



Randy's Work *and You*

January Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

Celebrating the 8th year of "Randy's Work and You." Circulation continues to grow and, as always, I welcome your feedback and comment.

What will 2009 bring? Forecasts I've read are just that: forecasts (note: I have included a more positive one below). No one knows the future for sure. I do believe that 2009 will test our resolve as a nation. As job seekers or the fully employed, we will have to be thinking about defining our impact on organizations' revenue and productivity. I have always believed that we create our own reality. And thus we become our own worst enemy. Organizations will have definite needs in 2009. In my view, there will be a lot of work available but many fewer full time jobs.

Copies of all past E-zines are archived on my website. Feel free to pass this E-zine on.

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This month's topics:

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1. Herman Trend Alert: 2009 Workforce/Workplace Forecast

Each year at this time, The Herman Group issues its annual forecast.

1. Certain Skill Sets Continue to be in Short Supply.

In spite of the global economic slowdown and massive layoffs, certain skill sets are in short supply. All but the most shortsighted employers will continue to respect talented workers in all fields for their contributions.

2. Some Employers will make Serious Mistakes, Threatening their Very Survival.

Wise employers will look for non-financial ways to add value for their top talent; while other employers, thinking short-term, will look at the salaries they are paying this talent and choose to keep only the lowest-paid employees. In some cases, these mistakes will prove fatal, for without effective human capital to make the products or serve the customers, these organizations will not be able to stay in business.

3. Fear and Apprehension Reduce Productivity.

As we have written about some months ago, there is a significant percentage of employees who are worried about the future. Unless addressed, this fear will reduce productivity and employee morale. Wise employers will show their appreciation for their workers and reignite passion and excitement with activities and contests that challenge employees to achieve high performance levels.

4. Increasing Insurance Costs Motivate Employers to Invest More in Wellness.

As we previously forecast, in an effort to reduce costs, more large employers will turn to programs that reward employees for healthy behaviors (e.g., stopping smoking and reducing weight) and penalize those who continue to engage in unhealthy ones. More behaviors will join the list; including incentivizing regular exercise and making workers pay for eating fast food.

5. Retention in the Face of Increasing Anxiety.

As in any economic slowdown, employee turnover will slow down. With anxiety building, more employees will be doing what we call "corporate cocooning", staying in the warmth and security of their corporate cocoons. When employment markets increase choices again, we will see more attrition, especially from the ranks of long-term employees. Wise employers will conduct "stay interviews" and provide re-orientation to their seasoned employees.

6. More Attention to Succession Planning and Management.

Around the globe, we are seeing a growing attention to succession planning and management. (Joyce will speak on this important topic in March at the HRD Congress in Malaysia.) The problem is that most succession planning fails to recognize the critical importance of succession preparation. Whether companies are right sizing, expanding, or just in a "holding pattern", succession management will be critical to long-term success.

7. Wise Companies will use this Time Well to Build Bench Strength.

Enlightened organizations will understand the training opportunity presented by this business slowdown and send their people for more training this year. When companies skip the leadership training and engage in "appointment by anointment", their supervisors, managers, and executives are simply not ready to move into the positions. Leaders' lack of competence will be seen in increased employee turnover.

8. More "Home Sourcing to Maintain Control and Reduce Expenses

Some companies have already begun to bring certain functions back into the organization. We call that trend "Home Sourcing". Excluding payroll and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), every outsourced function is considered fair game.

9. Employers will Find Low-Cost Ways to Add Value.

In an effort to keep their workers engaged and happy, wise employers will look for ways to add value? Without costing a lot. They will embrace ideas like collecting used DVDs and videos for a lending library and scheduling Lunch 'n Learns with free speakers.

10. Older Workers will be Particularly Valued this Year.

To get the work done without resorting to hiring expensive contract help, some employers will begin mining the rolls of their retired workers and hiring them back on a part time basis. These seasoned professionals have a lot to offer their former employers. The companies will probably need to conduct less training and most certainly will have a more reliable workforce than recruiting Millennials.

Source: <http://www.keyboard-culture-future-workforce-trends.com/>

2. Interview Tips— When you haven't a clue how to answer

It happens more often with candidates than you think. The interview goes along swimmingly. You are feeling more relaxed and confident. Then out of the blue, comes a question that you don't have any idea (OK a wild guess only) how to answer. Some of you lose your composure, others give that wild guess and still others say the truth: "I don't know."

Well, certainly telling the truth is critical. After all, the only wrong answer in an interview is a dishonest one. In my opinion, the best response is: "That's a good question. I'll get back to you within 24 hours with an answer."

