



Randy's Work *and You*

November Version

Dear clients and colleagues,

In a 2006 IBM global study of 765 CEOs, 65% reported "they expect to make fundamental changes in their businesses over the next two years." Innovation in the business model (strategy, partnerships) tops the list of desired changes. There has never been a better moment for strategic leadership by HR and OD in large companies. To help company leaders know if their organization *is* ready, they need to consider and evaluate the following questions: 1. What is the context that is driving greater innovation in today's workplaces? 2. Is innovation linked to your strategy, and what are you innovating *for*? 3. What are three innovation-killing cultures and remedies you can take.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

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This month's topics:

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1. Employees With ADD, Dyslexia Find Office Less Accommodating

By Sue Shellenbarger
From *The Wall Street Journal*

John Brennan, who has dyslexia and attention deficit disorder, was a hard-working student in high school, earning B's and C's with the help of special accommodations, such as extra assistance reading his test questions.

But entering the workplace after graduation was a shock. Mr. Brennan says he enrolled in a training program to service luxury cars, but he was criticized for "holding the class back" and dismissed. Then he joined an auto-repair shop that promised him training, but says the shop sidetracked him instead into a dead-end job. Fed up with trying to work for other people, Mr. Brennan says he has enrolled in junior college near his

Acton, Mass., home, with plans to start his own business.

Amid rapid growth in diagnoses of learning disabilities and special-education programs to address them, more young adults are entering the workplace with known learning differences and a history of receiving accommodations. But few employers have adapted training or job expectations for workers with learning disabilities. The lack of special accommodations has meant a rude awakening for many young workers, fueling on-the-job tensions and a rising tide of discrimination complaints.

While the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act entitles some workers with disabilities to job accommodations such as a quieter workspace, it doesn't require employers to offer the same broad services schools must provide learning-disabled pupils under federal law. Under the ADA, employers aren't required to make accommodations if it would inflict "undue hardship" on the business. Employers don't have to eliminate essential job duties or create new jobs. The law provides no protection if an employee is deemed unqualified, a definition that varies based on the job.

"The boss-employee relationship is very different from the teacher-student relationship," says Dale S. Brown, an author and advocate for people with learning disabilities.

To be sure, many employers aren't aware of employees' learning disabilities or don't know how to accommodate them. Also, some employees have an undue sense of entitlement. Attorney Patricia H. Latham of Washington, D.C., tells of a client with ADD who kept arriving at work late. "They're angry with me, and I don't think they should be, because that's part of my problem," the woman said and asked Ms. Latham to write her bosses a letter. Ms. Latham refused, telling the woman, "your employer doesn't have to put up with your being late to work." Instead, she suggested making a habit of arriving early, leaving a margin for error.

Such tensions are fueling discrimination complaints. Claims to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and state and local agencies that cite "learning disability" as one basis for alleged discrimination rose 74% from 1993 to 2003, according to an analysis of EEOC data by Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute.

Also, unemployment among people with learning disabilities remains stubbornly high. A 2006 federal study of 11,000 youth who received special-education services in school shows only 40% are employed a year or two after high-school graduation, compared with 63% of same-age young adults in the general population.

While no reliable data on learning disabilities in the work force exist, about 4.4%, or 7.5 million, of adults ages 21 through 64 have lasting mental disabilities of some kind that impair learning, remembering or concentrating, says a Cornell University analysis of Census data.

In the past, many learning disabilities such as ADD, dyslexia, mild autistic conditions, memory disorders and other problems went undiagnosed. Workers typically hid their impairments, avoided jobs that exposed them or suffered from misperceptions that they were lazy or stupid. But now that more people are recognizing that they have learning disabilities, says Susanne Bruyere, director of the Employment and Disability Institute at Cornell University, many are "also more confident" in asking for accommodations.

The fact that learning disabilities often can't be seen tends to make employers less sympathetic than they might be to someone with an obvious impairment. "We think it's heroic when a person with one leg climbs a mountain. But when a dyslexic works 70 hours a week to do a 40-hour-a-week job," co-workers think he's inefficient, Ms. Brown says.

If a learning disability starts to interfere with your job, Ms. Latham recommends acting promptly. "Don't allow a period of poor performance," she says and advises explaining your disability with confidence, providing documentation and requesting the accommodations you need. Most accommodations, such as providing written instructions, cost employers little or nothing.

The best solution is to find a job where a learning disability doesn't hurt your performance -- or even enhances it. Jaime Gomez, a Texas customer-service worker, says he hasn't told his current supervisors about his ADD, because "you don't know what kind of reaction you'll get." But his position is such a good fit that it doesn't matter. After several job changes, he found a post that requires only a few hours a day of desk work, with the rest spent traveling to see an ever-changing list of regional customers. He loves the work, he says.

2. The Top 14 Reasons We're Stressed Out

By Andrea Coombes
From MarketWatch

What's worrying you right now? A majority of Americans, asked to choose from 14 possible recently experienced problems, pointed to "rising prices," according to a survey conducted by Harris Interactive.

