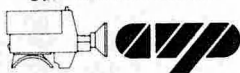




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# n Practice



## Child Care Myths

Submitted by Sandy Saber, Torne & Company, San Francisco

Despite overwhelming agreement on the need for child care among employers and employees, a scant 3 percent of the nation's six-million employers currently make provisions for child care. Hailed as "the employee benefit of the 1990s," the demand for child care has far exceeded supply as the two-working-parent household and single working mothers continue to erode the traditional nuclear family.

Adia Temporary Services, a national personnel firm, recently completed a survey which addresses this discrepancy between supply and demand with regard to child care. The survey's findings:

■ *Who's responsible for child care?* Both employers and employees strongly agree on the concept of flexible benefit options and child care provisions—as long as the responsibility for such services falls in someone else's backyard!

■ *Government, parents, and private industry are involved in a classic finger pointing match.* The child care issue remains frustratingly unresolved.

The survey's results further explode some long-entrenched myths about women in the working environment, including:

- Women feel guilty for working and being away from their children;
- Women work out of economic necessity and would prefer to tend fires at home full-time if given the option;
- Women consider extended pregnancy leave a sufficient addition to maternity benefits;
- Temporary employees are unreliable and represent an undependable labor source.

In actuality the survey shows:

- Women feel positively about working;
- Eighty-three percent of the women surveyed would continue to work either full-time or part-time *even* if money were of no consequence;
- The majority of women prefer "cafeteria" benefit options over a single benefit, such as extended maternity pregnancy leave;
- Temporary employees are an untapped, underutilized resource. A little flexibility on the part of employers could have big payoffs in morale, productivity, and the bottom line.

## AIDS in the Workplace: Are Companies Responding?

The rising number of cases—and the human costs—of acquired immune defi-

ciency syndrome (AIDS) have elicited surprisingly little in the way of formal response from American business organizations. According to a recent survey conducted by the American Society for Per-

sonnel Administrators, few companies have written policies for victims of AIDS. (The survey sought information on the human resource management response to AIDS. The fatal disease attacks the immune system of its victims and has caused panic in some sections of society.)

Among the survey's findings:

■ Of the 287 companies responding, only nine (3 percent) had written policies for dealing with employees who contract AIDS. Two additional companies reported that their policies were in memo form or were unwritten.

■ At 72 percent of the companies responding, AIDS is treated as a normal medical claim. Two percent of the respondents reported that AIDS is not covered by company insurance; 10 percent did not know if it was covered.

■ The companies that have policies generally follow guidelines suggested by the federal Centers for Disease Control and other health agencies. Of the nine

with written policies, eight provide for continued employment and eight for continued benefits.

■ None of the policies calls for immediate termination, two provide paid leave, and five offer unpaid leave. One health care firm said that AIDS is included in existing infection control procedures.

■ Many companies responding to the survey said they have developed educational programs to reduce anxieties and to counsel employees about the disease. Recent widespread publicity about the disease has forced human resource managers to deal with the problem in the workplace.

■ Twenty-six firms in the survey reported having an employee with AIDS (9 percent), 84 percent said that no employees have AIDS, and 6 percent said that they did not know.

■ Of the companies with no written policy, 16 provide paid leave and 4 provide unpaid leave. One company terminated

the employee immediately, providing partial pay indefinitely.

■ Other than health care companies, only one company said that it tests employees for exposure to the disease. Nine percent of the respondents make AIDS testing available to employees who want it. Others mentioned that the tests would be provided under existing medical benefits, while some said employees wanting the tests were referred to the local health department. Eight companies (3 percent) require employees to inform supervisors of an AIDS diagnosis.

■ Most companies in the survey have not yet faced the issue of how to deal with their other employees when a worker contracts AIDS. Five respondents said that they would terminate employees who refuse to work with an AIDS victim, five would use transfers, and six others would isolate the victim. Forty-three companies (15 percent) said they would use other solutions, including education, counseling and infor-



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mation sharing before they would discipline unwilling employees.