This tells the hiring manager 2 things: (1), You are honest and (2.), you know where to get the answer in a timely way. Clearly if you have to use this technique too many times in an interview, then, yes, it's not a fit.

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Randy brings expertise in executive search as a certified career coach. He has guided all levels of professionals in the areas of career transition: changing careers, choosing a career direction, evaluating/negotiating offers, executive career marketing, finding jobs, getting organized, as well as finding opportunities for self-employment, freelancing and consulting. He holds an IJCTC certificate from the Career Planning and Adult Development, a CCMC (Certified Career Management Coach) from Career Coach Academy.

3. Boomer Corner: Risky times ahead

Baby boomers face three new risks in coming decades, but there are answers
By Robert Powell, MarketWatch
Dec. 11, 2008

BOSTON (MarketWatch) -- Over the next 20 years, boomers will face many risks. Some are well known and documented; such as the risk they'll outlive their assets and spend their life savings on long-term care. Some are less understood, such as the risks resulting from a rapidly deteriorating environment.

But what's unknown is this: How will 77 million boomers deal with these and other unique risks as they move into their 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond?

Richard Adler of the Institute for the Future is among those who know the risks boomers will face. More importantly, Adler understands how boomers will marshal what he describes as conventional and unconventional resources to deal with their unique problems.

"The boomers' retirement years won't be anything like their parents," said Adler in an interview. Adler is the lead author of "Boomers: The Next 20 Years," a report published by Institute for the Future, MetLife Mature Market Institute and AARP.

According to the report, the laundry list of risks include: "A rapidly deteriorating environment, shifts in global economic power, the decline of legacy institutions that [boomers] have both opposed and worked within, the meteoric advance of technologies that confer advantage on the youngest members of society, and perhaps even the loss of faith in science as the basis for a rational society." See the report on baby boomers (PDF).

Boomers "may face growing opposition to entitlements by younger workers who feel burdened by the seemingly privileged lifestyles of boomers. They will stand divided by the great gap in wealth within their own ranks."

Among those risks, three are particularly worth noting:

1. The environment

"We face real environmental issues over the next 20 years," Adler said. "And just as the debt issue has come home to roost, so too will the environmental issue." According to the report, "Boomers face the real possibility of cascading collapses of living systems in their lifetimes. Food, energy, and materials will all undergo major disruptions and innovations in the coming two decades as the world scrambles to respond to climate change and water crises."

2. Stress

"The sheer number of boomers promises to stress all systems that touch their daily lives, from retirement policies and pensions to health care, Medicare, and other services," Adler wrote.

He's especially worried that Medicare cannot survive in its current form, given that the number of people age 65 and over will double over the next 20 years. "It's evident that many of the systems and structures that are in place now won't scale," he said.

3. Wealth disparities

"Boomers face the widest rich-poor gap in recent generations, both within their cohort and across the population at large," the report noted. "While median boomer household net worth has grown steadily over the past two decades, from \$36,000 in 1989 to \$149,500 in 2006, the absolute gap in net worth between those in the top and bottom quintiles more than doubled over the same period."

According to the Adler, this uneven distribution of wealth will create the pressure to innovate solutions.

So what then are some of the ways boomers will deal with these and other risks? Adler said boomers have amassed personal, social, experiential, economic, and even spiritual assets that they can call on as they age.

And "they will use these assets to craft distinctive ecologies of resources to respond to highly individual ecologies of risk," he wrote. Here's a look at what's coming.

1. The Web

Boomers are starting to use social media to identify like-minded people and to build new kinds of support for shared needs. For instance, boomers who are dealing with chronic diseases and other health-related issues are now using such Web sites as PatientsLikeMe.com, DailyStrength.org, and Care.com.

Others, worried about dementia later in life, are turning to a new generation of computer-based products that offer the prospect of "building general cognitive fitness based on the concept of neural plasticity -- the ability of the brain to generate new capabilities in response to mental stimulation." BrainAge2 is one such example. See the Brainage.com site.

Meanwhile, boomers interested in socially responsible investors are turning to Web sites such as Solari. See the Solari.com site.

2. Living

Boomers who are looking to strike a balance between aging in place and getting their health-care and other needs met are creating communities such as Beacon Hill Village, a version of what some call a naturally occurring retirement community or NORC. Beacon Hill Village was created in 2001 by a group of long-time Beacon Hill residents as an alternative to moving to retirement or assisted-living communities. Adler envisions more communities like Beacon Hill Village sprouting up across the country over the next 20 years. See the Beacon Hill Web site.

Adler also said researchers are exploring ways in which technology that supports "personal life stories" might extend individuals' ability to function independently.

