

— 21st Annual —



**UBA WOMEN IN BANKING**

— CONFERENCE —

**WELCOME BACK**



# Erica Sodos

Mentalist & Magician

<https://www.ericasodos.com>



# Flavia Naves

Commissioner for the Wyoming Stable  
Token Commission, and

Of Counsel at Hathaway & Kunz, LLP

# Stablecoin Resource

Commission's website:

<https://stabletoken.wyo.gov/>





Lora McCray

Senior Vice President  
Workforce Excellence  
ABA

# ACHIEVING WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE!

What top performing banks do  
differently

Lora McCray, SVP Workforce Excellence  
American Bankers Association



# DEFINING WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

## What it means

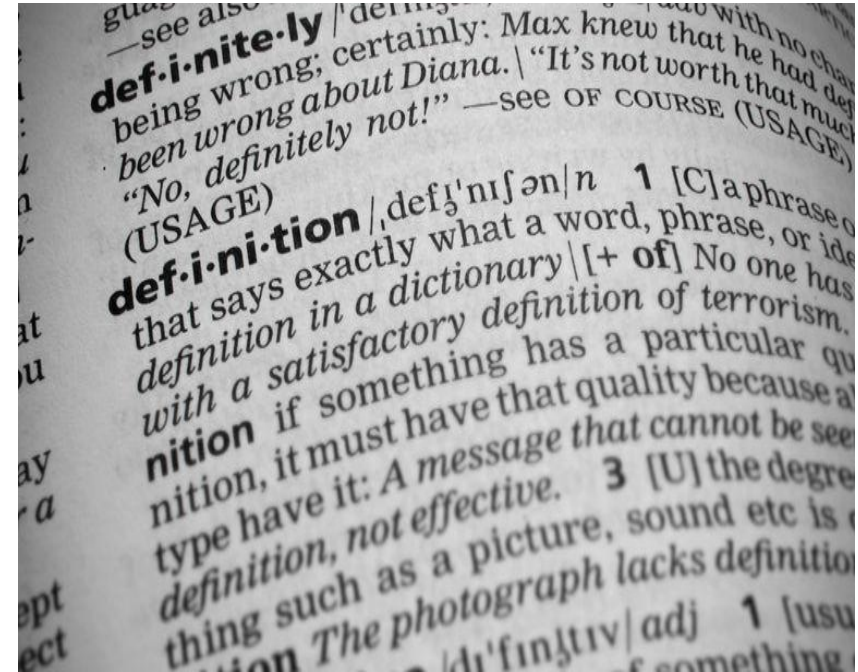
A skilled, engaged workforce that consistently delivers superior service and performance.

## Why it matters

Enables adaptability, innovation, and resilience—building trust while outperforming through regulatory and economic change.

## How it's achieved

People practices aligned to business and customer needs, grounded in respect, integrity, and inclusion.



# WHY WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE MATTERS

## Performance, trust, and resilience

- A strong workforce **sustains service quality and productivity** in changing uncertain times.
- It **strengthens customer relationships** and community trust while protecting operational continuity.
- It **reduces turnover, builds leadership depth, and creates a culture** that attracts top talent—supporting long-term growth and competitive advantage.



# THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE



## What drives workforce excellence?

- 1) Attract & hire the right talent
- 2) Grow & develop your workforce
- 3) Practice effective leadership & management
- 4) Foster a strong, values-based culture
- 5) Prioritize employee engagement & well-being

Together, these build capability, clarity, collaboration, and resilience—supporting sustained performance and organizational success.

# WOMEN AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE



**Women play a critical role** in driving workforce excellence—not only through leadership positions, but through daily actions, influence, and choices at every stage of their careers.

**Workforce excellence is strengthened when** professionals, including women, proactively shape their development, lead with intention, support respectful workplace cultures, and advocate for high standards and accountability.

These **actions multiply impact** across teams, managers, and the organization as a whole.

# ATTRACT & HIRE THE RIGHT TALENT



## TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGIES

### **Employer Brand & Fit**

Communicate values and future-skill needs; hire for technical capability and cultural alignment.

### **Broad Skills-based Outreach**

Expand recruiting channels to reach qualified candidates with the skills and experience to drive innovation and performance.

### **Fair Process & Pipeline**

Use transparent, consistent hiring; boost sourcing via referrals, schools, and targeted marketing.

# WHAT BANKERS CAN DO TO ATTRACT TALENT

---

## **Be visible ambassadors for the bank**

Share authentic stories about your work, growth, and values internally and externally  
Participate in campus recruiting, community events, and referral programs

## **Advocate for inclusive hiring**

Ask whether candidate slates reflect the full range of qualified, job-ready talent available in the market  
Encourage diverse interview panels and fair evaluation criteria

## **Refer intentionally**

Use your networks to recommend strong, diverse candidates  
Sponsor early-career talent by making introductions and opening doors

**Impact:** Strengthens employer brand, improves talent pipelines, and builds future leadership capacity.

# GROW AND DEVELOP YOUR WORKFORCE



## EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

### **Role-based learning plans**

Offer continuous development with clear pathways and individualized plans tied to aspirations and retention.

### **Mentoring & cross-department learning**

Enable knowledge sharing through mentorship and rotations to build loyalty and broaden capabilities.

### **Leadership readiness at every level**

Invest in certifications, workshops, and digital platforms to support succession and adaptability.

