EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Dispelling the Myths of Certification

Jamie Mulkey and Jennifer Naughton

Too often beliefs, whether or not they are based in fact, become truths. That's been especially true of professional certification programs. Mulkey and Naughton point out that many of the myths about certification programs—especially how they're designed, developed, managed, and applied—can range from just misleading to creating undefendable legal situations.

Certificate and certification are two terms that are often used interchangeably, though they are separate and distinct. *Certification* programs usually have predetermined standardized criteria on which candidates are measured, usually through testing or assessment. The designation that results usually indicates the individual has met those standards or criteria. Alternatively, *certificate* programs usually focus on a narrower range of topics, typically resulting in a document signifying completion of a learning experience, such as a workshop or a course.

The authors then detail the top 10 myths about certification.

For complete text, see page 20.
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The Promise of Phase 3

Jack Zenger, Joe Folkman, and Robert Sherwin

If you break down the learning and development process into three phrases, here's what you'll get:
Phase 1: activities that happen prior to a learning event.
Phase 2: the learning event.
Phase 3: the posttraining follow-through.

For years, learning and development efforts and dollars have been focused primarily on Phase 2. Research, however, shows that it's the events that happen after training that make the training stick. Thus, it's apparent that Phase 3 activities are underfunded and underemphasized.

An effective Phase 3 process provides an enormous benefit to an organization because it enhances the degree to which any learning is put into practice; thus, it leverages the investment made in Phase 2 learning events. To improve Phase 3, a new environment must be created that provides periodic reminders to participants about the learned behavior and encourages that behavior's use.

A few tips for better follow-up after training:
- Space learning events over time.
- Create buddy systems.
- Coach online or by telephone.
- Encourage mentorships.
- Initiate job discussions.
- Use 360-degree feedback surveys.
- Send email reminders.

For complete text, see page 30.
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The Coming Labor and Skills Shortage

Tony Carnevale

Although future economic realities favor higher levels of education and training, a reversal in longstanding demographic trends may make it difficult to fulfill those needs. The most powerful of those demographic trends is the retirement of the baby boom generation. The first cohort of baby boomers has reached age 57, prompting a rapid retirement of workers from the American labor force during the next 20 years. That depletion is expected to be especially strong among the most educated and highly trained workers.

Economists will tell you that technology will save the day by substituting for workers. Yet in the real economy, technology comes from research and development spending, and, ultimately, it has to be bought and paid for by individual companies. A quick review suggests that the R&D and purchasing costs that would be required to substitute for such a precipitous decline in skilled labor are far above current or historical rates.

America's advantages won't last. Eventually, America's competitors will narrow the U.S. economic lead as they learn how to create their own versions of agility and scale. At that point, the competition will really come down to who can educate, train, and retain the best human capital.

For complete text, see page 36.
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It Takes a Community

Neal Chalofsky and Mary Gayle Griffin

During the 17th century, an intimate connection existed between work and community. (You grew vegetables and sold them at the market.) But the Industrial Era separated work from community. As workers moved from self-employment to factory and office work, meaning disappeared from work when work separated from life and community. It was then that motivation—as a substitute for meaning—became an issue.

Various group dynamics movements (organizational development, humanistic psychology, and quality of work life movements) have tried to recognize individual and group behavior as critical components of an effective and productive organization. Substantiating that claim is the project by the Great Place to Work Institute and *Fortune* magazine in which the 100 top companies to work for are identified. The ongoing theme: Companies that treat people well and create work life cultures reap the rewards of high productivity and low turnover. Organizations that have work life cultures tend to be seen as workplace communities, evolving into a new integrated paradigm of the individual, the work, the workplace, and society.

To test that theme, the authors research companies receiving the Maryland Alliance for Work Life Balance Award and uncover how those organizations brought community back to the workplace.

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