Worldwide Training Industry News (Mar 11)

Report: Lack of Coaching Hamers Female Executives
Wall Street Journal (04/04/11) Lublin, Joann

A new report from management consulting firm McKinsey & Co. concludes that inadequate career development has kept women from ascending to the leadership pinnacle. The report examines barriers to women's advancement in corporations, and is primarily based on a 2011 survey of 2,525 college-educated men and women, including 1,525 individuals employed by large companies, mainly in management. The report finds that despite efforts by major corporations, relatively few women have reached the top ranks of the corporate ladder. Only 11 chief executives of Fortune 500 companies are women, down from a peak of 15 in 2010. McKinsey says that to crack the upper echelons of corporate America, companies must groom a deeper bench of female middle managers for advancement. "By increasing the number of women who make it from middle management to the vice presidential level, corporations could vastly improve the odds for building diversity in top management," the report states. Even a 25 percent increase in the ranks of middle-management women reaching the next level "would significantly alter the shape of the pipeline," it says. Joanna Barsh, a McKinsey senior partner who co-wrote the report, says companies need to spend more time coaching women and offering more leadership training and rotation through various management roles before their ambitions sour. Barsh says companies are not "systematically watching these women at the middle management level and putting in programs that would help them develop and get over the next [promotion] hurdle."
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Employers Continue to Cut Spending on Training
Personnel Today (04/01/11) Eccleston, John

Funding for learning and development continues to decline with the tightening of employer budgets in the United Kingdom, according to findings from the Chartered Institute of Learning and Development's (CIPD) annual Learning and Talent Development survey. The results show that about two-fifths of organizations have either decreased funding for learning and development this year or expect to do so. Only about 10 percent expect to increase their training investment in the next 12 months. About 54 percent of organizations report a decline in their economic circumstances for the past 12 months, and one-third have reduced the use of external suppliers and are moving to in-house provision. Compared with 2010 levels, companies are also increasing their training offering per employee this year and boosting their use of lower-cost development practices such as e-learning and in-house development programs. Public sector employers are reporting greater cuts in learning and development compared to those in the private sector. Dr. John McGurk, learning and talent development adviser at the CIPD, said, "With the full impact of the spending cuts yet to be felt in the public sector, maintaining support for employee development by linking it to organizational change is essential if organizations are to steer through these uncertain and challenging times." The survey's full findings will be reported at the CIPD's annual HRD Conference and Exhibition on April 6 and 7.
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BP's Bubbling Cauldron
Human Resource Executive Online (03/01/11) Ciccarelli, Maura C.

The BP Gulf of Mexico catastrophe is one of the most highly publicized risk management failures of the century. BP executives were blamed with prioritizing shareholder value over their employees' safety, a disastrous move that resulted into a number of vulnerabilities found within the company's operations. Problems with engineering design and mechanical flaws were among a compendium of failures cited by BP in a report the oil company published; yet human resources failures were absent from this report. BP remains a prime example of the lack of organizational and risk management necessary to run a successful business, which also involves critical errors in leadership and training. In fact, BP's unprecedented growth within the last 15 years was attributed to executives pitting growth against safety, with a gross neglect of modeling. BP also is criticized for not promoting a culture of encouraging employees to speak out about problems they might observe, which is another critical failure of senior executives. Essentially, every company relies on the Chief Human Resources Officer to build a

company's culture and uphold its conscience, which might be unpopular at times, but remains necessary to the safety of every employee and the strength of the business.
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Deloitte Gets Physical With $300 Million Learning Center
Workforce Management (03/11) Kranz, Garry

Consulting giant Deloitte expects to complete work on a $300 million "learning and leadership development" campus near Dallas this summer and begin offering training and development programs in October. The 107-acre Deloitte University will feature 35 classrooms, each outfitted with technology for interactive learning; the self-contained 712,000-square-foot-complex also will include an 800-room hotel to house employees. Deloitte has scheduled more than 420 learning programs for the first year of operation, and the campus is expected to deliver more than 1 million hours of training per year, which is about one-third of all of its U.S. training. Interactive training activities such as computer-simulated business scenarios, case studies and role-playing will be the participatory format, and will help force employees to anticipate hypothetical problems, devise solutions as a group and see things from the client's point of view. Some of the firm's U.S. partners, managers and executives will serve as instructors, and there will be one Deloitte leader to serve as a sounding board for about every five training participants. Employees will be invited to attend Deloitte University. "It's basically a leadership laboratory that gives us the opportunity to see how teams react, and then provide immediate feedback on their decisions," says Bill Pelster, a managing principal for talent development. "It's important that our leaders be in the classrooms to teach and mentor the next generation of Deloitte professionals."
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Dominion Pilots Veteran Energy Jobs Initiative
Associated Press (03/14/11)

Energy company Dominion Resources Inc. said March 14 that it is launching a pilot initiative to help military veterans find jobs in the energy sector. The Richmond, Va.-based company is one of five utilities participating in the two-year pilot initiative called "Troops to Energy Jobs." The program is aimed at developing a process of outreach, recruiting, education, and training to help military personnel find jobs. It is part of the national center for Energy Workforce Development, which projects nearly 100,000 job openings will occur in the energy industry by 2015 -- and as many as 250,000 jobs by 2020 -- as employees cycle out of companies through retirement and normal attrition. Those jobs include engineers, technicians, line employees, plant operators, and pipefitters. "There's a natural fit between the military and the energy industry," said Dominion CEO Thomas F. Farrell II, who is leading the pilot program. "Both cultures are civic-minded and first-and-foremost safety-focused."
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Just Like Me: Online Training Helpers More Effective When They Resemble Students
NCSU News (03/02/11) Shipman, Matt

