

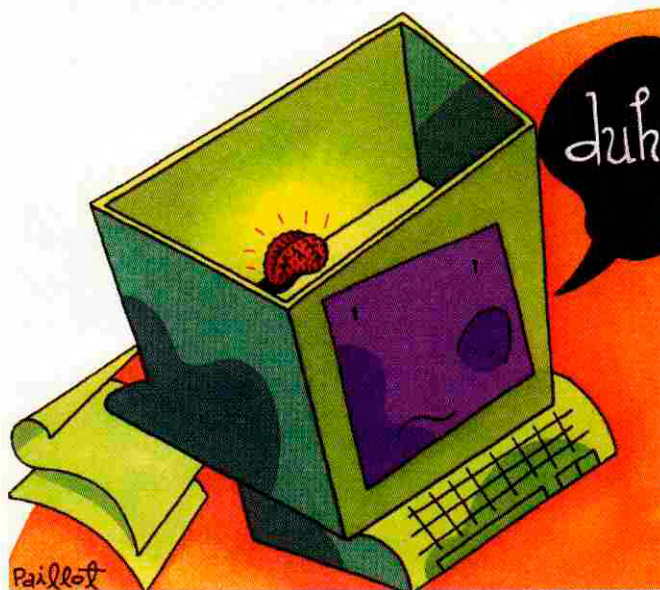
News You Can Use

by Haidee Allerton

THE BIMBO OF COMPUTERS

NETWORK computers may be cheap, but they're also dumb. Companies that are thinking about replacing employees' PCs with NCs (networked computers with fewer capabilities) to save money may pay a high cost in innovation.

Says *Wired* managing editor Russ Mitchell, "All computers can be networked. But the PC is a smart machine. The NC is a dumb terminal. A network of dumb terminals adds up to a dumb organization."



CAPITAL INVENTION!

YOU KNOW what an IRA is—an individual retirement account. Now, there's an ILA, an individual learner's account.

Thomas Edison State College in Trenton, New Jersey, is offering people a way to bank college credit. The option is open to employees at organizations that have their training programs evaluated by the Program on Noncollegiate-Sponsored Instruction of the American Council on Education. ACE/PONSI recommends college credits for employer-provided training.

Employees can use the credits towards earning a degree at Thomas Edison or many other colleges and universities. In some areas of employment, such as the military, people can qualify for promotions if they accumulate a certain number of credits.

All an employee has to do is complete a PONSI

transcript application, mail it with a fee to Thomas Edison State College (or other participating educational institution), and contact the ACE Registry Office in Washington, D.C., to have a copy of his or her registry report sent to the college. Then, the college creates a transcript of the employee's credits in workplace training programs and translates them to college credits.

For more information, contact Thomas Edison State College at 609/984-1150 or <http://www.tesc.edu>.

TELECOMMUTING TIPS

HERE ARE 10 tips for effective telecommuting, from Steelcase, a manufacturer of office furniture in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- 1. Communicate** with managers in writing on a regular basis to outline the expected results of the week ahead.
- 2. Dedicate** a separate

room or part of a room to work. Think privacy, permanence, professionalism, and productivity.

- 3. Schedule** regular face-to-face meetings with managers.
- 4. Plan** to attend team or group meetings at the office.
- 5. Prepare** for meetings, including the agenda, participants, and expectations.
- 6. Organize** your workday by batching tasks according to whether they're best accomplished in the office or at home.
- 7. Budget** your time to spend the appropriate amount each day working. In other words, don't spend all of one day doing

the laundry and then over-work the next day.

8. Establish checkpoints (meetings, e-mail updates, and so forth) to ensure that work meets your and your company's needs.

9. Learn how to manage stress.

10. Reconnect with in-office co-workers to avoid feelings of isolation and to maintain the sense of being part of a team.

OUTSOURCING OUTLOOK

MORE THAN 90 percent of U.S. organizations outsource one or more activities.

▶ In 1996, U.S. companies spent \$100 billion on outsourcing.

