

INTELLIGENCE

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/NEWS FLASH/

Gaining the Advantage?

Developing countries increase education rates and workforce power.

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

THE CLEAR LEAD that developed countries have in the educational arena is quickly shrinking, according to an analysis released by The Conference Board.

Developing countries are rapidly increasing the number and quality of college graduates, while equalizing the access rates to education for those attending secondary and primary schools. This is generating what The Conference Board calls "a sea change in the relative education advantage that advanced countries have enjoyed for literally hundreds of years."

Education and literacy

Access to primary and secondary education in developing countries is catching up to the standards for "advanced" countries, according to the board.

"Given recent trends in primary education," says Gail Fosler, executive vice president and chief economist of The Conference Board, "the world economy may achieve near universal literacy within a generation." The board predicts that by 2035, the emerging world may have almost 100 percent literacy.

Fosler says that if the trends keep go-

ing up, much of the gap in secondary education access between high- and middle-income countries will disappear by 2014. By that year, students in almost all of the middle-income countries and about 60 percent of those in low-income countries will get a high school education.

Fosler says there will be changes in access to college education as well. "The sea change is well recognized in math, science, and engineering capacities, but the simple fact is that emerging markets will generate large numbers of college graduates in all fields."

Work world implications

All this news is good for the developing countries, but, Fosler says, the countries that are used to having the advantage will feel the pressure of greatly increased competition.

"The gradual, but striking, convergence in educational access around the globe indicates that the huge gaps in the quality of the workforce between advanced economies and emerging markets are beginning to close," says Fosler. "What has been an enormous advantage in terms of organizational skill, problem solving, technology development, liter-

ary expression, and creative arts is fading. Not only can work be done in all parts of the world through the use of information and communication technology, but during the next 10 to 20 years, it is as likely that it will be initiated in the developing world as it is in advanced economies."

A worldwide conversation on these issues was launched with *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's recent publication, *The World is Flat*. The book examines the way the global playing field is being leveled through technology and other factors.

MORE www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.05/friedman.html for an interview with Friedman.

What Does *Developing* Mean?

Based on a United Nations classification, developing regions include Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), and Latin America as well as the countries of Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guinea, Haiti, Samoa, Senegal, and Yemen.

/ETHICS UPDATE/

Ethics: The Good, Bad, the Important

The bad: Despite all the attention ethics has been getting in the media lately, more people are observing ethical misconduct in the workplace. According to the 2005 National Business Ethics Survey released by the Ethics Resource Center, 52 percent of American workers have seen at least one type of misconduct at work, a slight increase from 2003. And employees are reporting misdeeds less. Fifty-five percent of employees who observed misconduct at work reported it, which is down by 10 percentage points from 2003.

The good: Five of six components of a formal ethics and compliance program measured by the NBES have increased, with written standards of ethical business conduct increasing 19 percentage points since 2004.

The important: The 2005 NBES findings highlight the importance of an ethical culture. (The study measures an ethical culture by such elements as the ethics-related actions of employees at all levels and perceptions of accountability for violations.)

Employees in a company with a weak ethical culture reported observing at least one type of misconduct than workers in organizations with a strong ethical culture (70 percent compared to 34 percent). Employees in companies with strong ethical cultures were also more likely to report misconduct than those in weak-culture companies (79 percent versus 48 percent).

MORE/ The Ethics Resource Center, www.ethics.org

/REALITY CHECK/

Nail Your Next Interview

It's no secret that many companies do a lot of hiring and promoting in the first quarter of the year. So, prepare for your next interview now. Consider it an important step toward creating a relationship with a potential employer and landing your dream job.

JillXan Donnelly, president of CareerWomen.com advises, "Practice, practice, practice. Many questions, such as those inquiring about your experience and qualifications, should be expected. By creating the right storyline to anticipated questions, your delivery will sound natural and confident. Remember, if you are qualified, the interview is where you can win or lose the game."

