

TRIANGLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

IN DEPTH: TRIANGLE TECH NEWS

From the April 15, 2005 print edition

Slepian: Managing human capital necessary for success

[Heather McGowan](#)

DURHAM - Jeanette Slepian, chief executive officer of [SAS](#) subsidiary [BetterManagement](#), will moderate a panel that will be discussing human capital management at The North Carolina Technology Association's "A CEO Conversation 2005," event.

"She's a nice fit here, because she had led a few technology-based, startup Internet companies successfully," says Greg Kaiser, Slepian's agent. "She has a wealth of experience dealing with high-profile thought leaders."

Slepian, an attorney, also has experience in strategic business development. "Most of my roles have been in cutting key strategy for an organization," she says.

Slepian has acted as a moderator for a number of panels discussing critical business issues. "It's really what we do at BetterManagement," she says. "We work with organizations that bring together key thought leaders and then explore in depth with those thought leaders their perspectives on some critical business topics. We can draw out not only their key points relating to the topic but try to bring some synergy among the panel members so the audience can walk away with some key findings.

"It's ultimately helping the audience understand how (to) rewind the corporate strategy with management and employee goals to deliver the strategic results in quantifiable results." We want to discuss how successful organizations focus on their knowledge, skills and attitude, she adds.

Members on the panel will include author and futurist Joel Barker; Tor Dahl, an international political consultant and productivity expert; and Kevin Freiberg, an authority on business best practices.

"The really interesting thing with the way the panel is constructed is that they're all coming into the topic of human capital management from different perspectives ... Each (speaker) has a unique perspective on how human capital management or knowledge workers are critical in the expansion of the economy and for financial and organizational success.

"But a very critical common thread runs through all of their diverse perspectives on this topic ... From my perspective, even though they're coming out from three different angles that it is all connected, that knowledge management, or unleashing knowledge within an organization, drives

innovation and drives financial success," says Slepian. "My challenge will be to draw out from each of these brilliant thought leaders the understanding as to how knowledge or human capital management - knowledge management - is the thread that will help our economies and businesses grow."

Mary Lou Drake of Drake & Associates in Chapel Hill says human capital management goes beyond using a tool or process.

"It's a matter of engaging all the appropriate human resources processes with the business side of the business and then having the effective software that can help you access information very quickly so that you can make the necessary decisions," says Drake.

"Human capital management theory basically looks at (human) capital as a financial asset," says Slepian. "It's intangible, and that's the challenge I think that organizations face ... how do you really unleash the potential of this intangible asset?"

Slepian refers to human capital management as a way of looking at an organization as a whole. Within an organization, it's not just what the research and development department does that matters. "It's R&D, financing and marketing," she says. "When you're looking holistically at an organization, you're not just looking at the knowledge base within one particular silo. You have to look at your overall strategic goals for that organization and try to unleash the talent that's within the organization and attract not just talent but the brightest talent that you can get."

But it goes beyond just getting raw talent says Drake.

"It's not only about getting the best and the brightest, but it's placing them in an environment where they can excel, and that's the key," says Drake. "When you do that you align your business goals, your mission, division, your strategy, and you get people on board."

"Successful organizations have to retain, motivate and develop high-potential employees," says Slepian. Human capital management enables companies to rely on the knowledge skills within the organization, rather than their bricks and mortar or their software code, she says.

"That's the differentiator, and that's going to unlock productivity," says Slepian. "It's how you mirror the talent that you have with the technology. It's not transactional. It's really looking at the knowledge within an organization and how you unleash it."

"Some organizations focus on proto-quality (perfect quality) management," says Slepian. "They are so focused on maintaining perfect quality that they fail to unleash the knowledge that they have to take them to the next level. ... You don't have to sacrifice quality at the expense of productivity."