▶ By 2001, the total spent on outsourcing is expected to reach \$318 billion.

From Michael F. Corbett & Associates, Poughkeepsie, New York. Corbett is the author of The Disciplines of Outsourcing.

NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT

DID YOU know that Junior Achievement is the world's oldest, largest, and fastest-growing not-for-profit educational organization? Each year, more than three billion primary, secondary, and university students in 100 companies participate in Junior Achievement programs.

In fact, last February, nearly 600 teams of Junior Achievement high-school students from more than 30 countries acted as managers in a computer-simulated business—a competition



THE NEW MILLENNIUM

WATCH FOR THIS NEW TREND:

In the 21st century, training materials will not be printed and warehoused on-site. Instead a few select training partners (Century Business Communications, Inc. for example, in Monroe, LA, 800-256-6000) will continue re-engineering the process of reproducing and distributing training materials.

► Here's how it works:

Training materials in the form of computer files are transferred electronically, materials are then created with "print on demand" technology, combined with any other training components such as pens and highlighters, a training CD-ROM or diskette, classroom giveaways, instructor's dry erase markers, the possibilities are endless. Corinne Byrd, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for The Zig Ziglar Corporation says "I didn't know that you could impact our work flow in such a dramatic fashion. Your solutions and efficient management have made a tremendous difference for The Zig Ziglar Corporation."

WHAT BUSINESS ARE YOU IN?

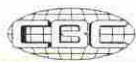
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News You Can Use

How To

Here's a short checklist of tips for a quick boost of efficiency:

1. Don't interrupt your work when the mail arrives.
2. Act on every piece of paper that needs it; don't handle anything twice.
3. Screen phone calls.
4. Consolidate call-backs and visitors' time.
5. Throw out all FYIs by the end of each week.
6. Avoid meetings with more than 12 people because nothing will be accomplished.

From Management Update.

sponsored by Hewlett-Packard.

The Second Annual Hewlett-Packard Global Business Challenge pitted the teams on marketing, pricing, producing, and distributing a fictional product. Each week, the teams sent in their management decisions via e-mail to a central processing center in Massachusetts. Teams earning greatest market share advanced to subsequent rounds.

This month, eight teams of finalists will be selected

to compete in the championship round in September in Tokyo.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

FORMER LABOR Secretary Robert Reich will join the faculty of Brandeis University this fall. He will establish a Center on Jobs, the Economy, and Society at the Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis.

Says Reich, "Our ability

to survive as a nation depends on the capacities of our people."

SURVEY SAYS

TWENTY-FIVE percent of executives at high-technology companies are ineffective managers, according to a 12-year study conducted by Hagberg Consulting Group, a leadership development firm based in New York.

These "executives in trouble" are rewarded for their technical competence by being promoted up the ladder, but they lack the people skills to inspire and develop a cohesive team, says Hagberg.

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. E-mail NYCUC@astd.org.

Trend Watch

They're back

Increasingly, downsized employees are returning as contract workers to the workplaces from which they were let go. In fact, about 20 percent of contract workers—more than one million—are doing jobs at their old companies, but on the payrolls of temporary agencies.

Says Alan Krueger, a Princeton labor economist, "Many companies don't want to lose experienced people, and they don't want to keep them on expensive career tracks. So, they have come

up with contract-worker status for ex-employees."

The American Management Association says that 30 percent of the 720 companies it polled had brought back downsized employees as contract workers. A temporary-help agency says that 80 percent of the 1,000 people it supplies each day to Pacific Bell are former employees.

According to a *New York Times* report, this subculture of rented workers are "outsiders with the employer's mindset." But for some, the changed status has under-

cut their self-esteem, motivation, and productivity. Others like the freedom from office politics.

Well, at least the companies seem happy. Many view contingent workers as "skilled reserves" that can jump back in and get up-to-speed fast. Still, some of the workers feel as if they have returned to just do tasks, not do work that calls on them to use their ingenuity. Many resent the loss of vacation time, benefits, and pension. And they don't like that they're excluded from training.