

# News You Can Use

by Haidee Allerton

## NEWS YOU CAN USE: NEW NAME, NEW LOOK

“IN PRACTICE” HAS a new name—NYCU, for short—as well as a new look and a new immediacy. You’ll find peaking and thought-tweaking news on what is happening in the field: training tips, trends, approaches, and alliances—and “@work,” a special menu of items hot off the on-line networks.

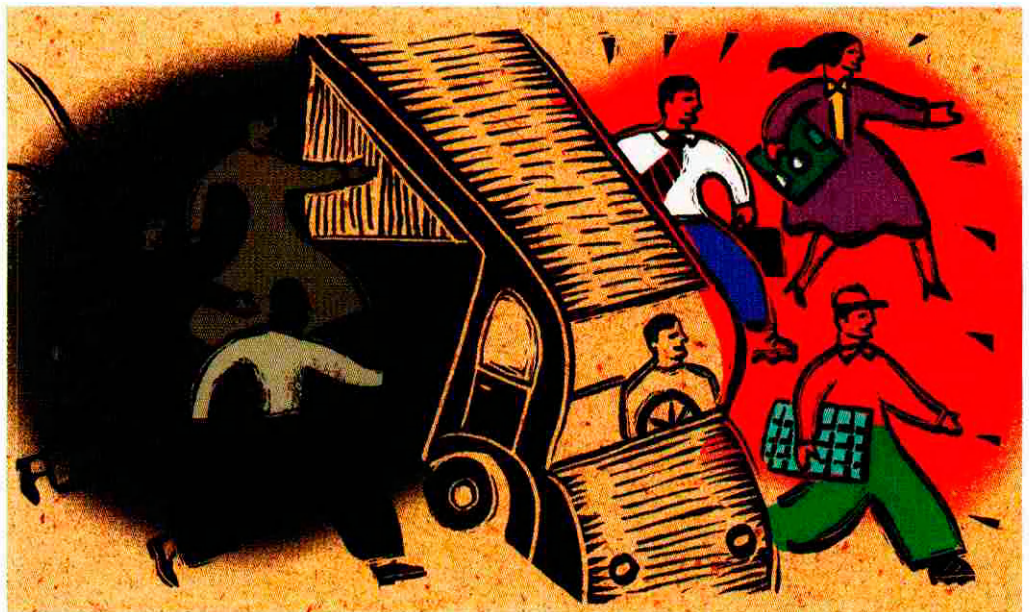
## TRAINING WHEELS

TRAINING DELIVERY takes on new meaning with the Mobile Learning Lab. This specially designed mobile coach (“coaching” also takes on new meaning) brings free vocational and job training to residents of Richmond and Burke counties in the Augusta, Georgia, area. Participants must meet federal guidelines regarding income, family size, age, and various barriers to employment.

The mobile lab—purchased from CENTEC Learning in Jackson, Mississippi—is equipped with computer workstations and software on career assessment, basic skills, English as a second language, and life and work skills.

The counties’ Job Training Authority chose this delivery method because of its ability to reach more people in rural areas, to provide services more cost-effectively, and to use the mobile lab as a marketing tool for promoting local workforce development to private industries.

En-ROLL-ment is up.



## THE BUS TERMINAL: BUSINESS USAGE AND SLANG

IS YOUR WORK GROUP “hot”? Oh, it may be a tight team, committed committee, or tough task force. But, we repeat, does it qualify as “hot”?

A hot group is a “lively, high-achieving, and dedicated group whose members are turned on to an exciting and challenging task.” This definition comes from the article, “Hot

Groups,” by management experts Harold J. Leavitt and Jean Lipman-Blumen in the *Harvard Business Review* (July/August 1995).

The authors say that hot groups occupy the hearts and minds of their members to the exclusion of almost everything else, while the groups last. Hot groups do great things fast.

So, how do you turn on the heat? The article provides case examples and describes the favorable conditions. For example,

the task must be worth doing—even uplifting. And the group must be open and independent.

