

# News You Can Use

by Haidee Allerton

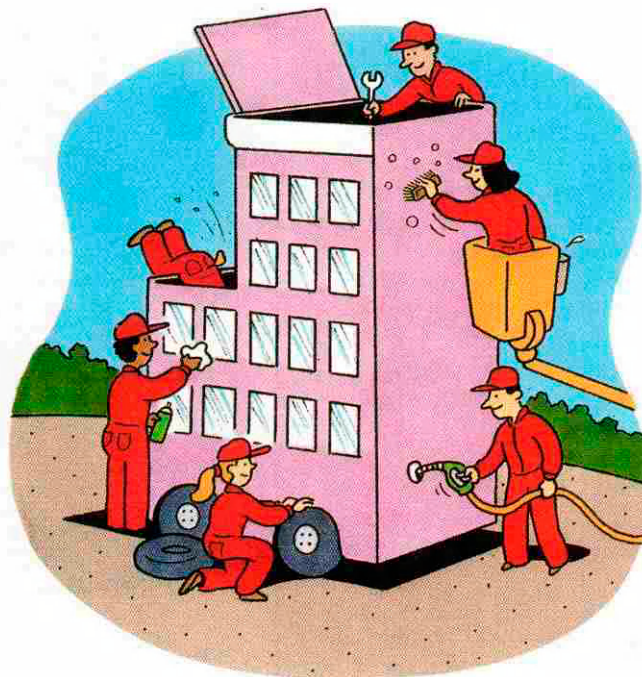
## TIME FOR A TUNE-UP

IS YOUR organization's "culture engine" sputtering?

"Every organization has a culture, for better or worse," say organizational psychologists Saul Pilnick and Jo Ellen Gabel of Human Systems, Boca Raton, Florida. "This culture can be an awesome force, negative or positive."

Once a company's culture is established, it becomes ingrained, says Pilnick. It drives both employees' behavior and business. Like a car's engine, it requires maintenance. Pilnick and Gabel recommend the following:

- ▶ Have a check-up. Diagnose the current state of your organization's culture to identify opportunities and set goals for improvement.
- ▶ Turbo-charge the culture with high-performance work teams. Put together hand-selected teams specially trained in culture-change management in order to build high-performance mini-cultures within the heart of the old culture.
- ▶ Embed the new teams into the existing culture. This confronts old-culture holdouts, provides mechanisms for making choices in favor of the new culture, and reinforces new-culture change efforts.
- ▶ Keep the engine tuned. Every three months, install



new members on the high-performance teams and keep your culture-change tools up-to-date.

Vroom...vroom.

## A FASHION STATEMENT

AS A TREND, casual dress at the office is hardly wearing thin. In a poll of more than 500 HR managers, 90 percent said that their companies allowed employees to wear casual clothing to work, either regularly or on special days. That's up from 63 percent in a 1992 study, also conducted by the Society for Human Resources Management.

"Casual-dress policies have clear advan-

tages for most companies, at virtually no cost," says SHRM CEO Michael R.

Losey. Many companies report a boost in employee morale and productivity after introducing casual-dress options. Survey respondents said that many workers also view a casual-dress code as an added employee benefit. AT&T is just one corporation that now allows "business casual" for everyday attire.



## A QUICK QUIZ

THE MOST SOUGHT-after skills in the American workplace are:

- ▶ sales and marketing
- ▶ finance

- ▶ project planning
- ▶ team leadership.

Answer: None of the above. The best job credential is technology know-how—in whatever your area of expertise is, according to the Cambridge Group, an executive-recruitment firm based in Westport, Connecticut.

For example, if your background is marketing, you will surpass other job candidates if you know what kinds of software, hardware, computer networks, data bases, and other technology are at the cutting edge in that area. If you're looking for a job as a sales manager, you had better know all about the latest contact-management software.

"Never mind mainframes and programming," says Fred DiSalvo, executive vice-president at the Cambridge Group. "Get to know your way around a personal computer and how it's used most effectively in your area."

## THE GRADUATE

MANY BUSINESSES find that the project costs for software implementation exceed initial estimates. If your organization is about to roll out some new technology, you may want to adapt some elements of a program created by the Center for Project Management in San Ramon, California. The "Software Estimation Certificate" program includes organizational and self-assessments, case studies, real-life projects, and scenario simulations. Participants apply a "what if" analysis for scope management and critical-

## STRICTLY HR

TWO AREAS experiencing an increase in HR activities are implementing performance management and leading organizational change, according to the Conference Board.



## @work

HERE ARE SOME NEW ON-LINE SITES.

THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY is now littered with homepages. Here are some new ones:

THE BUREAU OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS has a new homepage for training resources. The new site features HR and safety training programs, manuals, on-line help, live discussion groups, contests, and survey results. The address is <http://www.bna.com/bnac>.

SKILLVIEW'S NEW SITE offers information on skills-based management and a client-server application, "Engineer a More Productive Workforce." The address is [www.skillview.com](http://www.skillview.com).

