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Learning Helps You Stay Ahead of Trends

How do you keep personal stagnation at bay? Or prevent yourself from becoming irrelevant in your profession? The answer is simple: Learn or do something new. If you want to keep on top of the forces changing the ways you live and work, you need to educate yourself. Whether it's for personal fulfillment, such as learning to cook gourmet meals, or to earn a promotion at work, such as by learning database software, you need to learn the newest and best techniques to do what you want to do.

This issue is all about trends driving the workplace, and what can be done to help you and your organization stay relevant. Our cover Q&A with author and expert Paul Smith shows how the very old technique of storytelling can help enhance sales skills and leadership skills. Smith's most recent book, *Sell with a Story* (AMACOM, 2016), describes what makes a story an actual story and how to tell an effective story.

Jonathan Kestenbaum, in "Five Changes in Talent Acquisition," outlines the changes in how companies are getting new talent and what HR managers need to be aware of when designing recruitment tactics.

Continuing the HR narrative, Matt Poepsel in "Why HR's Digital Divide Is Bad for Business" talks about how more technologically savvy potential employees means that HR executives need to up their own digital skills.

Some of the trends created by the entry of Millennials into the workplace are also noted in this issue. For example, Maria Black, president of ADP TotalSource, discusses what companies must do to make the right impression on new employees who are Millennials so that they will stay around for a long time to come. And Edward Kairiss of Bryant University, in "Preparing Graduates for the New Workplace," shows what colleges should be doing to instill the skills students will need to succeed.

In "Rise of the Renaissance Employee," AMA studies reveal that successful employees need to be multitasking, and the best way to determine what skills are needed is by conducting thorough assessments.

You don't need a crystal ball to figure out what the trends in business and leadership will be. Active learning will keep you ahead of the curve.

Christiane Truelove
Guest Editor, *AMA Quarterly*

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PRINT STILL FIT

BY JACK FREKER



With so many marketing outlets and platforms to choose from, business owners need to be more confident than ever that they are targeting their marketing dollars at the right audience.

For many types of businesses, ads in printed directories are a vital component of the marketing mix.

While digital ads, consumer review sites, mobile apps, and online search are preferred channels for advertisers and consumers, there is still a sizable audience of consumers who rely on local print directories when seeking products and services, especially those of an immediate and specialized nature. Further, if business owners select only a digital or mobile advertising source, they may be addressing just 50 to 60% of their potential buyers.

REACHING LOCAL AUDIENCES

Think about it: Printed directories still show up on doorsteps and in mailboxes. We might chuckle and think, “Who still uses these things?” But given the price of paper and shipping, the use of print is not just for tradition’s sake. The business owners who spend their hard-earned money on printed advertising and directory listings year after year do so for good reason.

The Local Search Association (LSA), the industry association for location-based marketing, compiles an annual Local Media Tracking Study to analyze media usage for local product and service searching. The study compares various channels, including online search engines, ratings and

reviews, social networks, online videos, the print Yellow Pages, and interactive Yellow Pages.

The LSA data show that many types of small businesses still value printed directories such as the Yellow Pages as a preferred method of reaching consumers. Likewise, consumers still prefer the Yellow Pages for certain types of searches. It’s important to remember that not everyone is comfortable making significant purchases or service arrangements through a smartphone. Also, not everyone’s mobile phone is a smartphone. A typical retiree homeowner may send text messages from a tablet or purchase books from Amazon, but that does not mean he or she will use Yelp to find an electrician or financial planner.

A closer look at the numbers reveals that print still delivers value. Along with search engines, company websites, and word of mouth, printed directories are a top trusted source for accurate local business information that consumers turn to when ready to make a purchase.

One might think that print usage is down. However, according to the LSA Local Media Tracking Study, printed directories generated 4.9 billion searches in the United States in 2015. This runs counter to conventional wisdom. In fact, directory references have stabilized over the past three years, and print is outperforming other channels on important metrics

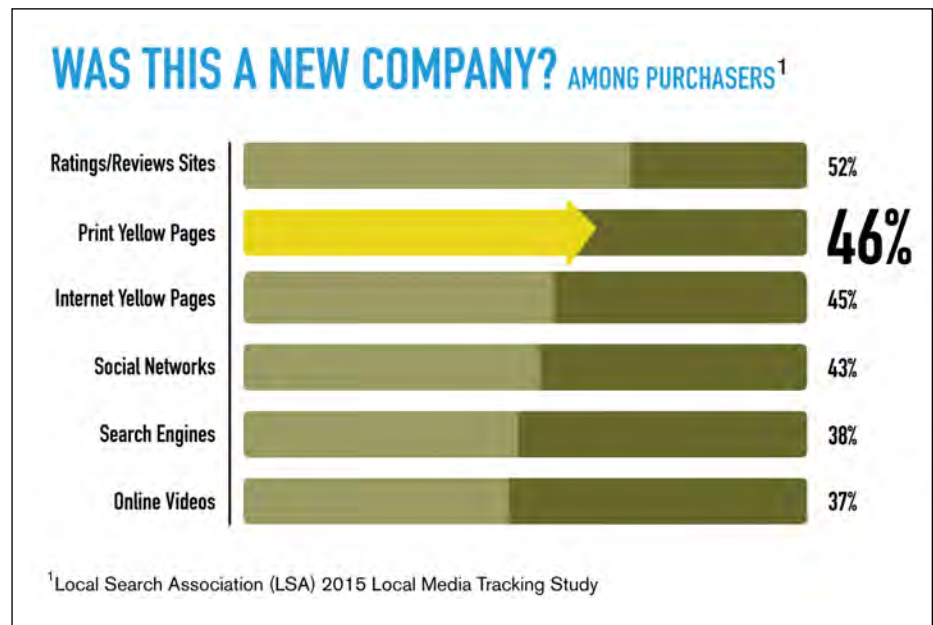
PRINT USERS TAKE ACTION AFTER A SEARCH¹



¹Local Search Association (LSA) 2015 Local Media Tracking Study

related to contacting, visiting, or purchasing from a business.