People are happier and perform better in online training programs when the online helpers are similar to the participants, according to a North Carolina State University (NCSU) study. "Efforts to program helper agents that may be tailored to individuals can yield very positive results for the people taking the training," says NCSU's Lori Foster Thompson. The researchers evaluated the superficial similarities, such as gender and race, between 257 study participants and helper agents for an online training program, analyzing each participant's communication style and similarity to the helper's communication style. The participants reported being more focused on the training when the helper matched their race and gender, the researchers say. In addition, the participants learned more from the program when the helper's communication style matched their own. "We found that people liked the helper more, were more engaged, and viewed the program more favorably when they perceived the helper agent as having a feedback style similar to their own--regardless of whether that was actually true," Thompson says.
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5 Proven Strategies for Inspiring Employee Engagement
GreenBiz.com (02/15/11) Roberts, John Marshall

Companies that want to engage employees need to have psychological insight into what inspires them to change how they behave. To this end, companies should start small by selecting a specific behavior to address, such as recycling or energy consumption. They should then develop a targeted campaign to shift that particular behavior. After change is under way, that momentum needs to be captured and used for additional behaviors. Several small, measurable wins will build up significant psychological momentum over time, more so than slogans or high-minded rhetoric. Empathy, or the ability to see, feel, and understand the world from the perspective of others, is also important in bringing about behavior change. For example, a sustainability executive at a well-known technology company was recently having difficulty in getting leaders to become engaged in a proposed idea. To resolve the situation, team members participated in a role-playing exercise to highlight what their department looked like from the officials' perspective. Each participant wrote a first-person essay about stepping into their counterparts shoes that were read aloud. The relationship with the officials improved as a result of more effective communication strategies, and the project was fully funded in a month.
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Advocating an Effective Mentoring Program
Metropolitan Corporate Counsel (02/11) Vol. 19, No. 2, P. 34

Susan Feeney and Stephanie Cohen, partners in the Newark office of McCarter & English, are interviewed about the need for effective mentoring programs for women and minorities at law firms. Feeney, who will assume the presidency of the New Jersey State Bar Association in May, says a diverse staff can bring new and valuable perspectives, based on family, educational and life experiences, to law firms. Diversity programs can help law firms attract as well as retain people from diverse backgrounds, Feeney says, adding that successful efforts need a mentoring component that provide the infrastructure for professional and personal development. McCarter & English offers several mentoring programs, Cohen says, noting that all first-year associates are assigned both a partner mentor as well as a senior associate mentor. The Diversity Steering Committee oversees "Mentoring Circles" of five to seven attorneys that diverse attorneys join for dialogue and development of personal and professional relationships; and the Women's Initiative Steering Committee focuses on client/business development, mentoring/leadership training, and community involvement, Cohen explains. McCarter & English has appointed Cohen to its recently created Diversity Partner position, and she will coordinate efforts to improve the recruitment, development, and retention of attorneys from diverse backgrounds, and act as a liaison between the Diversity Committee, the Women's Initiative and the Executive Committee. "Diversity candidates, in particular, need to feel confident that the firm genuinely supports diversity," says Feeney. She plans to support people of diverse backgrounds for leadership appointments at the NJSBA.
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A Hybrid Learning Model the Way to Go for a Global Corporation
Workforce Management (03/11) Waltmann, Frank

A centralized training function works well for global corporations that have one big market and one main consumer base because it is easy to manage and introduce training programs. However, a hybrid blend of a decentralized training organization with strong central roots is the best option for global corporations that operate in many countries, each with their own specific set of societal norms, because employees have fundamentally different learning needs from country to country. A true hybrid model needs to be structured and institutionalized with a decision-making, governing body--a learning board--comprised of people appointed by each division leader and who come from the area of talent management, education or human resources. Novartis established a governing body for learning in 2010 to serve as a bridge between its centralized and decentralized learning functions. The learning board determines all key initiatives and how to deliver training. Novartis has made the learning board responsible for defining a companywide, integrated learning strategy that is aligned with the company's overall strategic goals. The learning board is beneficial because it serves as an 'early warning system' for issues such as cost overruns and duplicate programs. Moreover, it helps link corporate central learning management to real business issues, for resolution in a cost-effective manner.
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Three Simple Spring Training Tips for Your Office
Bloomberg Businessweek (03/22/11) Baldoni, John