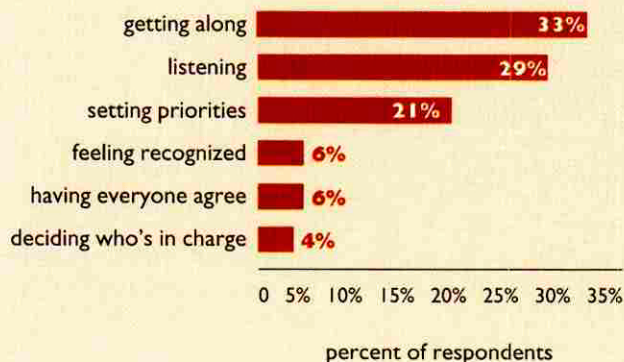
## TEAMS, HOT OR NOT

HERE ARE SOME up-to-date data about teams in the American workplace:

- ▶ Most—6 in 10—employees prefer to work in teams rather than independently.
- ▶ Two-thirds of women prefer teamwork, compared with 54 percent of men.
- ▶ Adult workers on average spend 61.5 percent of their time working in a team environment.
- ▶ Though most (90 percent) workers have some exposure to working in teams, only half receive team training.

Even without much training, teams still seem to be working. For example, 72 percent of employees say that working in teams makes their jobs less stressful; 67 percent say it makes them feel better about their jobs. Two-thirds of workers

## What Is the Most Important Factor in Team Success?



## @work

HERE ARE SOME NEW ON-LINE SITES.

**CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS**—often outside the business mainstream—can learn about copyright protection, career development, and networking services through the World Wide Web at <http://www.e-talentnet.com>.

The site—established by E-Talent.Net of Wilton, Connecticut—is geared toward workers in such areas as graphics; software and video-game design; music-video production; and writing for video scripts, screenplays, and novels.

You can contact E-Talent.Net at 800/455-2296 or at [info@e-talentnet.com](mailto:info@e-talentnet.com).

**INFORMATION ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE** is now offered on the World Wide Web through the Violence Prevention Resource Center, created by the National Crisis Prevention Institute. You can access information about CPI's training programs and other resources at <http://www.execpc.com/~cpi>.

**ON-LINE EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT** for smaller companies is now available through "Classified Ads" on the HEART/Career Connections network. The classifieds list one job per company for two weeks—organized by company name, location, discipline, and entry-level. The positions appear on the World Wide Web and Telnet sites and are posted to several newsgroups.

Candidates can respond via the following:

- Internet: <telnet:career.com>
- WWW: <http://www.career.com>
- e-mail: [webmaster@career.com](mailto:webmaster@career.com).

**NEWMARKET VENTURES OF BOSTON**, Massachusetts, has launched NewMarket Forum, an Internet site listing events-related information on more than 10,000 professional associations and membership groups—including seminars, conferences, educational programs, and membership benefits. The address is <http://www.newmarket-forum.com/>.

**AND FOR STICKLERS...** you can send examples of bad spelling on ads, products, business cards, and so forth to the *New York Times* by e-mail: [onthefjob@nytimes.com](mailto:onthefjob@nytimes.com). The paper may print—but might not pay for—your submissions.

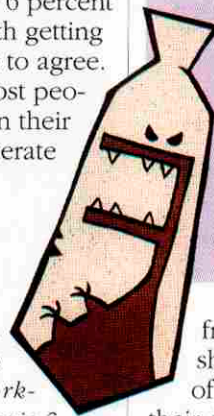
**MIAMI LINKS PROVIDES AN INDEX** of executive development programs worldwide. The Internet address is <http://www.muohio.edu/~wheeleba/centers.htmlx#centers>.

say that teamwork results in higher quality, productivity, and profitability.

What makes teams successful? One in three workers say, "getting along with others"; 29 percent say, "listening to each other." Only 4 percent think deciding who's in charge is important. And only 6 percent are concerned with getting all team members to agree.

Who would most people like to have on their team? Those inveterate team players Bill Gates, Microsoft founder, and Ted Turner of Turner Broadcasting.

From "Teamwork in the American Workplace," Dale Carnegie & Associates.



