Independent Banker  
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Columns

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**[hed] A new tool for your team’s career development**

[quote] There’s a direct correlation between having happy, well-trained and engaged employees and bank performance.

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As community bankers, we each wear multiple hats and have throughout the course of our careers. In fact, I’d say that no two of us have had the same journey. Our individual banks are as diverse as the communities we serve, and even when banking is “in the family,” how we ascended the ladder to our positions today differs greatly.

The same applies to our teams. Community bank career paths have never fit a traditional, one-size-fits-all approach. We don’t simply promote in a hierarchical fashion. To be efficient and develop staff with both their and our banks’ best interests in mind, we have to be creative. We must ensure managers have a personalized plan in place for their staff, one that leverages day-to-day opportunities for career growth. At the same time, we want all employees to recognize they have a bright future with us.

It’s precisely that unique approach to advancement that makes it difficult to articulate a clear career trajectory—and we’ve heard loud and clear that you are looking for a solution for that challenge, a way to better address professional development with your teams.

So, I’m thrilled that at this year’s ICBA LIVE, we unveiled our new Professional Development Planner. This web-based, interactive tool offers a detailed overview of more than 80 community bank job functions and enables employees to research areas of interest, job descriptions, and associated levels of responsibility. In addition, the tool generates the qualifications, competencies, specialized knowledge and on-the-job learning experience needed to qualify for a position.

But it’s also geared toward managers to support their team’s professional development. For instance, using the planner, managers can partner with employees to set personal goals and identify a path to their next career milestone. The tool further guides managers and staff by recommending specific training resources, providing clear direction on how to acquire the competencies required for each position.

As you consider succession planning and your bank’s broader future, I encourage you to take a look at the Professional Development Planner (*<i>icba.org/education/resources/professional-development-planner<i>*)and explore ways it will bolster your hiring efforts, help identify skill gaps and aid you in refining job descriptions accordingly.

As we look to this month’s best-performing community banks, we have to acknowledge there’s a direct correlation between having happy, well-trained and engaged employees and bank performance. Investing in our teams benefits not only employee retention and recruitment, but also our bottom lines. And that’s a win-win path we can all get behind.

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*[sidebar] Where I’ll be this month*

I’ll be wrapping up the ICBA Capital Summit at the beginning of the month, and then speaking at a CEO roundtable for association executives in D.C.

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