Every spring, Major League baseball teams convene either in Arizona or Florida to get in shape for the upcoming season. Management evaluates talent, players focus on the fundamentals of their positions, and the team integrates new players into the roster. What emerges from the effort is a team that knows what it does well and what it needs to do to improve, and for that reason organizations far from the world of sports can borrow a few lessons from the training regimen to improve team effectiveness within an organization. Leaders can reconnect to the team by communicating how the employees' roles translate into success and plans for dealing with upcoming challenges. Leaders reinforce fundamental skills by helping employees identify when it is necessary to learn new skills to stay current and effective. Reevaluation involves understanding how individual performance and organization goals are linked. Taking time away from the work environment to assess these areas, have senior leaders deliver key messages, and use breakout sessions to allow teams to address issues and raise questions can invigorate the process and renew the team's sense of purpose and direction. For baseball players and managers, spring training is all about hope, a time to focus on the "what might be" scenarios, such as reaching the World Series. Leaders in business need to dispense hope that comes from organizational purpose. Understanding that purpose gives people a sense of mission as well as a direction. Coming together to renew purpose is an essential part of the organizational mission, and for that reason any organization would do well to make time to bring people together to focus on the work but also celebrate the possibilities of what they do well.
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When and How to Go Beyond IQ in Assessing Employees
Chief Learning Officer (03/11) Nikravan, Ladan

According to John Hunter and Frank Schmidt, two former professors of psychology, when hiring workers who do not have previous experience in a particular position, the most accurate predictor of future performance is general mental ability measured through IQ tests. In their article, "The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings," Hunter and Schmidt assert IQ-test scores predict performance ratings in all occupations. The research mentions one exception: Low IQ scores are more likely to be an impediment to adequate performance for highly qualified activities, but athletic capabilities such as speed and coordination are more likely to sway performance for minimally skilled activities. But the relationship between IQ and high performance might be explained by the broader range of developmental faculties and thus career opportunities presented to those with higher scores, according to "Why Do IQ Scores Predict Job Performance?" a study published by the Netherlands' Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. "For managers, the challenge is to learn how resources that build valuable employee capacities are allocated in different national and cultural contexts where one is searching for employees," Eliza Byington, lead author of the study, explained. "For employees from outside the United States and Western Europe, for example, IQ reflective test scores may not be the most useful predictors of job performance."
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IBM Trains Staff With Volunteer Work
Straits Times (02/16/11)

Six IBM employees from Singapore, India and the United States assisted a southern Poland city in improving its image in 2010. The three week project in Katowice was run by IBM's Corporate Service Corp (CSC), an initiative fashioned after the Peace Corps that staffs employees for volunteer projects with governments, public sector agencies, non-profit organizations, small- and medium-sized enterprises and educational institutions. IBM's volunteers get to share their business, management and technology know-how, and the company believes the experience allows it to test if employees can put their training into practice. "My team has been to many training sessions and business schools but the value of the experience in Katowice outweighs them all," says Madhav Ragam, director of growth market units with IBM Singapore. "It gave us real-world experience in solving real problems." Participants in CSC must submit reports to their mentors after their projects are over. IBM launched the CSC program in 2008, and it will have had close to 1,500 participants by the end of 2011. The CSC program will assist IBM in creating a new generation of global professionals and citizens, says Chairman and CEO Sam Palmisano.

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Change Is the Only Constant
Business Times Singapore (02/14/11)

IBM's willingness to embrace change has enabled Big Blue to remain in the top 25 list of the Fortune 500 companies since the 1960s, CEO and President Samuel Palmisano said during a recent speech at the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Reinforcing change is an ongoing task, said Palmisano, who added that the culture should outlive the founder if the company is to outlive the competition. Palmisano discussed how social media was impacting IBM's culture, noting that social networking has helped the globally integrated company operate more as a single entity. He explained that IBM revamped its overseas executive training assignments three years ago by sending larger groups to emerging markets for short-term postings. In the past, IBM posted a select few overseas for management experience, and talent was more geographically confined. The teams use social media to share their experiences with colleagues, said Palmisano. The project has been well-received within the company. "To be a leader in the future will mean thinking globally, and not only about geography," said Palmisano.
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Power to Shape the Future; STCC Program Trains New Plant Employees
St. Cloud Times (MN) -- State and Regional News (03/03/11) Aeikens, Dave

The energy technician specialist program at St. Cloud Technical & Community College in St. Cloud, Minn., trains students to work in electric power plants. The program trains workers for companies such as Xcel Energy, Minnesota's largest energy provider. The company has worked with the Technical & Community College on the program and has paid for students to take the standardized Edison Electric Institute test. "It's a lifetime credential. We are the ones that Xcel has done this with," says Bruce Peterson, dean of trade and industry at St. Cloud Technical & Community College. The test can be given every six months, and the college is working with Xcel to provide it again in June, Peterson says. "We want to give our students the experience that this test entails because it is required to get into the industry," he notes. Xcel has been training its own workers. The company approached the school about providing training for future power plant operators. The power company received a grant and worked with the college to develop the curriculum. "They have shared with us the curriculum for their apprentice training. We have had numerous discussions with Xcel and human resources people so we are truly understanding what their demand for future employees will be," says Peterson. Xcel Energy is anticipating a great need for power plant workers in the next five years. In the classroom, instructors help the students learn how to read the dials, gauges, and pumps that are part of a modern energy plant. Students must pick a specialty: wind, solar, biodiesel, ethanol, power generation, or fossil fuels. Peterson says the program will continue to grow as the school looks to add a nuclear maintenance and operations program.
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Individualized Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Senior Executive Leaders
The Leadership Quarterly (02/01/2011) Vol. 22, No. 1, P. 182 Wallis, Nancy C.; Yammarino, Francis J.; Feyerherm, Ann

