

INTELLIGENCE

Work Weather Update

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

Early this year, this column listed 10 workplace trends from the Herman Group. Were those predictions accurate? What's the often stormy work weather currently? This month, we update you on several of the trends and track some new ones. Next month, we'll take a closer look at

one trend that has everyone talking: job off-shoring.

 "2004 Forecast," *Intelligence*, February T+D.

Employment market is turbulent. This prediction is slowly coming true, according to trend updates from the Herman Group. As the economy is improving, workers who have been unsatisfied

at their jobs are putting out feelers for new employment. Top talent doing this is especially dangerous to employers, many of whom remain oblivious.

On the organizational end, companies are beginning to increase recruiting, the Herman Group says, but quietly so as not to alert

Checking in with February's forecast and offering some new outlooks.

competitors. Often, organizations are looking for crucial competencies and are targeting specific people.

There's a shift to a seller's market in labor. This has already happened in the U.S. region known as Delmarva (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.), says the group. As the number of openings has increased, turnover has reached "dangerous levels" in some companies. By monitoring labor statistics, the economy, recruiting activity, staffing agency workloads, and other indicators, the Herman Group predicts that 10 other U.S. regions are posed to switch to a seller's market. Again, many companies will be caught unaware, and a lot of workers won't be pre-

pared to take advantage of the change.


Traditional retirement evaporates. According to a recent article on globeandmail.com, older workers are "the new darlings for recruiters" because of their dependability, patience, experience, and minimal family responsibilities. Companies like Home Depot and Radio Shack are recruiting senior workers.

An article posted on camagazine.com, the online version of a Canadian accounting publication, reads, "Retirement has become a process, complete with various stages." The treasurer of Australia is quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying, "There's going to be no such thing as fulltime retirement in [the] future.

Workforce of Tomorrow Update

In June's and April's *T+D*, this column discussed preparing youth for the workplace and how businesses can help. A recent interview in the *Connect for Kids* online magazine puts the School-to-Career organization in New Orleans in the spotlight. It's helping to "[bring] the education and business communities together with the common goal of updating high school education to reflect workplace realities." Executive director Susan Berge speaks about how to build "a meaningful partnership" between companies and schools.

 "Workforce of Tomorrow," April *T+D*, and "Workforce of Tomorrow II," June *T+D*.

 http://www.connectforkids.org/resources3139/resources_show.htm?attrib_id=309&doc_id=229282&parent=82343

There's going to be part-time retirement and part-time work.

New Trends

We've spotted several new work weather trends:

Employees concerned with workplace safety. A recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management found that feeling safe in the workplace was one of employees' top five requirements for job satisfaction. The number of respondents who said feeling safe at work is "very important" rose from 36 percent in 2002, to 62 percent in 2004. Employers should take note in order to keep workers satisfied, productive, and loyal.

Money tops employee priorities. Staffing service OfficeTeam found in a recent survey that almost half of workers polled said a bonus or raise was what they wanted most at work. More time off came in a distant second place.

OfficeTeam executive director Diane Domeyer says, "What the survey may be telling us is that employees today are feeling undervalued, overworked, and spread too thin." For workers who have taken on additional responsibilities after layoffs or other shortages, a raise or bonus "is a tangible, meaningful reward." If budgets are too tight, more vacation time or flexible hours could substitute, OfficeTeam suggests.

Graduates looking for employers with ethics. No doubt due to the recent corporate scandals, college graduates entering the work world are rating integrity as a top criterion for choosing an employer. In a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, integrity was rated as the top priority with stability taking second and ethical business practices fourth. Those aspects rose from seventh, eighth, and ninth places respectively in the 2002 and 2001 surveys.

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»»» Survey Says: 360 Degree Feedback

There's no one best way to conduct 360-degree feedback programs, found a recent study by 3D Group, an HR consulting firm specializing in 360 programs. However, there are some best practices.

The study examined 90 large U.S. companies—including Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Microsoft—and discovered wide variations in 360 content, selection of raters, use of feedback, administration, and more.

Other findings:

- Many companies use results from 360 programs not only for professional development but also for succession planning, training, and performance management.
- In most programs, raters include supervisors, direct reports, peers, and self.
- A quarter of the companies use standard survey content.
- Fewer than half of the organizations formally evaluate their 360-degree feedback programs.

3D Group identified these best practices in 360 feedback:

Survey content. Include fewer than 70 items, offering both qualitative and quantitative questions.

Selection of raters. A minimum of three in each category (excluding boss and self) will help ensure confidentiality.

Feedback reports. Item-level detail and written comments are the easiest to understand.

Development support. One-on-one coaching can follow up. All companies should look at the effectiveness of their post-feedback programs.

Use of data. Collecting data for purposes other than development can hamper buy-in and effectiveness.

Program evaluation. Consider formally evaluating the 360 program by looking at changes in manager behavior after feedback.

 [More/ www.3dgroup.net](http://www.3dgroup.net)

 ["Rethinking Likert," page 26.](#)

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