## NYCU: NUTTY YUKS COPING UTILIZATION

**R**UMORS OF downsizing in your organization? Already experiencing restructuring? Feeling extinct or about

to be? Why not laugh in the face of adversity: Wear a dinosaur tie to work.

Available at many all-tie shops and museum gift shops.

from 1991 to 1994—show that 35 percent of respondents say that

their departments have enough people to do the work, compared with 30 percent in similar surveys conducted from 1988 to 1990. Of the remaining respondents in the most recent group of surveys, half said that they had neutral feelings about staffing; the other half reported negative feelings.

## FACT CHECK

**S**HOCKING FIGURES from the Bureau of Labor Statistics had estimated the number of contingent workers in the U.S. workforce at 25 to 30 percent. Now, BLS says that the true number is only about five percent of the total workforce. The gap reflects the difficulty of defining "contingent worker."

## THE UP SIDE OF DOWNSIZING

**A**MERICAN WORKERS may not be as down in the dumps as some have thought. According to recent studies by the Hay Group of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, corporate downsizing and reorganizations haven't had the expected negative effect on survivors' attitudes about staffing.

The surveys—conducted

## PARTNERSHIPS

**I**NCREASINGLY, organizations in the training arena are forming partnerships to offer a broader range of programs, products, and services. Here's another:

Rochester Institute of Technology and the Industrial Management Council—both based in Rochester, New York—have formed the Alliance for Training. The joint venture combines IMC's courses on supervisory training and training in health, safety, environment, and TQM with RIT's training programs in high technology,

business and management, engineering, manufacturing, graphics, and imaging.

## APOLLO 65

**A** THIRD OF ALL COLLEGE students are working adults. Consequently, they need flexible class schedules. To meet this need, Apollo Group's 65 learning centers and campuses of the University of Phoenix offer night courses, with an emphasis on practical information taught by a faculty made up mostly of employed business professionals.

Apollo Group expects to add 19 new learning sites within the year in Michigan, Louisiana, and Florida. The group also runs similar programs at other universities, at corporations such as Motorola and US West, and through on-line classrooms.

Says CEO John Sperling, "The change to an information-based economy can be rough. It's educate yourself or die."

From Fortune.

## IN THE OUT DOOR

**W**HEN GAY AND LESBIAN employees ask for open acceptance in the workplace, many heterosexuals ask, "Can't you just keep your sexual orientation to yourself?"

In the book *Out in the Workplace: The Perils and Pleasures of Coming Out on the Job* (Alyson Publications, Boston, Massachusetts, 1995), editors Rich Rasi and Lourdes Rodriguez-Nogues respond that heterosexuals don't keep their sexual orientation to them-

selves at work. They display wedding photos, discuss weekend plans involving their spouses or significant others, and share romantic problems with co-workers.

In fact, most people don't expect heterosexuals to keep these matters to themselves. And heterosexuals who make no secret of their sexual orientation do not risk being ostracized,

■ "Can't you just keep your sexual orientation to yourself?" ■

passed over for promotions, or fired.

Rodriguez-Nogues and other contributors to the book ask readers to consider the expense in personal and professional morale to workers who are forced to conceal their true identities.

In fact, many organizations are beginning to realize that such discrimination is both unethical and bad for business. Anti-discrimination

## REALITY CHECK

**M**ORE THAN HALF (53 percent) of working Americans think that their co-workers would treat them differently if they became disabled, according to a poll sponsored by UNUM, a disability insurer in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## Trend Watch

**T**rainers have always known it: Warm and fuzzy counts.

New research suggests that emotions, more than brains, determine how well we do in life—a sort of "emotional intelligence," a term coined five years ago by Yale psychologist Peter Salovey and the University of New Hampshire's John Mayer. Basically, it means understanding one's own feelings and experiencing empathy.

In a new book, *Emotional Intelligence* (Bantam), author Daniel Goleman theorizes that brainpower (as measured by standardized tests) matters less than "character" and how one manages one's emotions—for example, anxiety. A little can help you focus; too much can paralyze you. Many experts already agree that IQ accounts for only 20 percent of success; other factors include nurturing, social class, and luck.