Viewing leadership as a relational process has largely been accepted as a vital perspective in leadership research and theory. In a study of Individualize Leadership (IL) in 11 independent, formally assigned senior-level relationships, researchers found that in dyadic relationships characterized by strong IL, followers determined whether their superiors would support their sense of self-worth and thus come to view their superiors as leaders. As a result, follower behaviors contributed to the initiation of these effective leadership relationships. Other findings of the study include differences between dyads with hired or inherited followers, and different levels of personal closeness associated with the gender of the leader. The practical applications of the study include that followers contribute a critical role in the determination of whether and dyadic leadership relationships form, and their effectiveness. In dyadic relationships characterized by IL, followers determine whether their self-worth will be supported, and they can decide to initiate effective and close working relationships with their leaders depending on the presence of several factors, including whether they feel trusted, respected, and accepted by their leaders. Leaders can benefit by understanding the important influence this has during the start of new relationships.

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Seeing What Others Miss
Conference Board Review (02/11) Feinberg, Steven; Denny, Stephen

Decision Triggers principals Steven Feinberg and Stephen Denny say most executives are either seeking to further their companies or get them out of sticky situations, but those deemed the "best and brightest" get ahead because they continually shift five dimensions: question, time, interactions, perceptions, and structure. When an obstacle is thrown in their path, these executives look at things from a different angle to ask questions and come up with some options; when Jack Nicklaus was hired to design a golf course on Grand Cayman and determined the island was too small for a real course, he opted to design a golf ball that travels shorter distances, rather than encourage golfers to shorten their swings. Executives can shorten or lengthen the time frame of the problem, like when Adobe Systems lost shelf space to a large competitor and decided to focus on the time between customers arriving at a store and making a purchase by having "detailers" interact with shoppers and demonstrate products. Training typically focuses on role-playing because executives need to shift their interactions, which is what Indium Corp. did when it launched blogs that speak directly to its technical audiences. Finally, executives need to shift perceptions of the company's image to increase the chances of success and shift the structure of negotiations to focus on value over money.
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Coaching to Inspire Excellence
Sunday Business Post (Ireland) (03/20/11) Daly, Linda

Companies are once again investing in executive coaching following a sluggish periods, says Linda O'Neil, a business coach with IMX. Executive coaching consists of regular meetings between a trained facilitator and a supervisor. O'Neil says in order for coaching to be successful, it is important to set goals, assess where the person is at present, establish agreed upon meeting times, and set specific tasks. Companies also need to assess the efficiency of their coaching initiatives. The aim of coaching is to proved participants with skills that will improve their business capabilities. Coaching also provides leaders with a greater sense of confidence and business maturity that in turn will likely help personnel become more engaged, says Maureen Hewitt, principal coach and managing director of Positive Success Group. "What emerges from the coaching is new ways of thinking and new ways to move forward," Hewitt says. At Accenture Ireland, staff at all levels of the organization are coached in-house. Lisa Manselli, a senior executive at the company, says when Accenture relies on training alone, staff experiences a 20 percent shift in behavior, but if it is accompanied by coaching, the shift increases to 80 percent.
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The Corporate University: Fad or Lasting Institution?
Chief Learning Officer (03/11) Vance, David

A corporate university implies that education is carried out like a business. This means that a vision and mission statement exist in tandem with specific, measurable goals for the function. Learning is coordinated proactively to the organization's top-priority goals and a business case is created, taking into account the expected benefits and costs. A business plan for learning is developed including the business case, in-depth work plans, and a measurement and evaluation strategy. This plan is then carried out with diligence throughout the year. Most corporate universities have enterprise-wide responsibility, a high-level governing board, and robust support from their C-suite leaders. This is the vision proffered by Jeanne Meister in her 1994 tome, "Corporate Universities," and this is how learning should be carried out, regardless of what the training function is labeled. Training executives and managers are all familiar with programs that simply rechristened themselves a corporate university and do not operate in the manner described above. This is faddish and they may quickly die out. There are also many such programs in operation that do operate as described above but do not wish to be called a corporate university, some because it simply sounds too bookish. Thus, if the term corporate university is too academic sounding for an organization, simply find a different moniker. Ultimately, the point is that regardless of what the function is called, that learning be run like a business.
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Realizing the Benefits of E-learning
Personnel Today (03/02/11)

Despite the effects of a global recession, a number of companies have continued to heavily invest in e-learning. Analysts note that e-learning investments are critical to a changing workforce where it is crucial for staff to learn new capabilities that will equip them to manage future challenges. Reducing the number of employees might result in a company's savings, but employers must understand that the remaining employees must not only retain but improve their skills. The recession has resulted in e-learning solutions at a lower cost, with the scope of these offerings ranging from webinars to interactive simulations and social networks. Analysts also say that generalizations about older employees being resistant to new e-learning tools must be dispelled, since older generations have demonstrated embracing these tools as much as younger employees. While some companies are reluctant to invest more in e-learning due to the need to keep costs low, the quality of e-learning and employee competence should remain a priority; additionally, employers should implement appraisals and coaching programs that support a group learning environment.
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Most Executive Training Is Done All Wrong
Forbes (02/16/11) Fine, Alan

