: Doing More With Less," at the Holiday Inn Norwich.

Developing "human capital plans" are a critical part of a winning strategy, she said. A show of hands revealed that few such plans exist.

The association, which started 10 years ago, helps members get planning ideas, said Janet Welch, co-vice president of membership.

"We offer an opportunity to develop leadership skills," said Welch, human resources manager at American Ambulance Service Inc. in Norwich.

Stepping up

Human resources managers are increasingly spotting the opportunity, said Welch, in relating that the association added 16 members in a drive that began in October. It now has 82 members.

With wages stagnant, increasing strife is occurring over employee benefits. Workers don't want to lose more of their pay to health and other plans while employers have to watch expenses.

"Most concerns have to do with benefits," said Therese Roush, payrolls and benefits coordinator for the Ledyard public schools system.

Finding jobs for the unemployed is taking on a greater role for the diverse membership.

"All of businesses have people," said Cheryl Calderado, HR manager for Dime Bank. "Human beings are our common denominator."

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