

### Not Your Father's Cubicle

What will the workspaces of the future look like? That's the focus of an exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art, running through April 22.

*Workspaces* examines how we work and the ways design can create environments and tools to make us more effective, or just more comfortable. Some of the items displayed in the show are already sold in stores, some are prototypes still in development, and some are just for fun.

The exhibit showcases such items as a chandelier made expressly for swinging on (for when you get the impulse); the Apple iMac; an SUV turned into a sophisticated workstation and mobile home; and an ordinary Bic pen.

Some of our other favorites:

- a bed embedded with computer screens, a keyboard, and a mouse

- a chair that changes color to match the sitter's clothing
- a collapsible workstation contained within a backpack
- a cocoon made of fabric and plastic that you can climb into for privacy anywhere
- a scarf that's a wearable communications device.

In an essay for the exhibit, Paola Antonelli, MOMA's curator of architecture and design, says, "Work has become transportable and ubiquitous, almost a state of mind. Like a bubble of pure concentration that one can turn on and off with or without the help of tangible tools, work is where you are."

You can see the exhibit online at [www.moma.org/workspaces](http://www.moma.org/workspaces).

Sources *Wired News* and the Museum of Modern Art

### E-News

The European e-learning market will grow to \$4 billion by 2004, estimates IDC. In Europe as in the United States, the market is highly fragmented, composed of new and old players vying for position. The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and Sweden are the strongest adopters of e-learning. One reason is that many people in those countries are already Internet-equipped.

For more info [www.idc.com](http://www.idc.com)

### E-Learning Term(s) of the Month

Confused and bamboozled by the alphabet soup of e-learning? Each month, we'll define a term or two. You'll be an e-expert in no time.

ASP (application service provider). The third-party organizations that manage and distribute software-based services to companies over the Internet from a central location. ASPs enable companies to save money, time, and resources by outsourcing

### Reality Buzz

Performing poorly at work? It might be your java. No, not the computer language, but your morning brew. According to recent research, 350 mg of caffeine—about what's in three cups of coffee and a cup of tea—is enough to make your concentration fuzzy and increase your stress level. We should probably also mention that the study was sponsored by mineral water company Volvic.

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some or all of their information technology needs.

LMS (learning management system). Software that automates the administration of training events. The LMS registers users, tracks courses in a catalogue, and records data from learners; it also provides reports to management. An LMS is typically designed to handle courses by multiple publishers and providers. It usually doesn't include its own authoring capabilities; instead, it focuses on managing courses created from a variety of other sources.

Find more definitions *Learning Circuits's* e-learning glossary, [www.learningcircuits.org/glossary.html](http://www.learningcircuits.org/glossary.html).

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## How To

Korn/Ferry offers these 10 tips for a successful talent strategy, gathered from their retention study (see Survey Says) and research of best practices.

- 1. Create a clear and compelling strategy and vision for the company.**
- 2. Identify the core capabilities needed to excel at this strategy and to continuously improve performance, distinguishing between skills available externally and skills that must be developed in-house.**
- 3. Seek out the best sources for skills wherever they're**

# Survey Says

The average e-learner is a male professional or executive who wants to advance in his career and likes the convenience of learning online, according to a recent survey by Corporate University Exchange.

As reported in "Learning in the Dot.Com World: E-learners Speak Out," CUX found that e-learners tend to be 35 to 64 years old, employed as professionals and executives (80 percent), and male (58 percent). The majority (56 percent) are using e-learning to build their careers. Only a quarter of the e-learners were participating as a job requirement.

CUX polled more than 4,000 e-learners from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Other findings:

- Computer and IT courses are the most popular for online learning.
- Most e-learners prefer to take courses at home, where their computer equipment is often more up-to-date than at the office.
- E-learners want to set their own schedules; most prefer to learn between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m.
- Technology is still a barrier

to e-learning; 40 percent of people surveyed experienced technical problems.

Respondents also offered suggestions on how to improve their e-learning experience. They want

- flexibility in where learning takes place (at home, at work, or on the road)
- permission to skip familiar content
- an orientation to prepare for the courses
- managers trained to be supportive of e-learning and who provide an environment conducive to concentration
- simulations and multimedia incorporated into the learning experience
- opportunities for interaction with the instructor and other participants.

For an executive summary of the study, contact [bburrell@corpu.com](mailto:bburrell@corpu.com).



To hire and retain talented employees, you need to understand their priorities. A recent study by the University of Southern California's Center for Effective Organizations and executive search firm Korn/Ferry International found that what employees

most value at work varies according to such factors as generation, career stage, gender, and culture.

The study, "What Do Employees Really Want? The Perception v. the Reality," had these findings:

- Early-career employees age 30 and younger value career advancement. Work satisfaction and the ability to influence the organization also ranked high on their lists.
- Mid-career employees age 31 to 50 tend to be most loyal to organizations that provide them with professional satisfaction and the flexibility to manage their own careers.
- Late-career employees over 50 are the only group for whom job security drives retention.

Although findings show that people's priorities at work vary greatly, many companies are still using a one-size-fits-all approach. Professor David Finegold, a researcher at the Center for Effective Organizations, says many companies are "failing to mine their employee data, falling into the trap of using [their] intranet to standardize, rather than customize, human resource policies."

But there is one commonality employers can count on. Analysis of behavior patterns found that, across the board, strategic clarity in an organization is effective in enhancing employee satisfaction and motivation. The key factors:

- a compelling strategy
- an innovative environment low in bureaucracy
- challenging work assignments that enable employees to grow
- rewards based, in part, on how well the organization performs.

The study also found that learning is a crucial part of a company's retention strategy. Finegold says, "Our research shows that many leading firms are pursuing innovative approaches to developing employee skills, such as e-learning, online simulations, project-based learning using new electronic tools, and the creation of online corporate universities."

So, if you want to retain employees, forget the foosball table and get back to the basics.

Source Business Wire  
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[www.kornferry.com](http://www.kornferry.com)

available globally, and offer people opportunities to advance and contribute, regardless of nationality.

**4. Understand the factors that are most important** in attracting and retaining people with key capabilities and in gaining their commitment to the enterprise.

**5. Recognize that different groups of employees want different things** from work and that their priorities are likely to shift as they progress through the various stages of their lives and careers.

**6. Create multiple career paths** (for example, technical ladders, rotational assignments, opportunities to join new internal ventures) to replace the declining number of management promotion slots in flat organizations.

**7. Craft individual development opportunities** so employees can build the capabilities that create maximum value for themselves and the company.

**8. Hold employees and management accountable** for meeting

development objectives and sharing their knowledge with the organization.

**9. Tie rewards and recognition to organizational and team performance** rather than place too strong an emphasis on pay for individual performance.

**10. Seek opportunities to enhance the company's talent rapidly** through strategic acquisitions, recognizing that those acquisitions must be managed differently than traditional mergers.