# WHAT BANKERS CAN DO TO GROW AND DEVELOP

---

## **Own your development**

Seek feedback regularly—not just during reviews

Be clear about your career goals and skill gaps

## **Pursue stretch opportunities**

Volunteer for cross-functional projects, task forces, or new initiatives

Take calculated risks that expand visibility and capability

## **Mentor and seek sponsors**

Mentor others to build leadership muscles

Seek sponsors who will advocate for you in advancement conversations

**Impact:** Builds skills, confidence, and readiness—while strengthening the overall talent bench.

# PRACTICE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

## LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### **Lead with empathy and clarity**

Set clear expectations and measurable goals and communicate them consistently.

### **Coach and recognize performance**

Provide regular feedback, build skills, and reward strong outcomes to boost engagement.

### **Build robust feedback channels**

Use 360 reviews and check-ins so employees feel heard—reducing turnover and lifting productivity.



# WHAT BANKERS CAN DO TO LEAD

---

## **Lead through influence**

Model accountability, collaboration, and professionalism  
Drive clarity in meetings, projects, and decisions

## **Give and request feedback**

Offer constructive, respectful feedback upward and across teams  
Ask for clarity on expectations and success measures

## **Develop others**

Share knowledge freely  
Recognize contributions publicly and often

*Impact:* Elevates team performance, trust, and leadership effectiveness at every level.

# FOSTER A STRONG COMPANY CULTURE

## CREATING A VALUES-BASED CULTURE

**Build collaboration,** communication, and respect through daily behaviors and shared initiatives.

**Celebrate excellence,** fairness, and diverse perspectives so every employee feels valued. Address issues promptly and fairly to protect morale and trust.

**Use recognition,** team-building, and transparent updates to sustain performance and satisfaction.



# WHAT BANKERS CAN DO TO BUILD CULTURE

---

## **Model the culture you want**

Demonstrate respect, inclusion, and ethical decision-making

Hold yourself and others accountable to shared values

## **Speak up**

Address behaviors that undermine professionalism, respect, or trust

Raise concerns early and professionally

## **Build community**

Participate in ERGs, councils, or informal peer networks

Create belonging by inviting diverse perspectives into conversations

**Impact:** Reinforces psychological safety, engagement, and cultural consistency.

# PRIORITIZE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS

### **Listen consistently**

Use surveys, focus groups, and town halls—plus clear channels to raise concerns.

### **Support well-being**

Provide wellness and mental health resources and promote participation without stigma.

### **Prevent burnout**

Offer flexibility where possible and monitor workload to reduce burnout risk.



# WHAT BANKERS CAN DO TO FOSTER ENGAGEMENT & WELL-BEING

---

## **Set boundaries that support performance**

- Manage workload sustainably

- Normalize using flexibility and wellness resources

## **Use your voice**

- Participate in surveys and listening sessions

- Offer solutions—not just issues—when sharing feedback

## **Support one another**

- Watch for burnout in peers

- Encourage balance, resilience, and help-seeking behavior

**Impact:** Sustains energy, retention, and long-term performance.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## FOR BANKS:

### WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE STARTS HERE

#### **Leadership sets the system**

Environment, expectations, and daily behaviors drive performance, trust, and resilience.

#### **People practices are core strategy**

Talent acquisition, development, leadership, culture, and engagement build high-performing teams.

#### **Invest in long-term strength**

Continuous improvement strengthens the institution and the relationships it serves.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

FOR BANKERS:  
TO ACHIEVE WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

- Say yes to a stretch opportunity
- Ask for specific feedback
- Sponsor a colleague
- Speak up for inclusion or fairness
- Invest in a skill that prepares you for what's next





American  
Bankers  
Association®

# Women Lead Symposium

July 30, 2026 • Virtual Event

[aba.com/WomenLead](https://aba.com/WomenLead)

# Connect with ABA For Additional Support

## [aba.com/WorkforceExcellence](https://www.aba.com/WorkforceExcellence)

Lora McCray  
SVP, Workforce Excellence  
[lmccray@aba.com](mailto:lmccray@aba.com)

Cathy Nestrick  
VP, Workforce Excellence  
[cnestrick@aba.com](mailto:cnestrick@aba.com)

Allison Dower  
Director, Workforce Excellence  
[adower@aba.com](mailto:adower@aba.com)



# Women Lead Symposium

July 30, 2026 • Virtual Event

Sponsored by



**REGISTER  
NOW**

[aba.com/WomenLead](https://aba.com/WomenLead)



# Dawn Cannon

Owner & CEO

The Creatrix

# Finding Peace in Chaos

Dawn Cannon

The Creatrix



The Creatrix

# Pause

Just for a moment... arrive

On paper.....

everything looked fine.

I was successful.....

and completely disconnected  
from myself.

Chaos isn't always  
external.

Sometimes chaos is what's  
happening inside of us....

while we're still performing on the  
outside.

# What we're rewarded for

- Speed
- Output
- Control
- Pushing through

# The Hidden Cost

- Chronic Stress
- Reactivity
- Disconnection
- Burnout

# The Chaos Cycle



# The Shift:

**Control** —→ **Awareness**

# Pause before you proceed

*A pause is not a delay. It's a decision.*

Your body is data

*It's not in the way. It's informing you.*

**You don't have to earn your  
worth through chaos.**

# 3 Simple Practices

 60-second reset

 Feel your feet

 One conscious breath

# A few questions to sit with...

Where are you performing while feeling disconnected?

What signals have you been overriding?

What would change if you didn't abandon yourself?

**Peace is not found when chaos disappears.  
It's found when you stay with yourself in the middle of  
it.**



The Creatrix

# Thank you.

Follow me/Sign Up for Newsletter:





# Women Lead Symposium

July 30, 2026 • Virtual Event

Sponsored by



**REGISTER  
NOW**

[aba.com/WomenLead](https://aba.com/WomenLead)

UBA 21st Annual Women in  
Banking Conference Feedback  
Survey