The LSA Local Media Tracking Study shows that the printed Yellow Pages tops the chart when it comes to consumers taking action post-search. In fact, the percentage of people who made contact with a business or a visit or purchase after their search is highest for printed Yellow Pages (71%), surpassing that of search engines and online videos. After viewing an advertisement, 69% of consumers made contact with a business by phone, 35% visited the business in person, 28% visited a website, and 15% contacted the business by email.



By the time they pick up a directory, consumers often need a specific local product or service and are very close to the last step in their decision-making process. In marketing lingo, they are “deeper in the funnel”: They have an immediate need or an unfamiliar one. They need to purchase soon and are looking for a bit of education.

A robust 84% of printed Yellow Pages users report their search resulted in making a purchase or intending to do so in the future. In fact, half of those users made a purchase that same day. And consumers aren't only looking up businesses they already patronize: Of those who used the printed Yellow Pages and made a purchase, 46% were purchasing from a company new to them.

Print ads are especially effective in directories or mailers that are directed at local audiences seeking professional services, skilled tradespeople, and specialty goods. When integrated strategically with social media, digital display, and other channels, print advertising enhances those marketing vehicles and helps yield stronger results.

ONLINE ADVERTISING ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Many businesses will be skeptical about investing in printed ads and directories, in part because they don't know how to measure results and determine ROI. After all, one of the most appealing aspects of online advertising is the relative ease with which consumer data, tracking, and metrics can be gathered and analyzed.

Print advertising can be evaluated by call-tracking lines (a unique number that appears only in the ad and is used by advertisers to trace sources) or unique URLs or redemption codes. These statistics can be reviewed daily, weekly, or monthly to provide accurate and timely ROI metrics on your advertising spend. In addition, astute businesses simply ask

walk-in customers what source brought them in and track those results in a formalized way. This customer data can then be used to direct and fine-tune both print and digital strategies. Regular reviews of print campaigns are essential for understanding the demographics and preferences of current and potential customers who do respond to print ads and listings.

Ad-weary consumers are quick to delete, scroll past, and close online ads without so much as a glance. Recent advances in hyper-specific targeting and programmatic ad technology, and the proliferation of new ad formats have made online ads more distracting than ever, and the pushback has been significant (ad blockers, negative sentiment, and so on). Print ads and directories are more permanent; an ad on a printed page is more likely to be seen by readers (and less likely to aggravate them). This stands to reason, as consumers generally come to directories prior to a purchase specifically to view ads from local businesses. Seventy-five percent of searchers using the printed Yellow Pages viewed one or more display ads, and the average number of ads viewed was 3.5, according to the LSA 2015 Local Media Tracking Study. Consumers reference copy and images from the ads of different companies to compare businesses based on their capabilities, experience, hours, terms of service, location, and price—all to fit their particular need.

The value of a lead is often higher with print ads, given how and why potential customers see them. For example, community-centric businesses such as restaurants and auto dealers can generate hundreds of leads per year from print ads, which often produce twice as many leads as digital ads. This explains why print campaigns often outperform search engine marketing campaigns when it comes to cost per lead. Interestingly, the 2015 DMA Response Rate Report shows that the response rate of direct mail outperforms all digital

channels. Direct mail has a 3.7% response rate (with a house list; 1% with a prospect list), whereas email, social media, and paid search all clock in at a much lower 0.1% response rate. Internet display ads are a mere blip at a 0.02% response rate. These findings illustrate that print advertising continues to engage with consumers effectively.

The fact that response rates are so strong and cost per lead so low makes print a good complement to the overall marketing mix. Allocating an advertising budget is no longer a question of either digital or print. It's now a matter of digital and print—a more robust combination of channels that leverages the benefits of each medium: lower cost per lead, ease of use, more targeted delivery, and more creative display.

WHAT PRINT DOES WELL

When considering the value derived from print in the marketing mix, it's helpful to look at those attributes of the print medium that are difficult for digital to emulate. For example, print ad formats enable nonlinear consumption of information, whereas most digital options require the search results to be navigated only in the linear manner that the source allows. This nonlinear access to information allows for direct comparison of offerings, guarantees, terms, methods of payment, hours of operation, even images of products within a two-page spread and across multiple pages. The multidimensional method of search and comparison used in print is less prevalent, and often more complicated to do, on digital platforms.

Relevant photos and product images interspersed with textual content about a provider are not prominent features in most digital search results pages, but these features are the hallmark of printed directories. With a physical book, consumers have tangible points of reference on where they saw a specific provider, location, or special offer. Similar memory reference points are generally not available via dynamic digital platforms.

Beyond its ease of use, the print directory in particular has other inherent core competencies: There are fewer steps to get to needed information and fewer distractions, and the directory serves as a trusted and accurate local resource with a defined geographic scope. Consumers also take some comfort in the fact that an advertiser has committed to an annual presence in a printed directory, and therefore it is likely to be a business with some staying power, available for service after the transaction occurs. This list goes on, but of course there are those usage attributes of print that will be or have been superseded by digital.

For a significant set of consumers, however, print's physical, tangible form still provides the right blend of functionality, pragmatic familiarity, and "always-on" availability for various types of search needs. Think of the multisensory consumer engagement of a print search as a "lean forward" approach, whereas the on-screen, online engagement of a digital search is more of a "lean back" consumer experience.

FIT FOR PRINT

There are those who will dismiss print advertising out of hand, and that may make sense for some types of businesses (such as e-commerce retailers with no physical stores). Companies need to consider the most appropriate channel to reach their most valuable customers and make educated inferences about how new clients will find them. When it comes to print ads and directories, the type and location of a business can have a big impact on results. It's important to study your customers, their online and offline behavior, and their path to purchase to see if you are missing an opportunity to reach out and meet them where and how they are seeking your particular service or product.