She suggests these tips to impress recruiters:

Be the qualified candidate. Know exactly why you are qualified for the position before you go to the interview. When you talk to the recruiter, match your experience to the specific requirements.

Do your homework. Research the company's current business issues so you can address questions about direction and

opportunity. Prior to the interview, develop a list of questions that demonstrate your interest and curiosity about the company and position.

Speak with confidence. The interview isn't the time to be timid. Be confident about your professional accomplishments and talk about your results. Cite praise from previous employers to validate your claims. If you have work samples that relate to the position, why not show them off?

Act professionally. It may seem like common sense, but professional behavior will take you a long way at setting the right impression. So, dress appropriately for the position, turn off your cell phone, and most importantly, be on time!

Be a good communicator. Pay attention and be appropriately enthusiastic. Don't interrupt: It could send a warning flag that you aren't interested. Instead, lean forward, make direct eye contact, and listen to the questions before you answer.

MORE/www.CareerWoman.com.

/IN PRACTICE/

High Performance Is More Than a Dream—It's a Culture

By Bob Rogers

OUR CURRENT productivity-focused economy has forced companies to look closer at their bottom line.

While reviewing spending analyses and new revenue sources, companies often don't realize that the solution is right under their noses.

In most organizations, the top performers are four times as productive as the weakest performer. In fact, a recent study by the Aberdeen Group showed that companies that have best-in-class employee performance management processes—where goals are established and measured regularly, and employees are accountable for their individual performance—generate from 50 to 70 percent more revenue than those that don't have as good a system. If the benefits of well-managed employee performance are this clear, why don't organizations deal with poor-performing employees?

Jack Welch hit on this issue during one of his many talks since retiring. At a major conference, Welch asked 2,000 managers from various organizations if their company had integrity. Ninety-five percent of the attendees raised their hands. He then asked if their company's leaders gave straightforward and honest feedback on performance. Only 5 percent of the audience raised their hands. So every day, the majority of the workforce is randomly trying to achieve success without any real understanding of how that success is measured for them or the organization.

The fact is that most managers can identify their mediocre or poor performers—they just don't address the issue. Managers fail to understand the impact of avoiding these difficult, yet critical, discussions.

Avoidance tells poor performers that mediocrity is acceptable. And the problem isn't about one individual—it has a negative influence on the morale and productivity of co-workers, who aren't blind to

the individual's poor performance and who may also begin to accept and deliver mediocrity. The result is that the entire performance level of the organization is now lowered and the manager's credibility and leadership are undermined.

But performance isn't an issue to be dealt with just by individual managers and supervisors—senior leaders set the tone for performance expectations of the entire organization.

If a senior leader is measured by the success of the company, they have to influence the behaviors of every person who impacts the company's bottom line. That can mean thousands of people whose behaviors and performance affect the profit margin and stock price. Can one person have that kind of influence?

Companies with a performance culture optimize business performance through employee accountability and commitment. Without this culture, under-performers are not held accountable and performance is allowed to slip, because the individual does not believe they have an impact on the big picture.

In the absence of a performance culture, managers take the path of least resistance and avoid the tough task themselves, shifting people to different positions or transferring them instead of dealing with problems.

Senior leaders develop a performance culture by telling every employee that they are accountable for meeting expectations. If expectations are not being met, the situation is addressed directly.

Jack Welch may have been the model for creating a performance culture in the 1990s, but today many CEOs or senior leaders like Michael Dell at Dell, James Kilts at Gillette, Elisabeth Fleuriot of Kellogg's Europe, or Mike Miller of Cognis North America are the models for tracking performance and communicating regularly.

Michael Dell knows it's critical for employees to understand their role in the organization,

so the company instituted a program called "The Soul of Dell," which conveys that every employee contributes to the success of the organization. Michael Dell's belief in individual accountability begins with his own role and those of the people on his senior management team—all of whom are held to the highest standards.

