

Robotot

In the throes of social transition in Japan, Japanese women are furthering their careers and putting off marriage. In fact, the birth rate in Japan has dropped so dramatically that it threatens to cut the population in half by the end of the 21st century.

To combat baby fever, single Japanese women are toting talking rubber dolls called Primo Puelis, which look something like a “boyish fairy with big ears and tail.”

The doll is equipped with sensors that enable it to respond to touch and conversation. Primo’s vocabulary of 250 words includes such phrases as *Welcome home!* and *I’ll miss you*. Bandai Corporation, maker of the doll, says it was designed for “healing,” to help young women retain the nurturing role of their mothers while they adapt to a new, career-oriented lifestyle. Interestingly, Bandai also offers employees a \$10,000 bonus upon the birth of their third child.

So far, 10 million Primo Puelis have been sold. (Available only in Japan.)

Source *Civilization*

Wired Workers

Americans drink 124 billion—BILLION—cups of coffee a year, and the number of Starbucks has grown from 676 stores in 1995 to more than 3,000. Now, there’s caffeine in lipstick: Hard

Candy’s Lipachino, Latte Lip, and Café o Lip—delivering one-half a milligram of caffeine.

Source
Real Simple

Happy Campers

Women are more likely than men to say their close relationships with co-workers contribute to their professional success, according to a study of 1,800 workers on employee loyalty conducted by Aon, a consulting firm.

Other findings:

- ❑ 57% believe colleagues make personal sacrifices to help their group succeed
- ❑ 62% feel co-workers improve their own skills
- ❑ 68% intend to stay with their company.

Tribal OD

The tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians, passed on from generation to generation, says that when you discover you’re riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.

This is modern management’s interpretation of the aforementioned tribal wisdom:
❑ Buy a stronger whip.

Somewhat Related Factoid

You’d have to eat 14 Hershey chocolate bars to get the same amount of caffeine as in one cup of coffee.

- ❑ Change riders.
- ❑ Threaten the horse with termination.
- ❑ Appoint a committee to study the horse.
- ❑ Arrange to visit other countries to see how they ride dead horses.
- ❑ Lower standards so that dead horses can be included.
- ❑ Reclassify the dead horse as “living, impaired.”
- ❑ Hire outside contractors to ride the dead horse.
- ❑ Harness several dead horses together to increase speed.
- ❑ Provide additional funding and training to enhance the dead horse’s performance.
- ❑ Do a productivity study to see whether lighter riders would improve the dead horse’s performance.
- ❑ Declare that since the dead horse doesn’t have to be fed, it’s less costly, carries lower overhead, and, therefore, contributes substantially more to the bottom line than other horses do.
- ❑ Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.

Contributed by FOWLs (friends of Working Life)

True Tales From the Workplace

A FOWL says he spent several years working at a company where upper management worried about information leaks. One day, he told his boss, “I can keep secrets, but the people I tell them to apparently can’t.”

Contributed by Glenn R. Coleman

Do You Have a True Tale From the Workplace?

Tell us actual stories that happen at your work, and we’ll mention you as a contributor to Working Life (or grant you anonymity, if you prefer).

Just email Haidee Allerton at worklife@astd.org or write to me at *Training & Development*, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

Fame can be yours!—or a place in the Working Life witness protection program.