Seventy-four percent of those surveyed said rising prices are an issue in their lives, followed by 56% who said "too much to do" and 53% who said they have "trouble sleeping," according to the online survey of 2,747 adults in September.

Fourth on the list is "concerns about money for emergencies," a recent problem for 53% of respondents, followed by 43% who said "concerns about health in general." Thirty-six percent said they're worried about the illness of a family member and 36% said they don't have enough money for basic necessities.

When asked how stressed they feel, most of those surveyed -- 47% -- said they have "some" stress in their lives. But 23% said they have a lot of stress. Meanwhile 27% said not too much stress and 3% said none at all.

The fact that money woes were among the key concerns for many respondents didn't surprise Stephanie Marston, a practicing family therapist, stress-management expert and author of "30 Days to Sanity: Create a Life You Love."

"Money concerns are certainly a huge stressor for people. People are working long hours, there are two-income families -- and yet people are still struggling to make ends meet," she said. Marston is based in Santa Fe, N.M.

Sometimes stress worsens those money woes, she said. "When people are stressed out, rather than thinking about what they can do to reduce their stress, they often overshop, overeat, overdrink," she said.

"Our culture is so consumer oriented, we figure if we buy ourselves something nice, buy that new appliance, that new car, it's going to make us feel better. It may for a very brief period of time, but then the bills start coming and it just adds to the already overextended lifestyle we're living."

With age comes less stress

Surprisingly, the younger you are, the likelier you are to feel stressed, according to this survey.

Just 9% of those older than 60 said they have a lot of stress in their lives, compared with 29% of 18- to 29-years-old, 28% of those 30 to 41 years old and 25% of those 42 to 60 years old.

Meanwhile, women are more likely than men to cite heavy stress loads, with 29% of women saying they face a lot of stress versus 18% of men.

Thirty percent of households with children said they face a lot of stress compared with 20% of households without children.

But stress did not vary much across the income spectrum: 25% of those with income less than \$15,000 said they face a lot of stress, compared with 23% who earn \$75,000 or more.

Tips for coping

So, we're all facing some stress. What to do? First, figure out your priorities, Marston said.

"The notion that you can have it all is a myth. You can't have it all," she said. "Most people are simply living like rats on a treadmill. We're going through the motions of living."

To overcome that feeling, list your top priorities in life, she said. "It's important for people to slow down long enough to ask themselves, 'What's most important in my life? Is it my friends, my family, my faith, my finances, my physical well-being?'"

Then, every morning before starting your day, figure out which of your top priorities matters most -- and then focus on that priority that day, she said. For instance, your daughter has a soccer game. For that day, family is your priority and your goal is to attend that soccer game. "On another day, you might have a huge report due, so that's your priority. On another day of the week, you realize you haven't been to the gym for the entire week. On that day, self-care is a priority," she said.

"Do that on a daily basis. You have to be selective," she said. "Before you look at what you have to do, look at what you choose to do."

Attitude shift

Another strategy is to change your attitude towards stressful events, said Scott Sheperd, a psychologist and expert in stress management, based in Toledo, Ohio.

While it's not easy to do, with practice you can shift your thinking from negative thoughts to strategies for action, he said. For instance, when faced with a financial setback, say to yourself, "OK. This is the way it is. I don't have the money. There are two things I can do: How do I cut down on my spending, and how do I try to increase my income? Are there some strategies to do that?"

Training your mind to react to stressful situations is similar to going on a diet to lose weight, he said. First, you need to eat less fattening food. "This is like having fewer thoughts in your brain that make it worse. 'I'm an idiot, I'm no good, life is no good.' The less of that, the better," Sheperd said.

Then, along with cutting out the negative thoughts, think about strategies to improve the situation. "It's just like the more you exercise, it helps you to lose weight. So the more you do things that take you in a positive direction, the better. You start planning. You start writing down strategies," he said.

"Maybe it's asking for a raise. Maybe it's that you like to eat out a lot so you cut that out, or maybe you have to ask for a loan. But whatever it is, you start writing down strategies."

Finally, focus on the power you have to make choices, he said. For instance, if you feel too busy, ask yourself, "Who makes out my schedule?" Sheperd said.

"You don't have to do any of that stuff. You don't have to do it. That's easier said than done, and sometimes it's tricky. You can get stuck. But at some point you say, 'No. This is changing.'"

Too often, Sheperd said, people forget "there are options."

Recent worries

Here are the complete results to the survey's question, "Have you experienced the following in the past month?" Respondents could point to any of the following 14 options.

- * Rising prices, 74%
- * Too many things to do, 56%
- * Trouble sleeping, 53%
- * Concerns about money for emergencies, 53%
- * Concerns about health in general, 43%
- * Illness of a family member, 36%
- * Not enough money for basic necessities, 36%
- * Too much information to process at one time, 33%
- * Being lonely, 29%
- * Problems with your work, boss or fellow workers, 24%
- * Problems with aging parents, 21%
- * Frequent or excessive noise, 20%
- * Problems with my children, 19%
- * Abuse of your personal privacy, 13%

4. Boomer Corner: Older, yes, but still drawing a paycheck

By Steve Goldstein
Philadelphia Inquirer

WASHINGTON - In 1990, when Louise Carpenter retired as a teacher at St. Andrew School in Newtown, Bucks County, she offered to continue as a volunteer.