James Kilts also started looking at the top when he took over as CEO of Gillette four years ago, instituting quarterly performance reviews at every level of the company, including the executive level. The business has flourished as a result, outperforming its competitors, which Kilts attributes to Gillette's "driven" culture.

What you measure becomes what truly matters for individuals. And once it's important for them, it becomes important for the entire organization. When you make the organization's goals relevant and personal to people, you have the key to driving strategy execution and, ultimately, company performance.

Bob Rogers is the president of Development Dimensions International (DDI), a global human resource consulting firm; www.ddiworld.com.

Email Tactics

By Sherry Sweetnam

Email volume is overwhelming many professionals in the workplace, according to a recent survey of professionals in sales, management, and HR, and feedback from workshop participants.

Email is a boon to productivity, yet too much of it can create crippling side effects. According to the National Research Bureau, the average businessperson sends and receives about 90 messages a day. “Power emailers” spend more than 3 hours a day on email and often work on it evenings, weekends, and during vacation. Clearly it has become a work-life issue.

The director of global human resources for a multinational company explains, “I get hundreds of emails a day from all over the world, and it’s too much. So, I give up and things slip through the cracks. And then I worry, ‘Did I miss something?’”

What is the best way to solve this issue? Have employees and management work together to discover new solutions. Krista Singleton, a communications manager at General Electric, says employees and management agreed they wanted to simplify emails. So instead of employees sending 20 separate updates to management, they consolidated their updates to just one inclusive update, and sent it once a week. That lessened the volume and the piecemeal approach.

Best practices

Revamp your filing system. You should spend no more than three seconds trying to locate a message. If you do, you need to customize your system to reflect your current needs. Experiment with new folder titles such as “Waiting for” or “Action Steps.” Your new system will give you the psychological boost you need to roll up your sleeves and deal with the volume of email you receive.

Start an “empty in-box” policy. As our in-box grows, so does our resistance to email. The solution? Immediately sort and file emails when you open your in-box, as David Allen notes in the bestseller *Getting Things Done*.

I know what you’re thinking. “Right, Sherry. No way am I ever going to maintain an empty in-box.” The gurus consistently recommended it, so I tried it. It works! The resistance I used to feel at approaching my in-box has disappeared.

Get it right the first time. Take the time you need to write a good email rather than firing off a quick response. Remember, you’re seriously handicapped with email because words are the only tool you have to communicate with. You lack the cues of body language and the subtle tones found in spoken communication.

Choose your words carefully. Your recipient will be less likely to misinterpret you, which triggers more volume. Reread silently. Or, use your ears as editors—they are powerful tools. Mumble your words softly and edit them simultaneously. Guaranteed magical results. Then send.

Set up a rules wizard. Rules Wizard is a powerful Outlook tool. It automatically filters incoming messages. For example, you can program it to place emails from your boss or “cc” messages in a separate folder. Rules can also delete spam or email from a certain person.

Frontload important folders. “Frontload” means strategically positioning important folders at the top of your folder list. Go to “Rename,” place an underscore symbol (_) in front of the folder you want frontloaded—for example, “_Favorites.” Hit enter and close the screen. When you return, the folder has popped to the top.

Rename subject titles. In-coming subject titles are typically too general or miss what’s important. Yet they are critical roadmaps for retrieval. Start re-naming subject titles that don’t state what’s important. For example, revise “Meeting” to

“Responsibilities for 12/04 meeting.” Open the message, highlight and delete the original subject title, and type in the new subject. When you close the message, the revised subject line appears.

Stress and email

Email volume is a major contributor to information overload. This issue was addressed by Edward Hallowell in the excellent article “Overloaded Circuits—Why Smart People Underperform.” (*Harvard Business Review*, January 2005).

The results of information overload are being easily distracted, creating clutter, and cutting corners. These symptoms are called ADT (Attention Deficit Trait). Hallowell believes the main antidote to technology stress is working at mental and physical well-being.

