

Alumni on the move

KATHRYN BEATON: BRINGING INTEGRATIVE THINKING TO THE ENERGY FIELD

By Mary Ann Gratton

Somehow, it seems fitting that **Kathryn Beaton** (MBA '93) works in the energy industry. Kathryn is the dynamic leader and driving force of the Toronto Energy Centre at Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Canada (CGEYC), serving as managing director of the centre as well as a vice president of CGEYC.

Two years ago, Kathryn initiated a drive to create a new business distinct from Hydro One, where she served as chief information officer. At the time, her group, Hydro One Markets, was a subsidiary of Hydro One. While the public utility focused on poles and wires, her group provided key support, skills and activities to the core, including billing, call centre activities, collections, customer complaints, strategic sourcing and e-procurement services.

Under Kathryn's leadership, employees in these areas moved out of Hydro One Markets and became part of the Toronto Energy Centre, which was bought by CGEYC and officially launched in March 2002. "Our area

was considered an important but non-core activity at the utility. It occurred to me that we should put these areas into an organizational and ownership structure where we were the core business."

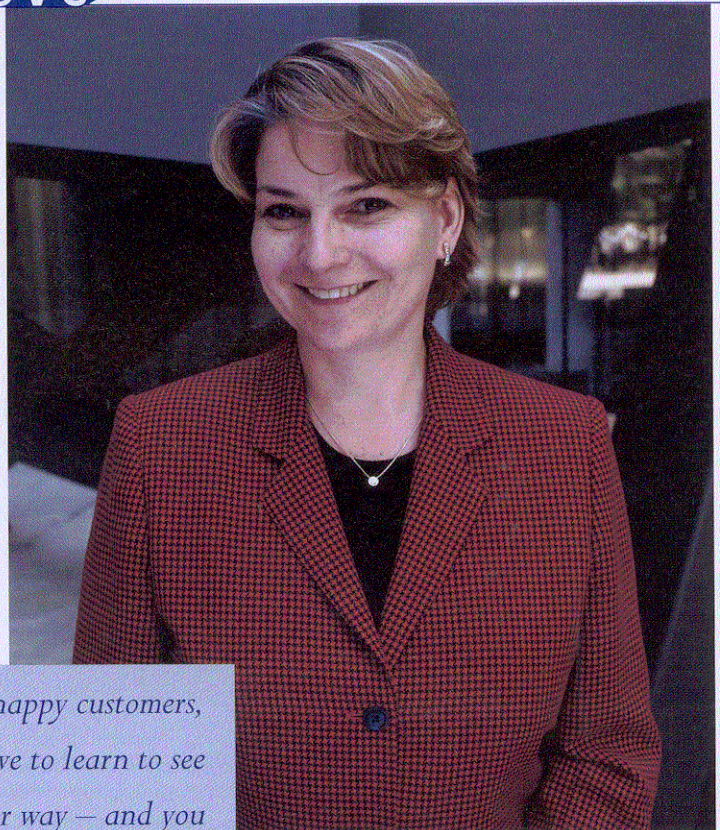
The Toronto Energy Centre employs approximately 2,000 people in operations involving energy, information technology, supply chain management, finance, customer service, human resources and administrative services.

Kathryn piloted the launch of the centre, with the bulk of employees working in Toronto at CGEYC, a backup call centre in London, Ontario, and technical support professionals across the province. Heading up the centre offered Kathryn the opportunity to finish a transition she started rolling out at Hydro One, where she worked from 1998 until the launch.

"Leading change is what I like best," says Kathryn. Her knowledge of the utilities industry and her experience as both a vendor of energy services and as a senior manager and operations expert give her a unusual combination of skills that she believes will help her influence events in the energy industry.

Kathryn previously worked for 18 years at IBM Canada, where she received a number of executive awards. She is a member of Industry Canada's E-business Acceleration Team, a national initiative co-sponsored by Industry Canada, BCG and Nortel to accelerate the growth of e-business in Canada.

She applauds the Rotman School for its emphasis on integrative thinking,



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something that parallels her own recent work experience. In her role at Hydro One Markets, Kathryn led an effort to promote a cross-functional environment.

"We had five different information technology units supporting different business units, and it wasn't working," she says. "We had to see ourselves as a single enterprise that supports all business units, and I think I succeeded in developing an integrated management team."

A cross-functional approach is vital because it puts you in your customer's shoes, she says. "When problems occur, your customers couldn't care less whether one department talks to another. If you want customers, you'd better see it their way, and you can't do that out of a silo."

One key challenge at Hydro One was to encourage employees to view other departments as customers, she says. "Their orientation needed to change from an internal relationship — whether collegial or not — to that of being a service provider."

To manage change effectively, you must know your audience, she says. "You have to understand who all your stakeholders are. Integrative thinkers should be able to articulate a proposal in whatever language is required — whether it's 'engineering speak' or 'execu-speak' or whatever 'speak' the listeners understand. That's so important, because often the various silos do not speak the same language."

Kathryn's life is busy, both inside and outside of work. When she is not riding her beloved horse, Noble Journey, she enjoys sailing, spending time with daughter Dana, nine, and son Marshall, 14, and is an avid gardener.