

News You Can Use

by Haidee E. Allerton

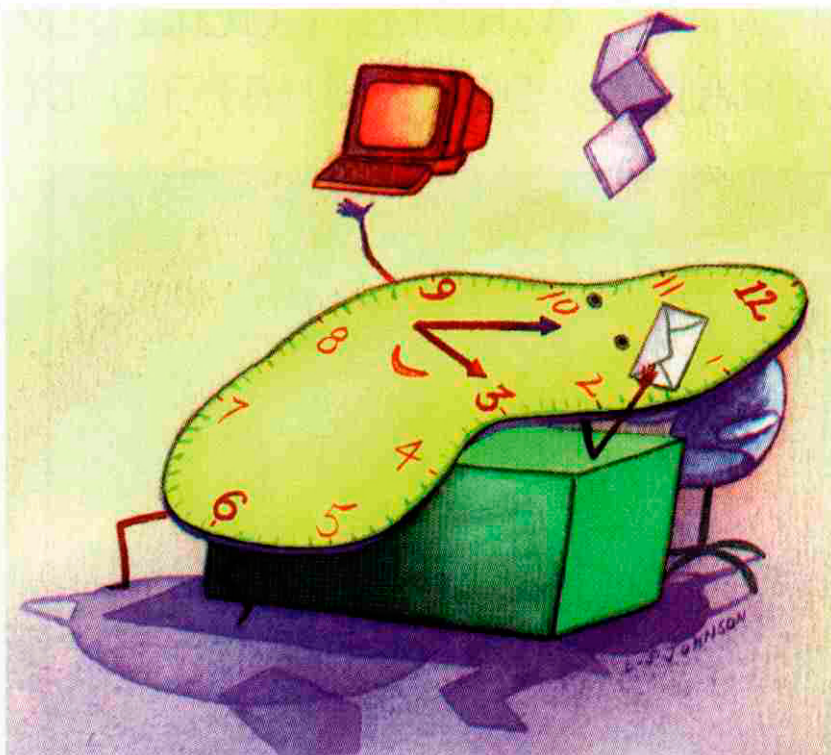
9-5, 11-2, WHATEVER

MOST—84 PERCENT—of executives polled by Office Team of Menlo Park, California, say that their firms offer either a formal or informal flexible-hours program for their employees.

WHAT TRAINING COSTS

HERE ARE SOME figures from the American Society for Training & Development on U.S. training expenditures, based on 1996 data.

- ▶ total employers spend yearly on training \$55.3 billion
- ▶ industry with the highest training expenditure per employee—high-tech \$911 million
- ▶ industry with the lowest training expenditure per employee—customer service \$162 million
- ▶ industry with the highest percentage of training expenditure to outside sources—light manufacturing 41%
- ▶ industry with the lowest percentage to outside sources—health care 12%
- ▶ delivery media used most by employers: videotapes, case studies, and role play
- ▶ delivery media used least: the Internet, intranets, and EPSS
- ▶ percentage of all training time conducted in instructor-led classrooms 84%



- ▶ course types taught by most employers: employee orientation, management and supervisory training
- ▶ course type that accounts for the most training time: technical training
- ▶ average number of employees served per each full-time equivalent of training staff 492
- ▶ percentage of employees that employers say receive training 58%.

The data is from a survey conducted by ASTD, The Times Mirror Training Group, Development Dimensions International, The Forum Corporation, and the U.S. Department of Labor.



MASTER OF THE INTERNET

AN INTERNET master's degree program is being offered by Marlboro College in Marlboro, Vermont—the first of its kind, according to the college president, Paul LeBlanc.

The master's program is designed to prepare people to take the lead in using technological and theoretical knowledge in their businesses, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Courses are geared to the multidisciplinary demands of online strategies.

The three-semester MAT with Internet Technologies program will seek to help candidates integrate and enhance their use of the Web, computer software, CD-ROMs, electronic

Trend Watch

ACSYS RESOURCES, a staffing firm based in Wayne, Pennsylvania, has established a Philadelphia-based division dedicated to placement of information technology professionals in contract and permanent assignments.

According to ACSYS, several factors are influencing the growing demand for contracted information services:


- ▶ Technologies emerge and change

rapidly so the demand to maintain staff skills is ahead of many companies' training capabilities.

▶ Because IT professionals are highly compensated, using them on a part-time, temporary basis makes economic sense.

▶ Finding, interviewing, and hiring full-time employees is complicated and expensive, which can distract organizations from their core functions.

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media, and other technologies. A one-year master's of science program in Internet Strategic Management is designed to equip professionals with the skills to oversee the development and management of any organization's Internet initiatives, including concept development, design, prototyping, and implementation of Internet marketing.

The facility for the programs will be in the Brattleboro Graduate Center, which will also provide customized technology training to businesses and not-for-profit organizations in the area. The center will be outfitted with such tools as its own dedicated T-1 Internet access lines, electronic whiteboards, and a multimedia library.