There are some types of content that consumers implicitly associate with printed directories. In the LSA data on how consumers search for various local businesses, a clear pattern emerges. When consumers are ready to make a sizable or time-sensitive purchase characterized by high cost, complex transactions, urgency, or personal services, they look for local experts in a printed directory. Print is the go-to resource for specific types of information. Businesses commonly researched via print include auto repair and parts; funeral directors; caterers, doctors, and dentists; vets and pet groomers; barbers and salons; contractors of all types, including plumbers, roofers, landscapers, and painters; and appliance and computer repair.

Emergency information has high awareness in printed directories because it's very important to be able to find it when needed. When you have a gushing pipe, you don't want to wade through unparsed listings of somewhat regional plumbers on your phone or laptop—you want the phone number of the guy down the way that your neighbor mentioned last month when her sink stopped up. You can find him at a glance in a printed directory, along with several others nearby.

Even online directories are now trending toward a focus on local businesses, events, and community leaders in an attempt to meet consumers where they live. The legacy of printed directories is one of trust and reliability, enhanced by local knowledge that can't be matched by online search bots. Small businesses know their customers well and appreciate advertising channels that can offer local ad networks and representatives.

Successful businesses look for the most effective ways to engage with their target audience and use data to guide these interactions to improve competitive positioning. With some careful planning and consistent metrics tracking, you can keep your finger on the pulse of your audience and make sure you show up where your future customers are looking for you. It's not always online. [AQ](#)

Jack Freker is CEO of Print Media, LLC which publishes and distributes YPSM-branded print directories that consumers use to find quality products and services in their areas.

5 changes in TALENT ACQUISITION



BY JONATHAN KESTENBAUM

If there is one constant in the workforce, it is change, and today's workforce is on the precipice of some of the most fundamental changes of all.

Everything about the employee lifecycle—including the word “employee” itself—is shifting, from performance management to recruiting and hiring.

It's the recruiting and hiring piece that seems likely to change most dramatically. Here are just a few of the trends impacting talent acquisition today and tomorrow:

Changing workforce demographics. The population and labor force will continue to diversify as immigration continues to account for a sizable part of population growth. A U.S. Department of Labor report, “Futurework—Trends

and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century,” suggests that the Hispanic and Asian share of the U.S. population will rise from 14% in 1995 to 19% in 2020, a mere four years away.

Generational shifts. As Millennials become the largest generation in the workforce, hiring must change. As stated in Sodexo Insights' 2016 report “The Emerging Workforce and How Demographics are Changing Business,” the U.S. and global workforce is evolving at an unprecedented rate, and with the addition of Generation Z, it will soon be five

generations strong. In the next four years 30% of Gen Z will enter the workforce.

Global hiring. In the 2012 report “The World at Work: Jobs, Pay, and Skills for 3.5 Billion People,” McKinsey & Company says the global labor force will approach 3.5 billion by 2030. Based on current trends in population, education, and labor demand, McKinsey projects that by 2020 the global economy could face hurdles that include a worsening skills gap in higher-skill areas and an abundance of lower-skilled workers, meaning high unemployment in some areas.

Compensation changes. The push for a \$15 minimum wage is being hotly contested in the United States. Most talent acquisition professionals will not suddenly be able to approve significantly higher salaries if and when the minimum wage goes up. This means hiring may stagnate or HR professionals will have to be smart about rewards, recognition, and flexible work schedules.

TRENDS IN TALENT ACQUISITION

Many of these changes are redefining how the world sees recruitment and assuredly how those shaping the talent acquisition technology of tomorrow view their role. Perhaps

the changes can explain some of the trends occurring specifically in the landscape of recruitment and hiring. In Talent Tech Labs’ most recent Talent Trends Report, we noted five specific trends affecting those in talent acquisition and the technology that surrounds it.

1 Significant M&A activity in the talent acquisition space

When Microsoft made its largest buy ever in talent acquisition technology, the world sat up and took notice. While this transaction is far from the only significant acquisition or investment in the space, it is a harbinger of things to come. It shows that some of the world’s savviest technology creators realize that many of the shifts outlined above are unavoidable and that skilled talent will be a key differentiator in the economy of tomorrow.

Other flurries of investment are happening simultaneously. M&A activity is expected to continue through the fall, particularly as smaller companies rush to fill market voids left by giant predecessors such as LinkedIn and as even smaller talent acquisition companies rush to fill their space in the recruiting technology landscape.

The Tech Behind the Talent

Many talent acquisition trends can be spotted by looking at the technology involved. What new companies are being created? Where in the employee lifecycle do they sit? How much money are they receiving? In many ways, keeping tabs on these shifts gives us unique insights into where the world of work, and specifically hiring, will go next.

Talent Tech Labs tracks the companies in talent acquisition and has been doing so for the past two years in our Talent Acquisition Ecosystem. This infographic documents the changes in various stages of the talent acquisition landscape—defined as Source, Engage, and Hire—and the smaller ecosystems that exist within each. By looking at areas that have grown or that seem outsized compared with other areas, we can start to predict where the talent acquisition marketplace might go in the next 12 months.

The largest circles are still in the Source and Engage quadrants, showing us that more investment is still being spent on finding talent than on getting talent on board. But when we dive deeper, we see that the lion’s share of the sourcing market is in job boards, which is no surprise to anyone who’s ever hired anyone. Job marketing and distribution also seems to have a significant number of players within its bubble, making this an area to watch.

SOURCING

Note the lack of dominance in any portion of the candidate-centric area. This shows that no one is really killing it here. While sourcing is an important part of the growing talent acquisition space, it’s still clear that candidate-focused solutions are not

really part of the landscape until they reach scale (wherein corporate and staffing start looking to them as recruiting pools).