THE MANAGEMENT LAB HAS A NEW HOMEPAGE that features an ongoing interactive survey on issues having to do with change. The address is <http://www.polaris.net/user-www/manlab/>.

FREE COURSES FOR BUSINESS AND FUN are available on the Spectrum Virtual University site <http://horizons.org/campus/>. Courses include "Improving Your Intercultural Communication Skills," "Coming of Age in the New Millennium," and "Exploring the World Wide Web."

path compression. They also develop plans for instituting sound software-implementation practices in their organizations.

The first graduate of the center's program is Intel Corporation, a major manufacturer of computer microprocessors.

### MUST-SEE TV

**B**USINESSVISION—a new television network developed by Video Publishing House of Schaumburg, Illinois, and Broadcast International of Salt Lake City, Utah—is devoting all of its programming content to training and information. In addition to television hookups, the all-business training network—broadcast via satellite—can feed directly into PC terminals outfitted with television cards or connected to a LAN, thereby reaching an entire organization.

For a monthly fee of

\$290 to \$380 per location (depending on the number of a company's employees), subscribers receive five days a week of top training videos, live panel discussions, and up-to-the-minute financial, legal, and business news. BusinessVision also films and broadcasts national and regional training conferences, professional meetings, and industry conventions, as well as interactive "speak to the expert" panel discussions with business-school professors, management authors, and *Fortune* 500 business leaders. All programs rotate so that they're available at different times and days to accommodate viewers' schedules. A separate, scrambled feed is available for customized programming. BusinessVision also enables corporate trainers to preview video-based programs before they make purchasing decisions.

Subscribers are supplied with the necessary equip-

ment and service for compliance, installation, maintenance, and network management, as well as a 24-hour help desk.

### POWER POINTERS

**S**O, YOU'VE BEEN promoted over your colleagues. It can be uncomfortable to have to manage people who were once your peers.

Here are some tips from Personnel Decisions, Minneapolis, Minnesota:

- ▶ Recognize that authority



affects relationships.

- ▶ Characterize the new nature of the relationship.
- ▶ Don't take your former peers' reactions personally.
- ▶ Don't try to assert your authority all at once.
- ▶ Emulate a "best boss."
- ▶ Talk to others with similar experience.
- ▶ Create a shared vision with your new staff.

### SURPRISED?

**M**OST AMERICAN workers are satisfied with their jobs, according to a survey conducted by the Gallup Organization for Accountants on Call, Saddlebrook, New Jersey.

The poll found little difference in satisfaction between men and women. But employees age 50 and older are more satisfied than those under age 30 (68 percent versus 38

# Are You . . .

## Running Revamping Reinventing

# A Corporate University?

Improve the effectiveness of your corporate university with resources developed by Jeanne C. Meister, author of *Corporate Quality Universities: Lessons in Building a World-Class Work Force*.

### NEWSLETTER.

*Corporate University Xchange*. Each issue contains research derived from on-site visits to corporate universities.

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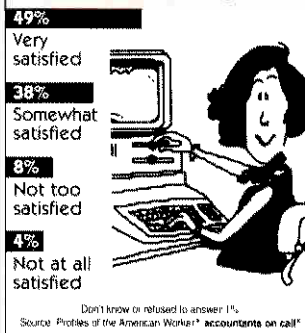
### Trend Watch

**I**T LOOKS WEIRD: 2000. As a year, it doesn't roll off the tongue. Yet, it's coming—and here are some things that might be happening then.

- ▶ By 2000, the United States will need more than 20 million new jobs to keep pace with population growth; more new jobs will be needed for immigrants. (Heidrick and Struggles, New York, New York)
- ▶ The top three sources of competitive advantages in 2000 will be customer satisfaction, new products, and human resources. (*Spotlight on Performance*, Performance Services, Minneapolis, Minnesota)
- ▶ By 2000, 50 percent of training will be delivered by technology, up from the current 20 percent. (*Corporate University Exchange*, New York, New York)

percent). College graduates are also more satisfied with their jobs than nongraduates; people with incomes over \$40,000 are more satisfied than those earning less than \$25,000.

#### All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?



and finances; 44 percent say that they experience stress all or most of the time.

- ▶ Almost all workers—90 percent—spend some time working on teams, but only 52 percent have had any formal team training.
- ▶ Thirty-two percent of respondents said that their bosses or supervisors trust staff to do a good job; only 16 percent say that their bosses or supervisors provide a clear vision of expectations, communicate with employees, and motivate or recognize staff.

Seventy-nine percent of the people polled said that 1995 was one of the most stressful years ever, mainly due to downsizing and high unemployment rates. Most respondents—85 percent—said that they don't accomplish everything they'd like to in a typical workday; 27 percent said that they complete less than half of their work-related goals. More than half—54 percent—resolve to spend more time with their families.

### TRIPLE THREAT

**H**ERE ARE SOME interesting facts and figures about stress, teamwork, and leadership, according to a survey of more than 700 American workers conducted by Dale Carnegie Training, headquartered in Garden City, New York.

- ▶ Of people under age 65, 79 percent report that their primary source of stress is work, followed by family

Send items of interest to "News You Can Use," 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.