He recommends taking conscious steps to lessen the isolation caused by sitting in front of your computer screen. He suggests taking more time to interact with people and honoring break times. By practicing those habits, we train ourselves to work at our peak and to counter the stress that email and technology cause.

Sherry Sweetnam is an author, speaker, facilitator, and trainer. She recently published *The Executive Memo* (Oak Grove Publishing, 2005).

/LEADERSHIP/

Ruling by Fear and Intimidation

By Robert Troutwine

LEADERS AND RULERS have used fear and intimidation for centuries, and the practice still exists today in many of the schools and organizations.

This “leadership style” has many common denominators, whether it’s practiced in a school building or a corporation. If you want to rule by fear and intimidation, here is how to do it right.

Use an inconsistent interpersonal style. One day, act very warm, friendly, and open toward people. Behave as if you are interested in their personal lives and problems they might be having at work. The next day, act very cool, formal, and aloof. This tactic is even more effective if you change your style within minutes. That keeps people on their heels.

Constantly shift priorities and initiatives. This enables you to stay a step ahead of everyone. You do not have to invent new priorities; simply change the one you want to emphasize. Keep people working on the newly stated priority until they are about 90 percent finished; then introduce the new direction. Do not let them feel a sense of satisfaction for reaching an objective. Later, you can use their failure to complete an initiative as leverage.

Schedule meetings without announcing the agenda. Make the meeting sound very important but be very vague about the purpose. Then fully prepare for the meeting’s topic. Call on people, asking pointed questions. Act displeased with uncertain responses.

Set rules to deal with exceptions. Many organizations have policies that are general, but exceptions to the policies are also dealt with quickly. This is wrong. For instance, perhaps a company’s dress code is stated as “a professional appearance.” If a worker shows up in flip-flops, you should immediately pass a rule that no open-toed shoes may be worn to work.

Reprimand people the right way. Sooner or later, everyone makes a mistake. This is perfect for creating fear. Describe and re-

hash their error in painful detail. Then confide you are having doubts about their ability and perhaps it would be a good idea to replace them, because their mistake has far-reaching consequences. You can always play the “poor attitude” card. Whatever you do, don’t suggest any corrective actions.

Realize that it’s okay to recognize a job well done. Once in a while you may have to recognize good performance. Emphasize that the important thing is that you are pleased, which everyone should strive for. Then remind them that people are supposed to have stellar performance all of the time. Make it clear that now you will be expecting a higher level of work out of them. Try to instill a sense of futility and give them an additional task as a reward.

Wave the big stick frequently. Workers naturally fear for their jobs. Even if you have minimal influence over raises, promotions, salaries, and terminations, you are still in a position to inflict fear. Frequently remind workers that you control their destiny.

Keep some of the weak ones around. You must keep in check your instinct to single out the weak workers and dispose of them. Weak people can be of use. Others will see their fear and intimidation and learn to fear you. The weak can be your eyes and ears, manipulated into willingly providing juicy bits of information or spying on others.

Gang up on individuals. Not everyone is weak. A few will be admired because of competence or personal qualities. Keep an eye on those people in case one of them stands up to you. Use the authority of your position and policies to gain leverage. Get your boss to cooperate or bring a colleague when you meet with the person. There is power in numbers.

Play favorites. Develop an inner circle of loyal supporters. They should also fear you, but less, because they think they are on your good side. Pick people who jockey for position and are ruthless in gaining

it. Let them in on little secrets, give them special favors, and spend extra time with them. Make outsiders feel excluded.

Work the grapevine. People in your inner circle should be well plugged into the grapevine. Communicate your disapproval of someone through the grapevine, rather than going to the person directly. Let them hear from someone else that you are unhappy and are going to do something about it.

De-emphasize family and life outside of work. Act completely indifferent toward people’s personal lives. Make no allowances (unless, of course, it is for one of your favorites). Place high demand on evening and weekend hours for salaried employees.