ENGAGEMENT

It’s pretty clear that the outlier here is the temporary labor marketplace, which we might more accurately describe as the “gig economy.” This area of the workforce is growing by leaps and bounds, and so are the tools created within talent acquisition to manage it. Formerly called the contingent workforce, the gig economy has rocked talent acquisition in a way that almost no one predicted. And even those who did predict it thought it would truly take hold around 2020.

It’s also clear that matching is the name of the game for both candidates and employers. Whether it’s tools that focus on matching for culture and personality, or matching on skills, people are investing (on both sides) their time and money in technology that can help them find the right fit.

HIRING

In our final step of the talent acquisition process, we see almost a three-way tie between vendor management systems, referrals and recommendations, and the corporate ATS. This is surprising to those who understand that most hiring happens by the small and midsize businesses of the world and that many of today’s and tomorrow’s graduates are starting their own businesses or becoming entrepreneurs. So why is the growth in this area focused on systems that are primarily used by the enterprise? This is food for thought.



Sourcing Hacks for Human Resource Professionals,” in 2016. Extensions include Rapportive and Prophet and independent social search engines that transform who companies hire and how. The popularity of these simple-to-use tools is not lost on the creators of talent acquisition technology and the companies that are launching new platforms.

“Social media has revolutionized the way we connect, interact, and engage. Because of this, the technology we leverage must seamlessly connect across a candidate’s online presence. Social media is no longer used to screen a candidate, it is now used to validate a candidate,” said Simon Fenwick, executive vice president and managing director of global talent acquisition at IPG Mediabrands, in Talent Tech Labs’ Trend Report Vol. 5.

According to Fenwick, “The most successful social media recruitment initiatives are those that imitate real-life scenarios. People want to see the ‘face behind the brand’ and are conducting online audits of potential employers prior to and during the recruitment process. It is important to integrate your digital footprint to ensure that you are presenting your desired corporate brand to potential candidates.”

4 Pivoting toward niche job boards and communities

“Spray and pray is over, on both the candidate and the recruiter side,” said Maren Hogan, CEO of Red Branch Media, in Talent Tech Labs’ Trend Report Vol. 5. “You can see it in the gasping death throes of some of the larger, more general job boards. If you can take the time to source a candidate properly, you can then take the time to approach them as you might any other human being. Is it faster? No. Is it more effective? Absolutely.”

Hogan characterized talent acquisition as a marketing, not a sales, role. “As we recover from our economic slump,

job seekers, both passive and active, are going to balk at aggressive tactics that interrupt their workday,” she said. “Today’s prospects want to know what you know, they want to see what you’re like, and they want to be approached with the same level of personal touch they receive from all the other people trying to market something to them. Just as marketing has moved from outbound to inbound, so too must recruitment.”

Recruiters understand this shift and are moving past job boards that promise millions of profiles or blast job descriptions to every live body in a specific radius with an email account. There has been a marked shift in sentiment—from being impressed at the scale to deriding the inaccuracy—among recruiters and HR professionals for tools that do this. This shift has been a boon for niche job boards and professional communities that often crowdsource and vote on who is the most “accomplished” or build out laser-focused communities.

5 Scrutiny of employer branding

Employer branding has enjoyed a steady rise in the talent acquisition space, with many small consulting firms and large brands leading the charge. Today, the Muse, SmashFly, and Hodes are building robust platforms that not only offer to support employer branding efforts but measure them as well. This capability has given recruitment managers and talent acquisition professionals a family of metrics they didn’t know they could measure. Organizations that want to stay flexible and maintain efficiencies end up utilizing the best component solutions, even if those elements are found in separate apps or platforms.

Expect the next generation of systems to be built with more open architectures allowing the easy use of web services and APIs that can communicate between apps. Proprietary or closed platforms are a thing of the past. As these open

systems enter the market, expect many AaaS, or analytics-as-a-service, offerings. Analytics-as-a-service will connect data from all point solutions and will allow recruitment managers to track success.

As this shift occurs, employer branding will come under scrutiny for its real and perceived ROI to the organization. Today, employers are actively hiring employer branding managers in droves. Susan LaMotte of Exaqueo recently began collecting employer branding jobs, and the submissions, just from an informal professional group, have been staggering. This class of (mostly) in-house employer branding specialists will have to prove that employer branding is effective at both hiring and retention in order to move the profession forward.

CANDIDATE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT MATURES

Recruiting is a specialized version of sales and marketing. So why has our candidate relationship management function lagged so far behind in comparison? That is about to change.

Companies in the candidate relationship management segment are focusing at the top of the candidate engagement funnel by interacting with potential and future hires to build a talent community. With such a growing emphasis on the candidate experience, effective candidate relationship management solutions are critical to building rapport with

candidates prior to selection and, hopefully, engaging them enough that they want to apply with the company.

While some aspects of the basic feature set of candidate relationship management platforms are included in applicant tracking, candidate relationship management tools are innovating the front end of the talent acquisition process in the way they capture candidate leads and execute ongoing engagement strategies with talent.

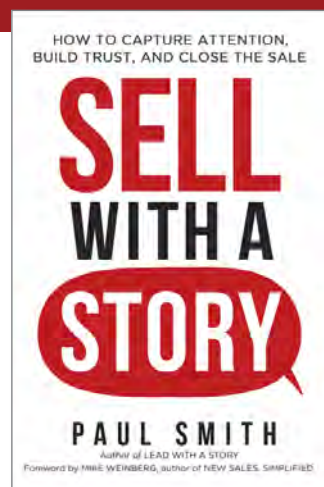
Recruitment organizations must begin to manage all of their interactions with potential candidates masterfully, just as with customers. The newest candidate relationship management systems help people track interactions and measure them. They identify why the top recruiters are successful, allowing companies to share and institutionalize that knowledge.