Despite the billions of dollars spent annually on training and consulting, employees and organizations still fail to recognize that better performance is not about gaining more knowledge, but acting on knowledge they already have. In addition to knowledge, there are three other ingredients that help create high performance: faith, fire, and focus. Hindering these elements does immeasurable damage, so reducing interference to faith, fire, and focus is probably the most effective, though least talked about, way that a business can improve its performance. Faith -- what an organization believes -- shapes what the organization does. The faith that enhances performance the most is believing "I can learn." Employees who see tasks as opportunities for growth are more likely to take necessary risks, and failure poses less interference for them because they also view missteps as chances to learn. Fire is about energy, passion, and commitment. This fire is often visible in companies that do ambitious and inspiring things. There is a strong relationship between faith and fire. Some important questions to ask as it pertains to an organization's fire are: Is the team's energy positive and directed toward carrying out the goals of the organization?; and, in what ways could the CEO, team leader, or manager be creating interference that blocks the fire, and what can be done to change that? Finally, focus is what brings together people's faith, fire, and their acquisition and use of knowledge. Great managers cultivate focus so that their team members can interact more effectively and improve their performance with faster and more adept decision-making.
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The Leading Edge: Using Emotional Intelligence to Enhance Performance
EI Insider Report (02/09/2011) Pearman, Roger

Successful leaders are those who enrich their relationships through emotional intelligence (EI). Coaches, consultants, and organizations that use EI tend to have clearer communication and stronger engagement and satisfaction with others. Leaders with EI typically use relationship-, empathy-, and problem-solving behaviors to gain an understanding of what is required in a situation and how to communicate effectively. Such behaviors can be cultivated, starting with an assessment of how a leader currently displays and uses those behaviors The EQ-i evaluation method provides a way to leverage 15 emotional and social skills that provide leaders with an edge. It involves connecting organizational targets to EI skills to determine which type of assessment would be appropriate--EQ-i, EQ 360, or MSCEIT. To make a successful case for improving EI behaviors through training, companies also need to examine the organization's developmental climate. Decision makers should be informed of the benefits of increased EI, including its impact on teams, customer service, sales reps, or daily associate interactions. For example, EI can be used to make team leaders more effective by helping them build interpersonal skills and develop greater flexibility.
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Pennsylvania CUs and Bankers Team Up on Training
Credit Union Times (02/02/11) Rubenstein, Jim

The Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers and the state's Credit Union Association are preparing to offer joint training and education sessions this fall. Signup for the pilot series of sessions began in early March. Initial sessions include a "Women's Leadership" series geared for female executives working at both small community banks and credit unions. The education series is expected to address topics such as leadership skills, branch management, marketing and lending, at eight sites across the state. The curriculum and speakers for the program will reflect a natural synergy between banks and small credit unions, says Kristine Warner, vice president of community and government relations for the 120-member PACB. The "past two years and what has gone down on Dodd-Frank has shown us that the big divide is no longer so much between banks and credit unions but between the big banks and smaller financial institutions," according to Warner. Small banks and credit unions share mutual interest in too many areas, "and should be working together," she adds.
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Five Tips for Retaining Top Talent
Benefits Canada (02/11)

Data from Towers Watson suggests that hiring will increase in 2011, so companies will need to address the issue of retaining their key talent. Forty-eight percent of employees surveyed in late 2010 said their employers are doing a good job of retaining top talent. However, employees' intentions to leave their current organization are climbing back to pre-recession levels. "Smart managers would do well to pay extra attention to their talent, especially top performers and those with hot skills, and make sure they feel so appreciated and engaged that they won't be tempted by 'greener grass' on the other side," says Max Caldwell, a managing director with Towers Watson. Towers Watson recommends that managers help employees chart their careers, recognize good performers, communicate more, help employees balance work and life, and survey the workforce. Gathering employee feedback on an ongoing basis is crucial for retaining top talent, who as a group are often very critical of their organization's leadership and desire greater involvement in driving the business forward. Towers Watson also found that 78 percent of employees who plan to remain with their employer believe their employer offers long-term career opportunities for them, while just 26 percent of employees who plan to leave feel this way. Similarly, 75 percent of those who plan to stay say they have a reasonably good idea of their career paths at their employer, while only 37 percent of those who plan to leave say they do.
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The Mismeasure of Work
Conference Board Review (02/11) Hammer, Michael; Hershman, Lisa W.

The majority of tools used by companies to measure and improve performance are essentially valueless. Operational performance measurements fail if they are only used to make a company and its managers look good. In distribution logistics, for instance, companies frequently measure themselves against the date that they promised a shipment to a customer. This approach sets the bar too low because a company could only set dates that are easy for it too meet. A better metric would be performance against the customer's requested date, but this is more difficult and would likely trigger resistance. Another common failure is the creation of organizational boundaries. For instance, a company's sales force attempts to sell to any willing client, while underwriters focus on only the best prospects based on quality of risk. The top management need to determine the appropriate balance between higher costs or lower revenue. Furthermore, companies often make the mistake of assessing only a small portion of what is needed or not taking measurement seriously.
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Workers Must Take Control of Training
Kansas City Star (MO) (03/08/11) Goodman, Cindy Krischer