Officials, who rehired her as a full-time aide, rebuffed her offer.

Carpenter, 91, yesterday was named Pennsylvania's outstanding older worker, an honor that left her shocked, pleased, and determined to keep working.

"I make no bones about being old," she said after bypassing a news conference to take a tour of the White House. "I tell everyone my age so they don't think I'm older."

Experience Works, a Virginia nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for older workers, bestowed the honor. The firm named outstanding older workers in each state and designated a 104-year-old beekeeper from Kansas as America's Oldest Worker.

Almost all the outstanding older workers from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were present yesterday, many with family members at the ceremony. It had the air of a reunion - albeit one of strangers - who established an instant bond through wrinkled skin and watery eyes.

Old, of course, but still drawing a paycheck, and proud of it.

Pennsylvania probably has more than its share of nominees. The commonwealth has the nation's second-largest percentage of population older than 65, exceeded only by Florida. During the last two decades, Pennsylvania's older population grew nearly twice as fast as the rest of the population, according to state figures.

Carpenter, who was accompanied by her three children, was nominated by the assistant principal at St. Andrew and judged to be the winner by the secretaries of the Pennsylvania Departments of Aging and of Labor and Industry.

Petite with light-brown hair ("My natural color"), Carpenter works 40 hours a week running the school store, checking in tardy students, and filling in for absent teachers.

"I'm in a nonthreatening position now," she said with a smile, "so I have a good relationship with all the kids."

After the White House tour - she coveted the dinnerware - the North Carolina native reflected on why she continued working.

"I know so many people who retire to nothing," she said. "You can't just go home and sit; you have to have something to retire to."

Her only ailment is high blood pressure, controlled by medication, so Carpenter likes to joke that she works "to support my drug habit."

Carpenter lives by herself in Churchville - one of her daughters, Catherine Scarpello, is nearby in Forest Grove - and drives the eight miles to school each day.

"She wimped out and got someone else to mow the lawn," said her son, Greg, of San Jose, Calif.

"I was going to ride the mower," she chortled.

Carpenter met R. Waldo McBurney, America's Oldest Worker, at his 104th birthday party Tuesday night.

"I told him I didn't believe his age," she said.

McBurney, of Quinter, Kan., turned to beekeeping after other agricultural enterprises and, in the last few years, maintained as many as 100 bee colonies.

At age 65, he decided to take up long-distance running and set a Kansas state record for the 10-mile run at

age 80.

The bounding beekeeper also won a 100-yard dash in Puerto Rico when he hit the century mark, but admitted yesterday there was no opponent in his age group.

McBurney's autobiography is titled *My First 100 Years! A Look Back From the Finish Line*.

He said his wife had teased him about being a celebrity, so he is thinking of calling his next book "Humility - And How I Attained It."

4. Success Story

Alice Sherman age 42
Divorced mother of a teenage daughter

She was laid off from her program management job in Mountain View. She found a job a year later as marketing coordinator for the web sales and marketing team for Intuit. Networking played a significant role finding the position. Alice joined job support groups and attended networking nights for unemployed African American professionals. She told everyone she knew that she was out of work, and she reminded him or her often. She treated every encounter as if it were a job opportunity. Through networking, her resume landed in front of the hiring manager at Intuit. She did extensive research on the company prior to her interview.

Her advice: "Stay really positive. You never know who might talk to one day. People won't recommend you if they don't believe in you or don't like you."

5. Humor Department: The value added chicken

Question: *Why did the chicken cross the road?*

Buddha:

Asking this question denies your own chicken nature.

Colonel Sanders:

Darn, I missed one!

Anderson Consulting:

Deregulation of the chicken's side of the road was threatening its dominant market position. The chicken was faced with significant challenges to create and develop the competencies required for the newly competitive market. Andersen Consulting, in a partnering relationship with the client, helped the chicken by rethinking its physical distribution strategy and implementation processes. Using the Poultry Integration Model (PIM), Andersen helped the chicken use its skills, methodologies, knowledge, capital and experiences to align the chicken's people, processes and technology in support of its overall strategy within a Program Management framework. Andersen Consulting convened a diverse cross-spectrum of road analysts and best chickens along with Anderson consultants with deep skills in the transportation industry to engage in a two-day itinerary of meetings in order to leverage their personal knowledge capital, both tacit and explicit, and to enable them to synergize with each other in order to achieve the implicit goals of delivering and successfully architecting and implementing an enterprise-wide value framework across the continuum of poultry cross-median processes. The meeting was held in a park-like setting, enabling and creating an impactful environment which was strategically based, industry-focused, and built upon a consistent, clear, and unified market message and aligned with the chicken's mission, vision, and core values.

6. Words that Inspire

"Just when I discovered the meaning of life, it changed."

---George Carlin, comic

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