We are living in another “age,” this time not industrial or informational but rather one that is truly based in the talent we can source, engage, and hire. This is the competitive advantage that keeps CEOs up at night. By closely observing the activity within the talent acquisition space, we can make guesses about what sorts of tools we’ll need to build to hire, train, and engage the workers of tomorrow. [AQ](#)

Jonathan Kestenbaum is the executive director of Talent Tech Labs, which focuses on promoting technological developments in the field of talent acquisition.

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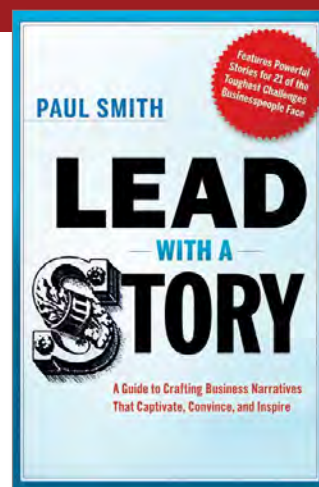
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AN INTERVIEW WITH

Paul Smith

THE POWER — OF — STORYTELLING FOR LEADERSHIP

BY CHRISTIANE TRUELOVE

Author and speaker Paul Smith talks to *AMA Quarterly* about how business and marketing culture went away from storytelling and why it's essential that leaders learn this skill again. He describes what actually makes a story a story and how a photographer closed a sale with the tale of a porcine island. Smith's newest book, *Sell with a Story: How to Capture Attention, Build Trust, and Close the Sale* (AMACOM, 2016), is part of his series on storytelling. The series also includes *Lead with a Story: A Guide to Crafting Business Narratives That Captivate, Convince, and Inspire* (AMACOM, 2012) and *Parenting with a Story: Real-Life Lessons in Character for Parents and Children to Share* (AMACOM, 2014).

It seems storytelling is a trend that cuts across all aspects of life but is having an impact in the professional setting. Can you say why more businesses are turning toward storytelling as a practice?

PS: The first thing I would say is that I agree with your observation: There clearly is a trend toward storytelling infiltrating much of life and even the professional workplace. But I don't think this a new trend that is just starting. The way I describe it is that we're kind of getting back to the natural order of things. This isn't one of the first times in human history where storytelling has been a primary form of influence and communication. In fact, I believe that for most of humankind's history, that was the case.

So the question should be, why did storytelling take a temporary hiatus from its position as one of the primary modes of communication? I think it's only been a few decades, a century or less, since that's been the case. You can go back to cavemen drawing pictures on cave walls; they were telling stories of where the buffalo was or whatever. The Celtic culture had its bards and druids; the Scandinavians had their people who told sagas; the Islamic countries had their Sufi masters and dervishes who were their storytellers. There were shamans in Siberia, and even Native Americans tended to make their storytellers their tribal leaders. So for much of human history, storytelling was the way that leaders shared and communicated, and the way influence was done.

The main reason for this was that it was before the printing press. And before the printing press, the main measure of success of any kind of communication was if people remembered it. In order for people to remember a whole lot of stuff, it had to rhyme like a poem or be in a song with meter and rhythm, or it had to be in a story. It was just more engaging. You couldn't just give people lists of things or ad nauseam logical arguments. They'd just forget them.

So storytelling was a natural form of communication, leadership, and influence for millennia. I think when it stopped being that was well after the printing press. In the business world, I would say in the early 1900s, when there started to be business schools. We started churning out MBAs by the thousands that were trained—and I'll admit to being one of them—to be very analytical and to look at a business like an engineer looks at a machine, something that needs to be fine-tuned. After that happened, if you were to be caught in the office telling stories, it would identify you as being old school, and certainly not a member of the new avant garde of sophisticated business leaders.

Where we began to regain storytelling, I think, goes back to the 1960s or '70s. It was only a few decades that it was out of favor. Back in the '60s and '70s, storytelling began to be more popular again. In 1973, the first national storytelling festival was held in Tennessee, and now it's held every year. And groups like the Moth and others developed. In the business world, in particular, there were some academic

studies done about the effectiveness of storytelling in the workplace. And in the early 1990s, the first of a series of trade books about storytelling in business began, and mine are part of that series. *Managing by Storying Around*, by David Armstrong, was the very first one, in 1991. *Corporate Legends and Lore*, by Peg Neuhauser, was I think the second one. Now there have been dozens and dozens of them. And there are more every year.

It seems that storytelling had been pigeonholed in the advertising industry for a while.

PS: Yes, storytelling showed up in advertising, in particular, and it took a while longer, a couple of decades, for it to show up in leadership communication. In sales it was probably there—not as refined or polished, but for lack of any other tools they had in their toolkit. But they went through a very analytical phase of salesmanship as well that they're now coming back from and realizing the benefits of storytelling. But yes, advertising and marketing are probably one of the earlier places to adopt just because it's a natural venue for storytelling, especially in radio and television.

What is the value of storytelling for leadership? What do leaders gain from developing their storytelling skills?

PS: First, [storytelling] helps your audience relax and just listen. It's like when you're in a college classroom and the professor stops writing formulas on the board and turns around and tells an anecdote or example or a story, and the students put their pencils down, lean back in their chairs, and just listen. That's what you want your audience to do, because normally we're in a critical evaluation mode with everything that comes out of somebody's mouth. We're already poking holes in it and thinking of the next thing we're going to say. What you really want the audience to do is listen to the story and evaluate it later—"I want to get it all out before you shut me off." So storytelling just puts people in that frame of mind.

Second, storytelling also builds strong relationships. There have been a number of studies showing that. Human beings tend not to trust people they don't know, and we tend to trust people we do know until they give us a reason not to. And the quickest way to get to know somebody, the quickest way between being a stranger and a friend, is a story. Once you've told someone a personal story, they can count you in that 70% of people they can trust.