Some neuroscientists, evolutionists, and other "ists" now refer to EQ, though there isn't a paper-and-pen test. Still, there are measurements, such as the Marshmallow test. Four-year-olds are told that they can have one marshmallow immediately—or, they can have two marshmallows if they wait for the test-taker to return from an errand. In at least one study, the kids who could delay gratification were deemed more confident, dependable, and popular. In follow-ups years later, they also scored higher on their SATs.

In other studies, emotional qualities have been a fairly accurate determinant of success. For example, optimists attribute failure to something they can change, not an innate weakness. Consequently, they recover from setbacks and go on to succeed. MetLife uses an optimism/pessimism test to screen sales candidates.

People who score higher on the PONS (profile of nonverbal sensitivity) test, which measures the ability to read emotional cues, are more successful in work and relationships. And at Bell Labs, employees who are rated top performers are not those with the highest IQs; they're the ones who answer their e-mail promptly.

So, can character be taught? In fact, under the Partnerships in Character Education Pilot Project, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded grants to education departments in several states to develop curriculum materials or provide instructor training in teaching such values as respect, fairness, and trustworthiness.

Can people learn emotional skills? And who determines the correct emotions? These issues are being debated. In the meantime, maybe nice guys (and gals) don't finish last.

From Time and the New York Times.

## 14 critical skills every manager needs...



### How to assess them

The enhanced *Management Effectiveness Profile System* (MEPS) from Human Synergistics includes:

- Valid and reliable assessment instruments for 360° feedback
- Computerized scoring to ensure quick and confidential results
- Comparison of individual results against a norming base of more than 4,000 current managers

### How to improve them

Help managers improve their skills using MEPS:

- **Comprehensive Feedback Report** including a *Visual Comparison Profile, Item-by-Item Comparisons* and an easy-to-use *Development Plan*
- Improved and expanded **Self-Development Guide** filled with extensive background ideas and behavior change suggestions



### How to learn more...free

Call 1-800-622-7584 to order your free MEPS *Information Portfolio* and receive:

- One **MEPS Self-Assessment** instrument
- A sample **MEPS Feedback Report**
- A chapter from the comprehensive, 110-page **MEPS Self-Development Guide**



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## News You Can Use

### WHAT THINGS COST

First, the bottom line: Shop around. Regarding customized videos in particular, estimates from big producers can range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per minute—that's \$150,000 for a 30-minute video. For the same job, a smaller producer might quote a flat fee of \$10,000. An independent producer with a camera and desktop editing equipment might offer to do it for less than \$1,000.

It's important to keep in mind the size of the audience over which to amortize development costs. For example, a development cost of \$100,000 for 2,000 trainees works out to a delivery cost of \$50 per person.

Final tip: Try not to go for every bell and whistle.

This sage advice comes from participants on the TRDEV listserv, available on ASTD Online and other on-line services.

clauses, workshops, and employee networks that address issues of sexual orientation are being instituted at such companies as AT&T, Bank of Boston, Levi-Strauss, Eastman-Kodak, and Lotus Development.

U.S. companies, 66 percent of U.S. workers reported that the training they've received has prepared them adequately for the work they do. Only a third of Japanese workers report receiving adequate preparation.

In addition, only 37 percent of Japanese workers say that they have sufficient opportunities to receive training to improve their skills, compared with 77 percent of U.S. workers.

As for advancement, 37 percent of American workers say that they have ample opportunities, compared with 21 percent of Japanese workers.

### HE(D)GEMONY: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

“Hegemony” means a preponderant influence of one nation over another—an edge, if you will.

Now that we've explained our headline... Many American businesspeople may have begun to feel that Japan has been doing everything better. In some cases, that would be true. So, it may surprise you to know that more than half of U.S. workers say that they're satisfied with their own training and development, compared with only 31 percent of workers in Japan who are satisfied.

In a survey by International Research Corporation of more than 350,000 employees in Japanese and

This month's "News You Can Use" was compiled by Haidee Allerton. Send items of interest to "News You Can Use," 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.