

FYI for your information



Keyboard Karma

A major impediment to developing computer literacy in top managers has been executives' lack of keyboard skills. A potential solution to this problem is an easier-to-learn keyboard, according to *Computers in Training* newsletter. It's the Dvorak keyboard, designed several years ago by a University of Washington professor but largely ignored in favor of the traditional, but awkward, QWERTY keyboard layout.

The Dvorak design puts the 10 most commonly used characters on the "home row," directly under the typist's hands when they're in the standard position. This eliminates much of the hunting and pecking common to untrained typists.

Now that many personal computers are designed so that the keyboard layout can be assigned by the software, the QWERTY-confused executive can simply relabel the keyboard, enter a special command and begin touch typing quickly.

Heart Beat

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can now be taught 24 hours a day, on an individually paced basis, with no instructor. The American Heart Association has begun installing its patented CPR Learning System, an interactive computer-videodisc training system, in health

care institutions across the country. The system was designed by Acronics, Inc. of Pittsburgh.

The CPR Learning System combines a laser videodisc player, a computer, an interactive audio cassette player and a life-size manikin with wired electric sensors. Students learn from the "victim," rather than from an instructor; each student's knowledge and performance of CPR is evaluated by the computer, and the computer selects appropriate coaching responses from the videodisc and audio deck.



QCs at the Kremlin?

The Soviet Union, where the workers own the means of production, is now giving workers a say in how that production comes about.

On August 1, a new Law on Work Collectives officially decentralized much of the planning and decision making in Soviet manufacturing plants. Now members of brigades—the lowest level of the shop-floor organization—will review their factory managers' plans and schedules before they are submitted to Moscow for approval. In addition, brigades will determine their own staffing levels and distribute bonuses among their members. Brigade leaders will be elected rather than appointed by management.

The new system is an attempt to halt and reverse plummeting productivity levels that are due largely to poor worker motivation, absenteeism and shoddy work habits, according to the August 1 edition of *Business Week*.



Economy Sizzles; Employees Fizzle

Be on the lookout for increased incidence of employee burnout. Mary Coeli Meyer of Cheshire Ltd. Human Resource Consultants says recession-related anxiety has kept a lid on expressing job dissatisfaction and entertaining notions of changing jobs. As economic conditions improve and workers feel more secure, the environment becomes "safe enough" for absenteeism, turnover, increases in health care demands and demotivation.

Meyer says these typical burnout behaviors will occur with the same frequency in management ranks as at the blue-collar/pink-collar level.

China Patterns

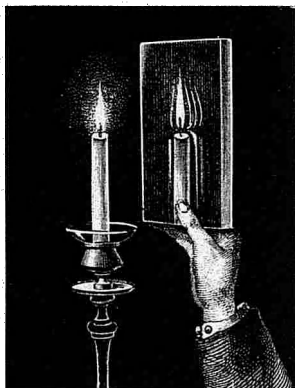
David Wigglesworth, whose article on cultural perception appears on page 58 of this issue knows of what he speaks. Wigglesworth recently turned up in an issue of *China Trade News*, describing how a California-based company named Unison International played a key role in negotiations between American Motors Corporation and the People's Republic of China for a joint venture to build AMC jeeps in China.

Unison's official role in the undertaking was "to assist AMC in the identification of opportunities, to

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assist them to formulate strategies and to assist in the negotiations." During one meeting, C.B. Sung of Unison was called in to help settle what was becoming a serious dispute. The conflict was over the use of the word "exclusivity" in a contract; when translated into Chinese, "exclusivity" has negative overtones both linguistically and culturally. "It was more than just language that was the problem," said Wigglesworth. "It was more a matter of perception."

After separate Chinese and American meetings, the groups agreed to substitute the words "undivided attention." This phrase's Chinese connotation is "undivided heart," which was far more acceptable and meaningful to the Chinese.



Better Overheads

Overhead transparencies are a trainer's stock in trade, and it's easy to take them for granted. But training program participants often complain about the poor quality of overhead visuals. Herbert Nagel of Dennison Manufacturing Company's Dennison Carter's Division offers some practical reminders for preparing and using overhead transparencies.