Third is a practical, more neurological reason: Stories speak to the part of the brain where decisions are made. A lot of cognitive science done in the last few decades shows that humans make unconscious, emotional, often irrational decisions in one place in their brain, but we rationalize and justify those decisions very logically later in another place in the brain. If you want to influence people, whether that's leadership or marketing or sales, you need to communicate to the part of the brain where they are

actually making decisions. Stories are a way to do that because they speak to that emotional part of the brain.

Let me illustrate the fourth with a true story. My wife and I went to Coney Island in Cincinnati to an art fair. My wife is an artist, so when I say we went to an art fair, I went to carry the bags basically. She was going booth to booth, talking to all the artists about their techniques, mediums, and inspiration. I'm just dutifully in tow. But she's on a mission to find a piece for our kids' bathroom. She gets to the booth with the work of an underwater photographer named Chris Guglielmo, who does fascinating, mesmerizing work of sea anemones, coral, sharks and whales, and beautiful stuff. She's flipping through his stuff and gets to a picture that to me looked as out of place as a pig in the ocean, and that's because it literally was a pig in the ocean. It's this picture of a little baby piglet swimming around in the ocean. My wife has gotten herself all attached to it, and eventually the artist comes over and they're talking. I said, "Look, dude, what's with the pig in the ocean? You've got to explain that, because it makes no sense to me."

And that's where the magic started. He said, "Oh yeah, it's the craziest thing!" The [picture] was taken off the coast of an uninhabited Bahamian island in the Caribbean called Big Major Cay. He said that apparently, a few years ago, a local entrepreneur decided he wanted to raise pigs—for bacon, I guess—and bought a whole trove of pigs. He found this uninhabited island where he could keep them for free.

But, Chris said, "If you look really close in the picture..."—and I got up really close and looked at the picture, and he pointed behind the beach—"what do you see behind the pig on the beach there?" I said, "Well, the only thing I can make out are cactus." And he said, "Yeah. Pigs don't like cactus." These pigs didn't have anything to eat, so not only were they not thriving, they were starving to death. Chris said that fortunately, a local restaurant owner on one of the neighboring islands started boating his leftovers and refuse every night to Big Major Cay and dumping them offshore. The pigs could smell this pretty tasty food and pretty quickly learned how to swim to get it.

So here it is a few years later, and two or three generations of pigs have learned to swim. They continue to eat this food that's dumped offshore. Chris said, in fact, that because the pigs have noticed that when boats come to shore or near shore it means they're going to get fed, now they just happily swim up to any boat that comes anywhere near the island. He said, "I boated up there, and I didn't even need to get out of my boat! I just leaned over the side, stuck my camera into the water, and got a picture of all these pigs. It was the easiest picture I've ever taken!" He said no one refers to the place as Big Major Cay anymore. They refer to it as Pig Island.

So I immediately pulled out my wallet, slapped down a credit card, and said, "We'll take it." The point is, two minutes earlier, that picture was worth nothing to me. But after hearing that story—which was a history lesson,

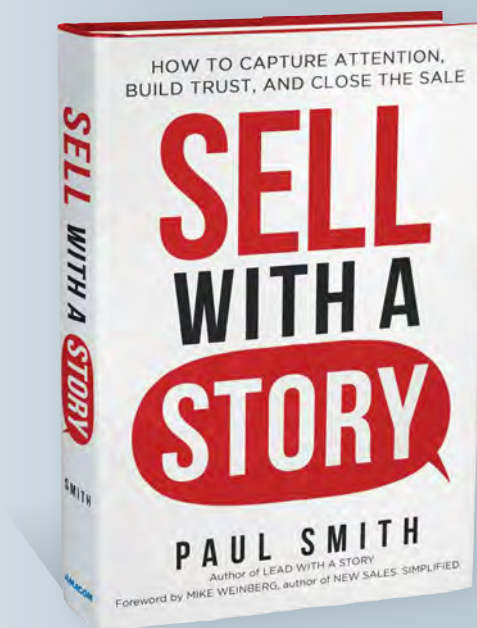
Sell with a Story

BY PAUL SMITH

It's 9 o'clock on Monday morning, three days before a big sales call with a new prospect. The entire team is assembled in a conference room ready to start planning the sales pitch. At 9:02, the sales VP walks in the room and calls the meeting to order with a clap of her hands. She remains standing, puts her hands on the conference table, leans out over the surface, and says, "Okay, people, what's our story?"

Do you think she's asking for an actual story in the traditional sense? Almost certainly she's not. She's probably asking for the logical series of facts and arguments and data the team should lay out for the prospect, probably in a PowerPoint® presentation, that will have the greatest odds of leading to a sale. That would certainly be a reasonable request. But it's not something that anyone would have called a story 10 years ago. It would have been called a message track, or talking points, or presentation slides, or simply a sales pitch.

In the business world, it's become popular in many circles to consider just about any meaningful series of words a story. Our strategy documents are a story...the mission statement is a story...our co-marketing programs are stories...our brand logo is a story...and so on.



I think with any story, whether it's a marketing or sales story, a novel that you read, or a movie that you watch, it really comes down to three things: a hero we care about, a villain we're afraid of, and an epic struggle between them.

a geography lesson, and an animal behavior lesson all rolled into one—I wasn't just buying a picture. I was buying a story. I love telling a story, and when someone comes to my house, I can show them that picture and tell them the story. It's worth so much more after the story than before the story. Literally the story made the picture worth more money to me and made me want to buy it. There's also been fascinating research into this.... Stories literally increase the value of what you're trying to sell.

Next, stories make things easier to remember. In fact, with my audiences, I don't go over the research with them. I literally tell them, "No one here is going to remember this list of 10 reasons why storytelling works, and that's OK. I won't be insulted. I've given this speech 200 times, and every time I have to turn around and look at the list to remember what they are. But all of you will remember the story of Pig Island. And tomorrow, the next day, the next week, and even a year from now, all of you sitting here right now can tell the story of Pig Island and probably get most of the facts right. But none of you will remember 2 of these 10 reasons why storytelling works." People just don't share things like that, but they'll share a great story.