After a gap of three years, companies are once again investing in workforce training. "Learning needs to be continuous if we want to advance and stay marketable," notes Thomas H. Shea, CEO of Right Management Florida/Caribbean Region. It is crucial for employees to determine what training they require, where to get it, and how to ask employer to provide it, if appropriate. Successfully incorporating

skill building into the work-life balance requires that a person be creative, self-sacrificing, and willing to negotiate. Workers have many options if they want to expand their career outside the limitations of the workplace. They can take free online course, enroll in online degrees, or take part in online training provided by employers. In 2010, colleges reported the highest ever yearly increase in online enrollment-- more than 21 percent. Many trade associations offer webinars designed to keep members updated on new trends. Knowledgewebb.net, for instance, recently conducted a webinar on crowd-sourcing on social networks. Other options include academic institutions and private consultants that provide leadership training. These include the women-focused programs now offered at Florida International University, Babson College, and Harvard Business School.
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Training and Study Key to Happy Staff
Northern Territory News (03/05/11) P. 402 Jenkin, Cara

On-the-job training, career development opportunities, and the chance to work toward a certified qualification that is financially supported by the employer is what keeps many workers happily employed, surveys show. It is one of the reasons why a good business is a top business in the eyes of employees who feel appreciated and cared for when the boss takes an interest in their aptitudes. Australian Institute of Management SA Chief Executive John Stokes says its job satisfaction polls find training and development is one of the top-ranked reasons why employees are satisfied with their jobs. He says nearly all -- 97 percent -- employees mention it as being one of the core reasons why a worker will stick with a company. "There's clear demand or expectation that a good employer will provide skills development and career development," Stokes says. "It also makes a connection between employees and their manager. If it's constructive, useful and there are some outcomes, it builds a better relationship with their manager." Stokes says many employers fear that if they give staff training and development they will leave the organization for greener pastures. But he says the survey findings prove a career development plan focused on a three or five-year period can help retain employees rather then tempt them to go elsewhere.
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Canadian Companies Say Flexible Working Cuts Costs
Toronto Sun (Canada) (03/14/11)

A new poll from Regus finds that 88 percent of Canadian companies now offer employees some kind of flexible working practice, with two-thirds saying the policy has saved them money. Flexible working has significant benefits, including work-life balance, improved staff productivity, and reduced overhead expenses, according to Regus. "Flexible working becoming the norm is truly good news for everyone because its benefits are so significant and widespread," says Wes Lenci, Regus regional vice-president for Canada. "Beyond just the employers and employees, families, wider society and even the environment experience improvements." More than 65 percent of companies offering flexible working said their employees now had a better work-life balance and that has helped to improve job satisfaction and motivation. Nearly a third of companies said it has also enabled them to access a wider talent pool, enabling them to employ people in remote locations.
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How to Create an Agile Organization
Chief Learning Officer (02/11) Meyer, Pamela

Organizations need to be agile in order to respond to changes in customer needs, the workforce, technology, market fluctuations, and geopolitical and social trends. Agility comes being responsive, where individuals, workgroups, and departments have the capacity, systems, and processes they need to respond to changing conditions. To this end, management educators increasingly imparting skills via games modified from improvisational theatre that encourage collaboration. A widely used improvisation game involves asking pairs or small groups of people to create a story using only one word at a time. Participants listen to each other and build on each others' concept, which encourages flexibility as well as responsibility for the collective process and product. It is also important for organizations to form structures, systems, and processes that promote improvisation success. This involves creating space for the play of new ideas. For instance, many organizations are adopting some form of Google's strategy where every employee is encouraged to spend 20 percent of their time exploring a new idea, topic, or project. In 2006, it was determined that 50 percent of Google's new products were incubated during such

20 percent time, according to Stanford University's Marissa Mayer, Google's vice president of search products and user experience.
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Training Smarter
Cardiff University News (02/09/11)

Researchers at Cardiff University and the University of London have concluded that concerns that many United Kingdom employers would cut investment in skills training as a result of the recession have proved to be largely unfounded. Total expenditure on training has reduced only slightly, according to a new study from researchers at Cardiff University and the Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies (LLAKES), at the Institute of Education, University of London. The study adds that many companies are also "training smarter." The recession has, in fact, prompted firms to focus their training on key business needs, organize more in-house courses, and use their own staff as trainers. They have also renegotiated contracts with external trainers and increased their involvement in e-learning. Professor Alan Felstead, Cardiff School of Social Sciences said: "A majority of these employers believed that they would persist in 'training smarter' when the economy recovers." The study concludes that an "overwhelming majority" of employers recognize that some types of training are essential, even in a recession. Some of the employers that the study's authors interviewed also believe they now need training that "multi-skills" their workforce. "If anything, the recession has taught me that we need to make sure that our whole workforce is trained in several tasks," one industrial employer told the researchers. "If we do have to make redundancies in the future we will then have the people to fall back on if we lose key employees."
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Corporate Training: Now, More than Ever
No Jitter (02/09/2011) Turek, Melanie

Training is one of the biggest concerns for C-level executives when companies deploy new technology, as the expansion of virtual technology has made it more difficult to make sure employees receive the training they need. Companies must constantly train employees quickly to keep them up to speed on company and product information, business processes, and the technology in use. The best corporate training includes on-demand training rather than rigidly scheduled sessions, to accommodate different time zones, job roles, and locations. Training should also be relevant so that employees are engaged and their knowledge needs are met; participant collaboration and the use of video may help this experience. Employees should also be able to obtain refresher and follow-up classes as they need them so that they are kept up-to-date on information and will not forget what they have learned. At the same time, organizations and executives must still keep costs in check, especially those associated with travel, when reaching employees for training.
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Line Managers Have Vital Role in Motivation
Employee Benefits (02/07/11) Paterson, Jennifer