Adler says that these Web-based tools allow people to record their experiences of everyday life and store personal artifacts to help them stay in touch with their own past -- for instance when facing loss of memory from dementia. See YourTrumanShow.com. Or see Gordon Bell's MyLifeBits project.

3. Sharing risk

Boomers are starting to distribute the stress and burden of managing risk across networks of people, according to Adler's report. He envisions, for instance, that boomers will form networks of "bio-citizens" in reaction to the risk of aging and that health-care offerings will be re-organized as a result. Bio-citizen, a term coined by the Institute for the Future, describes a medical patient who works with other people to share information and sometimes advocate for research on treatment options, side effects and other medical concerns.

Also, he says that peer-to-peer networks of people are starting to perform some of the same financial services that banks and others typically perform. According to Adler, this kind of social lending enables members to lend and borrow money at rates favorable to all parties.

"Boomers have defined every stage of life they have moved through," Adler said. "And they will leave their mark on this stage too."

Robert Powell has been a journalist covering personal finance issues for more than 20 years, writing and editing for publications such as The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, and Mutual Fund Market News.

4. Success Story

Eliot Carter Turning 100 years old at Carnegie Hall (with new music)

Classical music tends to lionize the great composer cut down in youth, but Elliott Carter made a mockery of that trope on Thursday. Mr. Carter, the dean of American composers, celebrated his 100th birthday, on the day, with a concert at Carnegie Hall.

He had a piece on the program, of course, but not some chestnut written when he was a student in Paris in the 1930s or an avant-gardist in New York in the 1950s or a Pulitzer Prize winner in the 1960s or a setter of American poetry in the 1970s or a begetter of chamber music and concertos in the 1980s.

Mr. Carter wrote the 17-minute piece, for piano and orchestra, just last year, at 98. In fact, since he turned 90, Mr. Carter has poured out more than 40 published works, an extraordinary burst of creativity at a stage when most people would be making peace with mortality.

His first opera had its premiere in 1999. He produced 10 works in 2007 and six more this year. "I don't know how I did it," Mr. Carter said on Tuesday in the

cluttered but homey Greenwich Village apartment where he has lived since 1945. "The earlier part of my life I felt I was more or less exploring what I would like to write. Now I've found it out, and I don't have to think so much about it."

The new piece, "Interventions," was given its New York premiere Thursday evening by the pianist Daniel Barenboim and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with James Levine conducting. When it ended, Mr. Carter slowly rose amid the cheers and applause, and with the aid of a friend, made his way to the stage. Mr. Barenboim took his arm and helped him up the steps.

Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" came next on the program; Mr. Carter said that hearing a performance of that piece at Carnegie 85 years ago had helped inspire him to become a composer.

Mr. Carter is a phenomenon. To paraphrase the musical satirist Tom Lehrer, when Mozart was Mr. Carter's age, he had been dead for 65 years.

He has lived more than three times as long as Schubert did. Some composers, like Verdi and Richard Strauss, produced until the end of long lives — but that was merely their 80s.

"He's still writing at the top of his form," Mr. Levine said. "Like all great composers, every time he writes a piece he has new ideas he's trying, as well as coming up with a subtler reworking of something he had done before."

With the interviewer out of the apartment, Mr. Carter was heard on the other side of the door saying to an aide, "I've got to rest a little after this nonsense."

5. Humor Department: Office Vocabulary

* Blamestorming:

Sitting around in a group discussing why a deadline was missed, or a project failed, and who was responsible.

* Salmon day:

The experience of spending an entire day swimming upstream only to get screwed and die in the end.

* Chainsaw Consultant:

An outside expert brought in to reduce the employee head count, leaving the brass with clean hands.

* CLM:

"Career Limiting Move". Used amongst microsers to describe ill-advised activity. Trashing your boss whilst he or she is within earshot is a

serious CLM. (Also known as CLB: Career Limiting Behavior.)

* Adminisphere:

The rarefied organizational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the adminisphere are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve.

* Flight risk:

Used to describe employees who are suspected of planning to leave the company or department soon.

* 404:

Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web error message "404: Not Found", meaning that the requested document could not be located. "Don't bother asking him . . . he's 404, man."

* Ohnosecond:

That minuscule fraction of time in which you realize that you've just made a BIG mistake.

* Percussive maintenance:

The fine art of whacking the crap out of an electronic device to get it to work again.

* Prairie dogging:

When someone yells or drops something loudly in a "cube farm" (an office full of cubicles) and everyone's heads pop up over the walls to see what's going on.

* Assmosis:

The process by which some people seem to absorb success and advancement by kissing up to the boss.

6. Words that Inspire

*"Fail again. Fail better."
---Samuel Beckett*

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