- *Make it large and legible.* All type should be at least 1/4" in height and spaced properly. Avoid condensed or extended typefaces.

- *Type it.* To create the sharpest originals, use a smooth surfaced paper and a high quality carbon film ribbon (sometimes called a single-strike ribbon). The orator face gets the best results.

- *Letter it.* Vinyl adhesive letters and transfer letters can supplement your typewriter face and provide emphasis for headlines and key points.

- *Simplify it.* Use one thought per transparency. Avoid using sentences and paragraphs; instead, use key

words and symbols.

- *Limit it.* Confine the image area to 7 1/2" x 9" to allow room for borders. The horizontal format is generally easier to display than the vertical. Whichever format you choose, the information should be confined to the upper two-thirds of the page to assure optimum visibility.

- *Label it.* If there is any possibility of confusion, label it. Everything—numbers, diagrams, graphs—should be instantly recognizable.

- *Frame it.* Framing a finished transparency blocks unnecessary light, provides rigidity and makes the film easier to handle. Frames also provide a handy place for speakers' notations.

- *Color it.* Water-based colored markers can add emphasis and bring your transparencies to life, and they wipe off easily and completely.

Once you've prepared your effective new transparencies, keep these suggestions in mind while you use them: Never let your audience look at a blank screen during your talk. Turn the projector off, then turn it on again when you have something to show. Dim the room lights near the screen for sharp contrast.

Be dramatic. Try opening and closing your presentation with a negative or black overhead that has key words covered. As you make your points, uncover each word on the screen.

Another technique is to write key words on the film and then cut the film apart, so you have several "mini-transparencies." Fold a corner of each transparency to make a handle, and then lay each word on the projector as you announce it. In this way, you can move the words around to show emphasis and relationships, without having to create several complete transparencies.

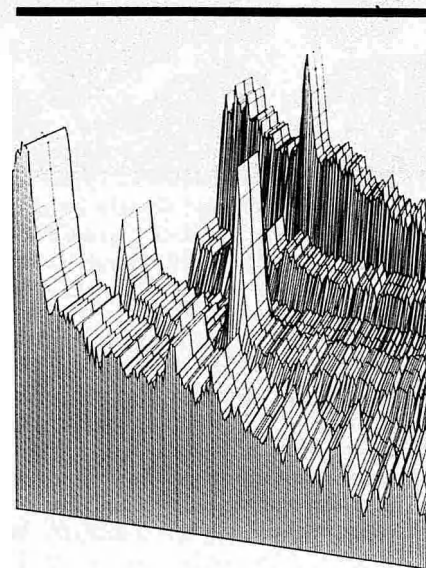
Invest in Tomorrow's Work Force

If your organization is seeking community involvement opportunities, you should know about the Labor Market Orientation (LMO) sessions sponsored by Summer Youth Employment Programs. LMO helps disadvantaged youths learn about career planning, in-demand occupations and work place norms like correct behavior and dress.

"There are no role models for

many inner-city children," said James H. Lowry, president of the firm that designed and coordinates the LMO programs in Chicago and Milwaukee. "Many of these young people have not been in the offices of a major corporation or heard of occupations like financial analyst, industrial designer or maintenance engineer."

At a time when employers are voicing dissatisfaction about lack of preparedness of the entering work force, programs like LMO seem well suited to the needs of young people and their prospective employers. Contact James H. Lowry & Associates, 303 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1340, Chicago, IL 60601.



Ranking Executive Ed.

Which university-based executive development program should you recommend to your top management? Frederick H. Maidment of the University of South Carolina surveyed approximately 100 business school deans to determine their opinion of the best non-credit university programs "aimed at the employees of corporations and other organizations and dealing with job-related topics."

The respondents identified 36 programs as being of excellent quality. Harvard's was the runaway leader, outdistancing second-place Stanford by a total of 29 cumulative points. Stanford put even more distance between itself (89 cumulative points) and third-place Michigan (43 cumulative points).