You've done a lot of research, talking to a lot of CEOs and executives. What has been the common theme you've found in all of these individual stories? What have you found makes a great story?

PS: I think with any story, whether it's a marketing or sales story, a novel that you read, or a movie that you watch, it really comes down to three things: a hero we care about, a villain we're afraid of, and an epic struggle between them. Think about *Star Wars*. We care about Luke Skywalker, we're afraid of Darth Vader, and they have an epic struggle. Just about every story that is good is going to have those three elements. That obviously sounds kind of Hollywood, so if I were to translate that into business language, the

If using the word "story" for all these purposes helps people find or create more meaning in their work, then that's obviously a good thing. But for our purposes, these are not stories. Not every set of words that has meaning is a story, just as not all collections of words constitute poetry. A story is something special.

So how can you distinguish a story from other narratives that are not stories? We need some practical tips to recognize a story.

The most sensible attempt I've seen to do this is by business storytelling consultant Shawn Callahan. He even created a 10-story quiz at www.thestorytest.com to help people practice identifying general business stories from nonstories. I encourage you to try the quiz yourself.

SIX ATTRIBUTES OF A STORY

Inspired by Callahan's work, here are my top attributes that distinguish a story from all other forms of narrative. Stories typically have the following six identifiable features, listed in the order you're likely to encounter them in a narrative: (1) a time, (2) a place, (3) a main character, (4) an obstacle, (5) a goal, and (6) events. When you find these features in a narrative, it's a good indication that what you're experiencing is a story. Stories generally have:

1. A time indicator. Words like "Back in 2012" or "Last month"

or "The last time I was on vacation" are all indications of when something happened. And since in a story something has to happen, these time indicators are a clue that something is about to happen.

2. A place indicator. A story sometimes starts out with words like, "I was at the airport in Boston" or "It all started in the cafeteria at my office" or "On my way home." Again, since stories relay events, those events have to happen somewhere. Try telling a story about something specific that happened to you without mentioning where it happened. It's not impossible, but it feels awkward, which is why most stories have a place indicator.

3. A main character. This should be obvious, but as discussed above, much of what passes for "a story" these days are things like mission statements and talking points that have no characters at all. For a narrative to be a story, there has to be one character, and usually more. In the context of sales stories, the character is almost always a person, but it could be an animal, a company, or even a brand.

4. An obstacle. This is the villain of the story. It's usually a person, but it doesn't have to be. It could be a company that's your main competitor, the disease you're designing medicine to combat, or the faulty copy machine you finally got your revenge on.

5. A goal. The main character in the story must have an

“hero you care about” becomes “a relatable hero” or “a relatable subject or protagonist.” But the person the story is about needs to be someone that your audience can relate to. So if you’re telling a story about Superman, that might be entertaining but it’s not going to help you in the office, because the people you’re telling the story to can’t bend steel bars with their hands, jump over a tall building with a single bound, or fly. The hero needs to be relatable to the audience.

The “villain you’re afraid of” translates into “a relevant challenge.” In other words, the challenge in the story needs to be of the kind that your audience would run into at some point in their lives or career. Otherwise you’re wasting their time. You’re maybe telling an entertaining story, but it’s not a story that will help them get out of the same predicament because they’re not going to run into that predicament.

And then “the epic struggle” turns into “an honest struggle.” In other words, in the story you tell, it can’t be too easy for the hero to get out of their pickle. As an example, if I were to tell you that Bob was putting up some cabinets in his kitchen and needed to find a three-fourth-inch socket wrench or he was never going to be able to finish the project and was going to be late for work, and he reached into his tool belt and found a three-fourth socket wrench and finished the project—the end—how do you like my story? It’s an awful story. And it’s awful because it has a relatable hero and a relevant challenge, but the struggle is missing. It was too easy. All he had to do was reach into his

tool belt and find it, and that was it. One of the things that stories in the workplace often miss is an honest struggle. Show us the struggle. You need to see it.

The only thing that I’d add to this list of three things, the big picture, is that for a business story, whether for leadership or sales or marketing, there needs to be a worthy lesson or an action that comes out of it. You just can’t tell an entertaining story, with a hero and a villain and a struggle. It needs to lead to the audience learning a lesson or changing their behavior or taking some action that is worthwhile.

What I teach in my classes and the books is how to do that. That’s when we get into details such as what the structure of a story is, how to use emotional elements right, and the element of surprise. There are a number of things you need to do in order to have a relatable hero, a relevant challenge, an honest struggle, and a worthy lesson.

You’ve talked about why storytelling works better than a typical sales pitch. When should leaders be telling stories?

PS: For leaders, it seems [to be] when they’re trying to set a vision for the future, trying to get people to collaborate better together or get people to be more creative or innovative, or to set the culture and the values of the organization. In general, I would describe it as when leadership is called for rather than management. Storytelling is a leadership tool, not a management tool. I think there is a difference. When

understood goal, particularly one that’s worthy or noble in the eyes of the audience. Don’t confuse your goal in telling a sales story with the goal of the main character in the story. Your goal in telling the story may be to close the sale. But the goal of the pigs in the Pig Island story, for example, was to find food to survive. It’s hard to get much more worthy than that.

6. Events. If there was a single most important identifier that a story is happening, this would be it. For a story to be a story, something has to happen. Statements about your product’s amazing capabilities or your service commitment, or testimonials about how awesome your company is, are generally not stories because they don’t relay events. Nothing happens in them. They’re just someone’s opinion about something. If nothing happens, it’s not a story. Those kinds of narratives can be very compelling and effective and are an essential part of any salesperson’s tool kit. They just aren’t stories.

SALES STORY TEST

Let’s give these criteria a test drive and see how they work. Similar to Shawn Callahan’s story test, below are four narratives that may or may not be rightly called a story, but specifically in a sales context. Your job is to decide which are and which are not stories, and why. We’ll score your answers after the narratives.