Line managers play a crucial role in the motivation, engagement, and commitment of employees. This role should start with developing a personal link between the manager and employees, with Edenred sales director Colin Hodgson noting that "good managers should have an insight into their team, their roles, motivations and hobbies, so the recognition event and reward can be tailored and personalized. A motivation procedure that is specific to the target staff will deliver more impact." SHL Group's Sean Howard says personalized rewards should be concentrated around the employees' sweet spots, and points out that "if [managers] can reward [staff] around that main thing in their life, that would have a greater impact." Another attribute of a good line manager is the practice of informal recognition, with consultant Steffi Gande contending that this can often be more effective than formal rewards. Consultant Stuart Hyland says line managers should become familiarized with the benefits that a simple "thank-you" to employees can yield. Another effective strategy that a line manager can use to improve employee motivation is peer-to-peer recognition, although it can depend on individual employees' personal career agendas. The most essential line manager traits determined by the Institute for Employment Studies' the engaging manager survey include effective communication, recognition and engagement of the team,

supportiveness, a clear strategic vision, empathy, good leadership skills, respect, and an active interest in others.
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Leader Self-Development as Organizational Strategy
The Leadership Quarterly (02/01/2011) Vol. 22, No. 1, P. 33 Richard, Rebecca J.; Johnson, Stephanie K.

Leadership self-development allows leaders to adapt to continually changing environments, both inside and outside of an organization. The process of becoming a continuous self-developing leader is influenced by several factors on the individual, group, and organizational levels. Self-development is essentially an enhanced ability to solve problems quickly and generate creative ideas that support organizational adaptability and growth. Learning organizations composed of self-directed learners with an inclination to self-develop will have an advantage over competition. Leader self-development not only enables organizations to keep up with the dynamics of a changing environment, but is also a cost-effective way of developing human resources. For leader self-development to be successful as an organizational strategy, it must be in harmony with other organizational and group level practices. Adapting a strategy that promotes leader self-development may result in financial, attitudinal, and relational dividends to the organization over time. Creating an organization that supports leader self-development allows resources that were previously spent on managerial training to be reinvested. Instead of focusing on certain leadership competency programs, organizational strategy should focus on improving and supporting leader self-development.
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Employers Put Staff Development and Retention Before Recruitment for the Year Ahead
HR Magazine (03/11) Woods, David

A new report by Taleo found that employers will be prioritizing employee development over hiring in 2011 as they seek to boost staff retention and develop internal talent. Some 82 percent of HR professionals surveyed said they considered employee development to be the chief concern for their organization in 2011, compared to 18 percent citing recruitment. In addition, 56 percent of respondents reported that employee development and training was perceived as an essential business enabler within their organization, compared to 15 percent who reported training as "nice to have" instead of essential. When asked about how their organization could improve how it develops talent, 27 percent of respondents cited improved visibility of skill gaps, while 25 percent cited improved visibility of employees' existing skills. The report also found that 65 percent of HR professionals were not expecting any proposed changes to their employee development and training budgets for 2011. Chris Phillips, vice president of international marketing at Taleo, said: "As businesses expand globally, talent mobility requirements make the ability to develop skills from within your existing workforce an imperative in any successful business strategy. It can reduce staff attrition, boost staff engagement and minimize the recruitment costs, all of which will be crucial in the coming months as organizations look to drive growth."
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Recession Resilience
Chief Learning Officer (02/11) Ryan, Victoria

HD Supply Utilities recently migrated from classroom learning to virtual learning in an effort to save money amid the recession. The transition to a virtual solution took less than nine months and allowed the company to continue the delivery of training, which was combined with strong leadership support, alignment with key programs, and field-based associates who also served as learning leaders. Before the switch, the firm's Utilities Learning Team (ULT) conducted a rapid, deep-dive assessment focused on people, process, and technology. The ULT discovered that it lacked what experts say is necessary, including an LMS, but had enough to get started, such as programs like AdobeConnect and Sametime. The ULT ended up shifting from 90 percent classroom training to 90 percent Web-based delivery. The team's planning before the delivery also focused on communication, logistics, and establishing an on-site producer. It also determined it would use no-cost, repurposed laptops obtained from IT, low-cost webcams, and enthusiastic instructors who studied virtual delivery best practices. The virtual program that was launched was immediately attractive for sales, field operations, and functional leaders. They noted that individuals who underwent training gained an understanding of utilities key metrics and how to use

them to make good business decisions. One senior sales leader remarked, "I'm called on less frequently now to make decisions because the team understands the impact of approving a nonbudgeted expense."
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Six Questions for Company Transformation
IndustryWeek (02/16/11) Shaner, David