The other university-based executive education programs deemed excellent by this group were MIT,

Pennsylvania, Virginia, Northwestern, Columbia, Chicago, UCLA, Illinois, Indiana, Houston, Minnesota, Washington, U.C.-Berkeley, Wisconsin-Madison, Texas, NYU, Rochester, Florida, Clemson, Tennessee, N. Texas State, Dartmouth, North Carolina, Georgia, Rutgers, Cornell, Ohio State, Claremont, Northeastern, Penn State, U.C.-Davis and Baylor.



Automation Doesn't Mean Retraining

Although automation is becoming commonplace in both factory and office, a majority of the 285 employment executives at leading business and industrial organizations who responded to a recent survey are not involved in training their employees for the new tasks.

The survey asked respondents, "Does your organization (or any of its divisions) now have programs for retraining employees as a result of office and/or factory automation?"

Sixty-eight percent indicated that they do not have retraining programs; however, three percent said that they will soon. Seven percent either didn't know or didn't answer the question. Only 25 percent of respondents are actually involved in retraining their employees.

Most of the existing retraining programs are directed to clerical personnel and production and maintenance workers, such as machinists and electronics assemblers. Many companies limit their retraining programs to "good to excellent performers," the survey found. Contact Deutsch, Shea & Evans, Inc., 49 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022.

Banking on Training



The rapid expansion of financial instruments and services offered to the public has brought about a flurry of training activity in many consumer banks, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. The banks are concentrating on training customer service representatives—the people who in the past have sat in the lobby and filled out forms—to be more sales oriented, in order to help the bank compete with aggressive financial service companies.

In addition to drilling on the features of individual retirement accounts, money market accounts and other products, the intensive training efforts cover interviewing and sales techniques and polishing the professional image of customer service reps, e.g., no sodas or cigarettes at the desk and a "dress for success" approach to fashion.

Chip on Her Shoulder



Lack of access to information about primary sector jobs, and lack of science and mathematics background are among the factors that will place women workers at a disadvantage in the computer era, according to *Microelectronics and Office Jobs*, a new publication from the International Labour Office authored by Diane Werneke. She says micro-electronic technology in the office could result in severe labor displacement among women, as many office jobs traditionally held by women are phased out and further growth in office jobs is curtailed.

Werneke also predicts a serious problem for women reentering the work force, whose previously valued office skills are no longer relevant.

The Best Way to Resign

While you may consider yourself "married" for life to your present employer, the odds are overwhelming that you will move to another job several times during your career.

Each move and each resignation will result in one of the key causes of management stress, according to a recent poll of relocated executives by the Goodrich & Sherwood Company, a New York-based human resources management consulting firm.

Ninety-three percent of the 110 senior-level managers surveyed said they felt guilt and discomfort when resigning. Andrew Sherwood of Goodrich and Sherwood offered an explanation: "The classic factors of divorce are at work: shock, rejection, feelings of betrayal, hostility, insecurity and the breakup of personal as well as business relationships."

The company from which you resign will find the situation stressful because your departure represents corporate disloyalty and the disruption of plans and objectives. Here are some suggestions for minimizing the negative effects of a resignation.

Write your letter of resignation with care. Get right to the point; state that you are leaving. Emphasize the value of the training and experience you have gained and your confidence that the company will continue on course without you.

Include an indication of your plans, the date of your departure and a pledge to cooperate fully during the time remaining.

Be prepared for the company to overreact initially to the news of your leaving. Frequently companies will make counteroffers to induce you to stay. "Do not consider counteroffers," Sherwood advises. "Remember you have announced that you have made the decision to leave the company and ply your trade elsewhere. Things will not be the same if you stay. Once the initial shock subsides, resentment will build and the company may feel it has been blackmailed."

Be consistent with everyone about the reasons for leaving and the new job.

Do everything possible to strengthen and maintain your relationship with the old organization. Don't be hostile or burn your bridges behind you. Sound relationships along your career path make sense, particularly when you need a good reference in the years to come on your next new job.