## Computers Educate in Our Homes

Use of home computer software for educational purposes has increased at a faster pace than any other application, according to comparisons of studies made in 1984 and 1985 by LINK Resources, a New York-based research and consulting firm that monitors the home electronic media field. In 1984, 45 percent of home computer users reported using their home PCs for education. This number grew to 64 percent in LINK's 1985 Home Media Consumer Survey.

The second most significant year-to-year change in use of household computers occurred in the degree to which software applications for the filing and sorting of information increased in importance. This grew from 49 percent in 1984 to 59 percent in 1985. Use of software for

word processing increased from 30 percent to 39 percent among home PC owners.

Entertainment software, however, remains the most frequently used for the in-home PC—although it declined from 66 percent to 64 percent between the 1984 and 1985 surveys. It is now being used only as often as educational software.

Andy Bose, LINK Resources director of microcomputer analysis, in looking at the overall trend in home software purchases, commented, "Collectively, the popularity of the home productivity and home business applications matches, if not exceeds, the education and entertainment categories. This finding is not surprising considering the heavy usage of the PC by heads of households."

PC owners, in responding to a survey question regarding their plans for future PC software use at home, indicated that the greatest increase in use of their computers is expected to be for word processing. One out of three who were not using their computers for that purpose in 1985 expect to be doing so within a year.

The next fastest-growing use of software in the home is for budgeting and financial management. While 36 percent of home PC owners are currently using PCs for this purpose, fully one-third of those who are not, intend to use them for this household task during the next year. In the area of filing and storing information, over one out of five (20.3 percent) have plans for such an application within a year—in addition to those already employing their PCs for this chore (almost three out of five).

Other topics covered in the report, "Home Computer Software Outlook," include a more detailed look at how current PC owners use their computers at home and how non-PC owners intend to use their PCs when they do get them for their households. The survey also reports on the planned software purchases of home PC owners, the status of household ownership of personal computers in the U.S. (statistics and market share by brand), profiles of 21 software vendor companies, and the 1985 Home PC Software Forecast.

Further information regarding the report, "Home Computer Software Outlook," and the 1985 and forthcoming 1986 LINK Resources Home Media Consumer Survey, can be obtained by contacting Kathleen Heeney at LINK Resources, 212/473-5600.



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## The OSHA Right-to-Know Laws: Have You Complied?

Some 14 million American workers are beneficiaries of the most extensive employee hazard communication standard ever written. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard should have been in place at some 300,000 manufacturing establishments in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands by May 25.

Often referred to as "right-to-know" legislation, the laws are intended to protect the safety of workers by keeping them informed of the dangerous substances with which they are working, the hazards and symptoms of exposure, and the proper steps to take if they have been exposed.

According to OSHA, there are as many as 575,000 chemical products in American workplaces, with new chemicals being introduced every day. The standard sets a floor of about 600 substances—regulated by OSHA or listed by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial

Training and Development Journal, June 1986

Hygienists, the National Toxicology Program, or the International Agency for Research on Cancer—which will automatically be considered hazardous, and sets criteria for determining what constitutes a health hazard.

The OSHA regulations, initially in effect only for chemical manufacturers, will now cover every employer in Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) 20-39. This includes manufacturers, importers, and distributors in such fields as petroleum, stone, textiles, food, and paper.

Initial costs of the standard are estimated by OSHA to be almost \$604 million, or \$43 per employee. Annual maintenance costs will be \$158 million, or \$11 per employee. Benefits of the standard are expected to include increased employee awareness of hazards and increased compliance with protective measures. These in turn should provide a return on investment in lower incidences of chemically related injury and illness on the job. Further, the OSHA standard will probably reduce the costs involved with

complying with diverse state and local standards, many of which are more stringent than the federal standard.

For employers who need to come into compliance quickly and efficiently, a Chicago-based compliance materials organization has designed a comprehensive manual to help regulated companies implement right-to-know programs. The two loose-leaf volumes include step-by-step instructions for establishing an employee program to comply with OSHA and state standards. For information on federal and state right-to-know laws or the compliance program manual, contact Intereg at 5724 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60646; 312/478-0900.

## Postsecondary Education Partnerships Gain

Job training and higher education officials in six communities are helping

revive their economically depressed economies through activities brought about through the assistance of a recently completed demonstration project. Results of the project are summarized in a new booklet, "New PIC/Postsecondary Partnerships."