Organizations that seek to launch successful change initiatives must first ask six key questions. These are, Where is the organization's culture? What starts the process? Whose culture is it? How do you know if you are making progress? When can you change the culture? and Why do people change? The answers to these questions will provide the context for making the change. The answers will also help form an important foundation for the organization to launch any top-to-bottom transformation. If the company continues to struggle because the global economy, it may be necessary to attempt at change within the organization. This change should not involve a weekend retreat or a simple slogan. More than 70 percent of all organizational change efforts fail because there is a lack of lasting commitment after the initial introduction phase. Lasting change requires an investment in hard work, time, and a stronger sense of involvement at all levels within the organization. For example, there must be concrete ways for employees to take part in the change process. Work needs to be associated with personal growth, achievement, satisfaction, and spiritual development. Staff should be able to exercise their potential, achieve new performance levels, develop interpersonal skills, and have improved ability to collaborate with a variety of people.
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9 Ways to Get Your Staff to Collaborate Like Crazy
E-Commerce News (02/18/11) Nail, Jim; Zabin, Jeff

There are nine major ways that employers can encourage their staff to collaborate more effectively. Companies should first implement incentives focused on employee participation, then establish goals that will serve as a serious reminder that either a project-based or individual goal is mission-critical. Work processes should then be adjusted to promote collaboration, whereby tasks that might not have previously required multiple departments working together might now more readily collaborate. Management should also support information sharing practices, while integrating with a contact management database and other internal systems that underscore the company's shift toward prioritizing collaboration. Next, input and activity should be analyzed to monitor its efficacy, while publicizing and rewarding successful examples of collaboration practices thus far. Data from external and internal communities should also be integrated because members outside of a company might have valuable information to contribute. Finally, implement content notification and alerts so that employees are more likely to frequently check in with the project and contribute continuously.
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Examining Engagement: Are Employees in Love With Your Company?
Talent Management (02/14/11)

A recent survey by Workplace Options reported that 59 percent of workers believe their employers keep them fully engaged in the workplace. To fully engage employees, the Workplace Options survey results indicate that 61 percent of employers use regular feedback and dialogue with superiors to increase engagement and 57 percent use reward or recognition systems. Fifty-three percent use career advancement or improvement opportunities to increase employee engagement. Two-way feedback and shared decision-making are additional ways to engage the workforce. "Employee engagement is more than just an initiative or program started by human resources," says Dean Debnam, chief executive officer of Workplace Options. "Keeping employees engaged should be a key component of every business strategy. An engaged staff is a productive, happy and profitable staff." High levels of commitment and retention are a direct result of keeping employees engaged in the workplace. Employers can attain this high level by first identifying how well they know their workforce and how they relate to their employees. If they know what motivates their staff, they can keep employees engaged at all levels by introducing initiatives such as coaching programs for new hires, career training or large group brainstorms, and staff meetings. "If employers do not place importance on having a two-way conversation with their staff, they may be in danger of losing highly valuable employees," says Alan King, president and chief operating officer of Workplace Options. "When you allow an employee to have control over their career

development and play a part in the decisions of the company, they will become more committed to the organization and its goals."
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Corporate Training to Improve Productivity
Sun2Surf (01/25/2011)

New Horizons Malaysia strives to provide employers better return-on-investment in terms of time and resources through its business soft-skill services. The company has introduced the Corporate Membership Programme to encourage more corporate companies to invest in training and human development. Launched last December, the program delivers post training support for employees on top of the regular training routine. The program focuses on technical and business-related skill training, from basic application to desktop productivity tools. Trainees learn to use programs such as Microsoft Office and Cisco Systems, while at a more advanced level, they learn about more complex and integrated business systems, such as information security and virtualization.
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The Interface of the Top Management Team and Middle Managers: A Process Model
Academy of Management Review (Winter 2011) Vol. 36, No. 1, P. 102 Raes, Anneloes M.L.; Heijltjes, Marielle G.; Glunk, Ursula; et al.

Engagement between the top management team (TMT) and middle managers (MMs) is a central support of effective strategy formulation and deployment, but little research on the actual nature of this interaction has been undertaken. Researchers specify the TMT-MM interface's functions and structure through a series of propositions connecting TMT and MMs' interaction processes, role behaviors, and trust to strategic decision quality and deployment quality. Examination of the interface furnishes a new pathway for both TMT and MM research and augments insight into the influence that TMTs exert on organizational performance. The proposed interface model has theoretical pertinence because it fills part of the void in the relationship between TMT composition and organizational performance and supplies an alternative and more detailed model that earlier studies in either the MM or TMT arena have supplied. The interface model can work to the advantage of TMTs in practice because it may be less difficult to learn and change the mechanisms by which they exert influence than to revise TMT composition. Overall, the researchers call on their peers to start investigating alternative channels of TMT organizational influence.
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Coaching Takes Center Stage
Workforce Management (02/11) Kranz, Garry

Companies are using professional coaching in innovative ways to build on employee strengths and develop strategic solutions to a range of business issues. Companies are investing in strong employees by using coaching to develop their leadership abilities so they can take on more responsibility, leading to more commitment and retention of talent. A 2009 report by the Lexington, Kentucky-based International Coach Federation reports that companies are seeing a seven-fold return on investments in professional coaching. Northrop Grumman develops coaches internally with a two-year certification program. "We're creating a culture in which coaching is used to develop our leaders. We don't use coaching for remedial activities," says their corporate director of learning and leadership development, Barb Goretsky. Similarly, when the biotech company, Genentech ranked last in employee satisfaction five years ago, they used a combination of personal and group coaching called the Personal Excellence Program resulting in increased employee satisfaction, communication, and collaboration.
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