

INTELLIGENCE

Workforce of Tomorrow

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

The workforce of tomorrow is growing up today. Unfortunately, many youth are not getting the education or experience they need to succeed as they enter the work world.

Education. In 2002, I wrote about Daniel Pink, the author of *Free Agent Nation*, and his cry for a new U.S. education system to coincide

with the new way people are working. Freedom, flexibility, and self-determination are absent from schools that look just as they did 40 years ago, (with the exception of some new technology), Pink said.

 **"Education Evolution," Intelligence (April 2002 T+D)**

A recent trend alert from the Herman Group agrees

with Pink's assessment. The futurists say employers are "practically begging" for young workers who can "think, collaborate, communicate, coordinate, and create." To address that need, schools will shift from teaching facts to teaching critical thinking, problem solving, and other applied knowledge

How can we prepare *all* youth for future work success?

and process skills, the group says. However, that process will be “agonizingly slow.” In the meantime, corporate trainers will have to fill in the gaps by developing those skills in employees.

But if people gain those skills only at work, how can people within disadvantaged populations gain higher-level jobs? Will they be stuck forever in a chicken-or-the-egg cycle?

A bipartisan initiative in the United States, the American Diploma Project, is attempting to address that issue. The project wants to ensure that a high school diploma means U.S. students can succeed in college or “high-performance, high-level jobs.” Led by Achieve, a partnership of state governors and corporate leaders, the project offers benchmarks for competencies that map to workplace tasks and college assignments.

Achieve is working with states, the U.S. government, educators, and business leaders to “create a high school diploma that counts” and

give students the knowledge and skills they need to survive in an information-based global economy. Will this initiative provide employers with the type of workers they’re so hungry for? Only time will tell.

Experience. Many young people around the world aren’t getting the work experience they need for present and future success. More than 300 million people age 18 to 30 are unemployed or underemployed globally, according to a 2003 report by the international Teens and Technology Consortium (written about a 2002 roundtable discussion).

Young workers in the United States bore the brunt of employment losses in the past few years, according to a report by the Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS) at Northeastern University. From 2000 to 2003, the rate of employment for 16- to 24-year-olds declined more than for any other age group (5.2 percent). The effects of that can reach into the future: Reducing cumulative work

experience can impair youths’ earning potential later in life.

Among specific populations, underemployment is even more prevalent and lack of experience is especially critical. In 2003, only 35 percent of U.S. high school dropouts and 55 percent of high school graduates were employed full-time, versus 77 percent of four-year college graduates. Only one in four African American high school graduates were working full-time.

 **“Recovery for Whom?” Intelligence (March T+D)**

One important factor contributing to un- or underemployment globally is lack of access to technology. The Teens and Technology Project Inventory analyzed best practices in connecting disadvantaged youth to technology; one of those practices was linking learning to further education or future employment.

The Herman Group predicts companies will “adopt” students, forecasting long-term educational employment at corporations for teens

and describing current career programs by Motorola and Sony at elementary schools.

According to CLMS, reducing un- or underemployment of youth entering the workforce can help boost a struggling economy (increasing production and consumption), decrease criminal activity (which may look attractive versus limited job options or low wages), and reduce teen pregnancy (according to at least one study). That’s not to mention halting the overall cycle of poverty.

Have You Been to the Blog Yet?

Several times a week, the T+D blog (Web-log) continues to offer ideas, links, news, and trends on topics that matter to you. Go to the T+D Website (tdmagazine.asted.org) and click the blog button on the right-hand side of the page.

Recently, the blog covered

- whether work-life balance has disappeared
- signs not to post in a training room
- trends in social and workflow software
- fun training ads
- technologies that refuse to die and their parallel to classroom-based training

More Info

- www.hermangroup.com/alert/archive_12-10-2003.html
- www.hermangroup.com/alert/archive_1-22-2003.html
- www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/americandiplomaproject?openform
- www.digitale-chancen.de/transfer/downloads/MD552.pdf
(Teens and Technology report)

Thanks to Connect for Kids Weekly (www.connectforkids.org) for several of those links.



- PowerPoint as art
- and lots more.

What's missing? You! Visit the blog and offer your thoughts through the comments feature. The blog works best as a dialogue!

Reality Check

Are you working on the weekends? You're not alone. Seventy-three percent of Americans who work in an office with more than 100 people work on the weekend, whether in the office or at home. So says the "Steelcase Workplace Index," a semi-annual survey that examines workplace trends.

How to Handle Difficult Co-Workers

Every job has them; here's how to deal with them.

1. The office gossip. Most gossip is false and hurtful. Keep information to yourself and your co-workers will see you as trustworthy and reliable.

2. The constant complainer. Negativity can lower productivity and morale. Listen respectfully, but don't join in. The complainer will likely find someone else to unload on.

3. The nose neighbor. Cubicles don't hide much. Be discreet by limiting personal calls and conversations. If your neighbor crosses the line, talk to your manager.

4. The office thief. Steer clear of people known to steal credit and ideas. Don't brainstorm with them or share your thoughts.

5. All-around unpleasant co-worker. Try having a private conversation about your interactions. If that doesn't work, document issues and talk to your manager or HR.

↳ Sources/ MSN Careers and Careerbuilder.com



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Late-Breaking News/Late-Breaking News

An item of note as we go to press: President Bush's plan to strengthen U.S. high school education and improve access to postsecondary school and job training.

↳ www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040121.html