The project, conducted by the National Association of Private Industry Councils (NAPIC) and the National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL), brought together private industry councils (PICs) and postsecondary institutions to address local education and job training problems of common concern. PICs are business-led volunteer boards that oversee local job training programs authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Colleges and universities represent a major educational resource in a community, but rarely have they worked with PICs to stimulate local economic development.

"Individually, the PICs and postsecondary schools have enormous resources to help their communities rebuild their economies," said Robert Knight, NAPIC



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executive director. "Our goal was to encourage collaborative arrangements to pool these resources and achieve even greater results."

Among the collaborative activities at the six demonstration sites was involvement in the creation and development of business "incubator" projects in Flint, Michigan; Shippensburg, Pennsylvania; Dunkirk, New York; and in several sites in northwest Pennsylvania. These incubators generally provide space for new businesses in a building with shared services; management, financial, and technical assistance through educational institutions; and recruitment and customized training of new employees through the PICs.

In addition, the two-year NAPIC/NIWL project created new relationships between PICs and higher education including a new educational advisory

council in northwest Pennsylvania, integrated JTPA trainees (especially laid-off adult workers) into college campuses, and developed short-term intensive skills training at colleges for JTPA participants. "This project demonstrated that higher education and the federal job training system can be stimulated to work together to play key roles in economic development," said Shirley Fox, NIWL project director.

Technical assistance provided by NAPIC and NIWL consisted of on-site visits, workshops, and a newsletter. None of the six communities received any financial incentives for participating. Project funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

Copies of the project summary, "New PIC/Postsecondary Partnerships," have

been distributed to all PICs and to many postsecondary educational institutions. Additional copies of the project summary are available for \$8.95 each—and of the six detailed case studies for \$11.95 each—from NIWL, 1200 18th Street NW, Suite 316, Washington, DC 20036.

*Please send items of interest for In Practice to Robert Bové, Training & Development Journal, 1603 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.*



## Decision Making.

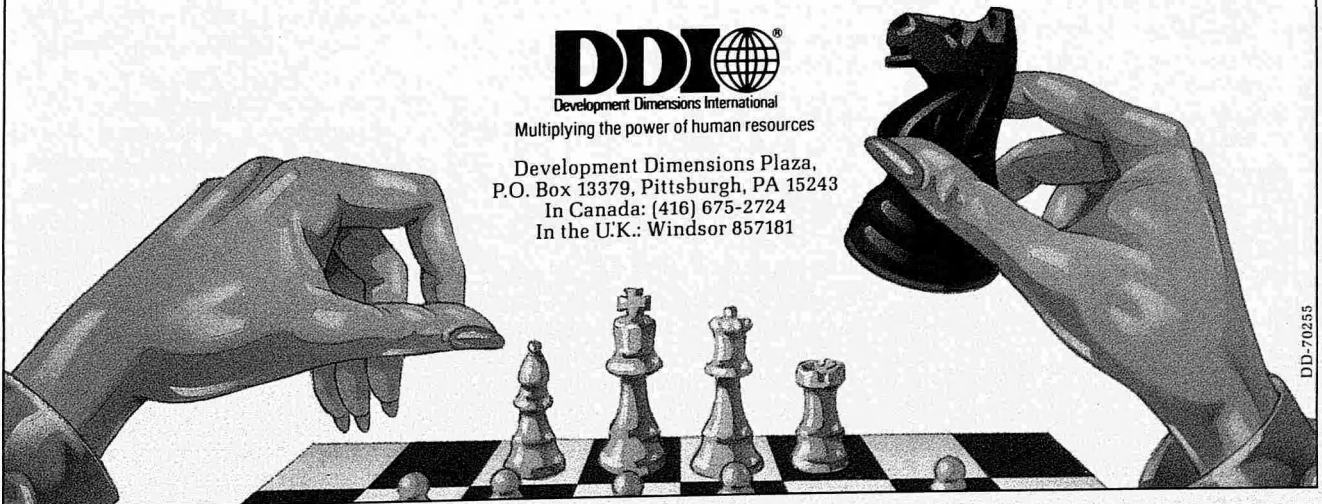
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