Says LeBlanc, "Not only are we designing a kind of curriculum that has no model or precedent, but we also have to tend to the mundane matters of purchasing equipment, installing computers and phones, and even choosing paint colors."

THE DISTAFF SIDE

RESTRUCTURINGS and downsizings have been harder on women managers than on men managers, ac-



TRUST A BUST

TRUST HAS declined in three out of four workplaces in the past two years, according to a survey conducted by Manchester Consulting, Jacksonville, Florida.

The level of trust in the workplace received a rating of 5 1/2 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent).

"Trust in corporate America is at a low point," says Lew Stern, senior vice president.

Manchester Consulting offers these tips for leaders on how to foster trust at work:

- ▶ Maintain integrity.
- ▶ Communicate vision and values openly.
- ▶ Show respect for employees as equal partners.
- ▶ Focus on shared goals more than personal agendas.
- ▶ Do the right thing regardless of personal risk.
- ▶ Listen with an open mind.
- ▶ Demonstrate caring compassion.
- ▶ Keep confidences.

Manchester says that leaders lose trust these ways:

- ▶ acting inconsistently in what they say and do
- ▶ seeking personal gain above shared gain
- ▶ withholding information
- ▶ lying or telling half-truths
- ▶ being close-minded
- ▶ being disrespectful to employees
- ▶ breaking promises
- ▶ betraying confidences.

cording to The Academy of Management, based in New York.

A study conducted by researchers at Pace University and Rider University found that women managers with MBAs on average earned less, worked more hours, and experienced lower job

satisfaction than their male counterparts—particularly during the years when most reorganizations were taking place.

CONTINGENT WORKERS ON THE RISE

MOST U.S. employers use contingent labor—temps, part-time workers, independent contractors, leased workers, and so forth—according to a survey of more than 1,110 employers, conducted by Business & Legal Reports.

▶ 9 out of 10 employers are using contingent workers for part-time assignments

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- ▶ 50% are using part-timers on an open-ended basis
- ▶ 4 out of 10 are using independent contractors and other freelance consultants.

Nearly 10 percent of the U.S. workforce is made up of nonpermanent staff.

According to employers responding to the survey, the top advantages of contingent staffing are

- ▶ the temporary nature of the contracted work
- ▶ the ability to cope with changing workloads
- ▶ the opportunity to screen workers for future full-time jobs
- ▶ having people to fill in for absent full-time workers.

Employers say the disadvantages are a lack of specific training and required skills, excessive turnover, and poor work quality.

The survey is part of BLR's recently published booklet, *Temps, Part-Timers, and Independent*

Contractors: A Business & Legal Planning Guide.

For more information, call 203.245.7448.

ROADBLOCKS TO SUCCESS

Here are some career mind barriers found especially among new entrants to the workforce, from *News From Kaplan*, a fact sheet published by Simon & Schuster.

▶ **Waiting to be discovered.** Instead of making contacts, such people think they will be magically rewarded with fame and riches.

▶ **Impostor belief.** Some people feel they're not really qualified to do the kind of work their employers want them to do. They're afraid of being exposed as incompetent.

▶ **I shouldn't get paid for what I do: It's easy for me.** This belief usually crops up among people

who are talented and love their work.

▶ **Fear of failure.** New workforce entrants often fear they won't be hired or will end up penniless.

▶ **Fear of success.** Some people are afraid of doing well because they can't imagine being recognized as an expert in their fields. They may even think that fame and fortune will hurt them in some way. They may think that family and friends will like them better if they stay "small."



LEGISLATIVE VICTORY

SECTION 127 of the U.S. tax code, Employer-Provided Education Assistance (which lets people exclude from taxable income up to \$5,250 in non-job, employer-provided tuition assistance) due to expire in July, has been reinstated—partly as a result of a lobbying effort by the American Society for Training & Development, which was also instrumental in helping formulate some of the language used in the reinstatement.

Section 127 has been extended for three years.

How To

HERE ARE SEVERAL ways to celebrate customer service in your organization.

- ▶ Host a Trading Places day in which senior managers spend an hour answering phones while customer reps supervise them.
- ▶ Send a personal note to each rep at home thanking them for their hard work.
- ▶ Ask the company president to write a thank-you note to publish in the employee newsletter.
- ▶ Have a dress-down day for reps.

- ▶ Give out special certificates of appreciation.
- ▶ Hold a contest to see which rep can revive the most lost accounts, take the most orders in a day, or cross-sell the most products. Reward the winners and everyone who participates.
- ▶ Have a scavenger hunt that involves the whole company, with clues leading to why a customer was lost.
- ▶ Teach reps relaxation and stress-relief exercises.

The tips are from The Customer Service Group in New York; 212.228.0246.

Send press releases or short articles on news, trends, and best practices to **News You Can Use**, Training & Development, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043; NYCUC@astd.org.