By using these techniques, your workers will soon learn that you always win. Then, all they’ll care about is making you happy and being one of the favorites. At that point, you have them right where you want them.

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/TRENDS/

Organizational Change on the Rise

CONTINUOUS CHANGE might be the future of business worldwide, according to the results of survey conducted by technology and research-consulting service eePulse and the University of Michigan.

The September 2005 Leadership Pulse surveyed 379 senior executives from around the world. The data collected indicated that 79 percent of the firms studied were going through high levels of organizational change. Also, trend data from 2004 to 2005 showed that the amount of change organizations are experiencing continues to steadily climb, while the number of firms experiencing medium or low levels dropped.

“Given the recent trend data indicating lower energy and confidence levels at the same time of this increase in rate of change, we worry that the high rate of change we’re all experiencing is starting to catch up with leaders,” Theresa M. Welbourne, founder of the study, explains. “Continuous change is no doubt the wave of the future; however, research indicates that for organizations to thrive in high-change environments, they also must provide employees with an ability to cope with change.”

According to the research, the communications and technology industries were the hardest hit. Ninety-five percent of communications, 89 percent of web-based technology, and 87 percent of biotechnology firms reported the highest levels of change. Government entities reported the lowest, 44 percent.

More interesting, revenue doesn’t seem to be playing a part in the organizational transitions. Larger firms—those earning more than \$250 million—as well as firms with less than \$5 million in revenue went through the most change with 85 percent and 72 percent reporting high levels of change respectively.

—Josephine Rossi

[MORE/www.eepulse.com/leadership_reports.html](http://www.eepulse.com/leadership_reports.html) for more information on the Leadership Pulse research study.

/A TRIBUTE TO PETER DRUCKER/

Management Theory Pioneer, Legendary Author Dies at 95

By Pat Galagan

ALMOST 100 YEARS AGO in Vienna, Austria, a man was born who changed history. His influence on management practices became legendary, and before he died recently at age 95, he had published more than 30 books and received countless international honors. It was he, more than any other person in the 20th century, who broke the genetic code of management to reveal that people are the source of innovation, productivity, and growth.

He identified “knowledge workers” as a distinct class and championed management practices that would give employees more autonomy and responsibility, use the power of teams, and leverage the technological agility of younger workers.

He gave the learning profession an inestimable gift; his championship of learning and the value of knowledge in the modern enterprise. He wrote that learning institutions would have to change drastically to meet the demands of a knowledge-based society “in which organized learning must become a lifelong process.”

He came to believe that business enterprises offered a way to make a living more than a way to make a life. For that, he directed people to not-for-profit organizations whose volunteers could have “a sphere in which they are in control and a sphere in which they make a difference.”

He had remarkable powers of foresight, predicting that Japanese manufacturers would become world competitors and that unions would lose power. And he was a gifted writer, with a grace of expression that few achieve even in their first language. His energy was legendary. He held teaching posts all his life and con-

sulted into his 90s. His published works included dozens of business books, two novels, an autobiography, and a book on Japanese gardening, at which he was adept.

In 1998 I requested an interview with him for this magazine. I telephoned, nervously, from a phone booth in a noisy hotel, unaware that he was quite hard of hearing. “Fax your request to me,” he barked. And he hung up. From that rough beginning we embarked on a written exchange of questions and answers. He would tell me what was wrong with my questions and correct my writing, reminding me he had once been an editor, too. His answers were thoughtful and precise and sometimes testy. He once left me a phone message that began in his unmistakable Austrian accent, “This . . . is Peter Drucker.” He went on to chastise me for an inaccuracy. I saved that message for years.

When I finally met him in person, backstage at an ASTD event, I learned something that was not apparent in our exchange of faxes. He was warm and gracious and witty, with fine European manners. Sitting beside his wife, Doris, holding her hand and chatting with half a dozen people, he had star appeal. Then he stood up, grasped his cane, kissed Doris, and walked on stage to meet 8,000 adoring, cheering fans. I was solidly among them.

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