Narrative No. 1. Are your teeth stained and yellowed? Are you embarrassed to smile at parties or in pictures or videos, especially next to friends with movie-star smiles? Have you tried teeth-whitening systems but given up after a few days because they made your teeth too sensitive? If so, Ultra-White is right for you. It’s the revolutionary teeth-whitening system designed by Hollywood dentists to give you star-quality whiteness without all the pain and discomfort. Ultra-White involves a two-step process that alternates applications between a high-impact whitening paste and a desensitization gel. The result is sparkling white teeth without any discomfort that would keep you from showing off your new Hollywood smile.

Narrative No. 2. A couple of years ago, David Neild, the network service leader at the University of Leeds in the UK, realized he had a problem. He was getting cease and desist orders and copyright violations from all over the world as a result of students using file-sharing services such as BitTorrent. In addition, many of the students were showing up in his office with computers infected by viruses. It took his staff up to an hour to clean up each one. Dave agreed to do a test with Hewlett-Packard’s TippingPoint network security device to see if that could help. When the test was over, he told us, “As soon as we installed TippingPoint, we instantly stopped receiving copyright notices. That protected our students

you have to manage processes and decisions and machines, management tools are called for. But when you're trying to lead people, that's when storytelling is called for. When there are people involved, storytelling is almost always going to be a great thing to do.

Is there a real-world example you can point to where the attempt at storytelling has been so disastrous that it actually affected the health of a company?

PS: Well, nothing comes to mind, but something like that on a small scale happens almost every day, when leaders trying to convince their employees of something will tell an awful story or fail to tell a story at all. In fact, that's probably one of the biggest mistakes, in that people think they're telling a story when they're actually not. The word "story" has become misappropriated and used for things it was never intended to be used for. Imagine that you do work in the New York City office at AMACOM, and it's Monday morning and there's a sales meeting. The leader calls the meeting to order, saying, "All right, people, we have a big sales call next week on a new client. What's our story?"

Do you think for a moment she actually means, "What's the story we're going to tell?" Or do they mean, "What is the logical series of bullet points and facts and data and arguments that we can put together, probably in a PowerPoint® presentation, that will result in our client buying what we've got to sell?" What they probably mean is the second thing. And this basically means, "What's

our sales pitch?" or "What's our presentation slides?" or "What's our talking points?" And that's just not a story. It doesn't mean those things aren't useful. But when you're in a leadership or selling situation and a story is called for, you at least need to know what a story is. I think that's the biggest mistake—most people don't even know what a story is. They think a story is any set of words that come out of your mouth that are effective. "That marketing guy, he tells a great story!" No, he just gives a great sales pitch or maybe he makes a great presentation. You can have a successful presentation without telling a story. But it would be a better one with a story!

That brings up a point about content marketing and storytelling. How can storytelling play a role in content marketing?

PS: I actually spoke at a content marketing seminar in Germany not too long ago and they asked me the same question. In marketing and sales and content marketing, you can have story-based advertising and content marketing, and non-story-based advertising and content marketing. For example, non-story-based content marketing came about first, and that would be something like, Jell-O brand gelatin came out with a recipe book—and no surprise, every recipe in the book uses Jell-O. They give you the book or sell it for cheap. You make the recipes and wind up buying a lot of Jell-O gelatin. That's non-story-based content marketing. There's no story in the book;

getting threatened by lawyers, and it protected the reputation of the university." The university also got about 30% of its lost bandwidth back from the reduction in file sharing.

Narrative No. 3. You should be using your shoppers' planned purchases of toothpaste to sell more toothbrushes. Currently, shoppers buy toothbrushes only about every six months, despite the fact that dentists suggest replacing a toothbrush every three months. But your shoppers are already in your oral care aisle every two months to buy toothpaste. If you co-merchandised toothbrushes with toothpastes, you could close more of your shoppers with toothbrushes. And toothbrushes help sweeten the profits for you as a retailer. The average toothpaste-category profit margin is only X percent, but the profit margin on toothbrushes is usually about double that. And your own sales data show a dramatic increase in toothbrush sales when merchandised with toothpaste. Our February co-merchandising event delivered a 22% increase in sales of toothbrushes over three weeks. That was \$YY million in incremental sales. This was by far the best toothbrush sales month of the year. Even bigger than Christmas!

Narrative No. 4. I had just spent way too much money on my new road bike, which was white with bright orange highlights all over it. I unloaded it off my truck and was standing at the elevator doors of my loft. As the doors opened, I saw a girl from

my building already standing inside. I'd been wanting to meet her for some time. She gave a friendly smile as I entered. I see this girl all the time and she runs and bikes constantly, so I knew she was going to comment on the new bike. I was just waiting for her to speak up. She kept looking in my direction, clearly about to say something. When she finally opened her mouth, she said, "Is that a wood watch?" I had totally forgotten I was wearing my Sully Green Sandalwood Watch from Jord that day. "It's really cool," she said. At that moment the elevator stopped on her floor and she got out. Didn't even notice the bike. Might as well have been invisible. That watch gets so many comments, it's crazy. Thanks, Jord!

OK, let's see how you did.

First off, admittedly none of these are earth-shatteringly great stories. But some of them are stories, and some of them are not.

Narrative No. 1 (Ultra-White) - Not a story. Let's walk through all six criteria. There is no time and place mentioned. There's also not a clear main character, although "you" is mentioned several times. There does appear to be a main obstacle (yellow teeth and the discomfort of most teeth-whitening systems). And there is clearly a goal (whiter teeth). Finally and most tellingly, there aren't any events that occur in the narrative. Nothing happens. Net, this narrative contains only two or three of the six criteria. It might make for a good advertisement. But it's not a story.

it's just a bunch of recipes. It's not an advertisement.

Another form of content marketing would be where makers of action figure dolls get together with Marvel Comics and come out with a new series of comic books that, surprise, have the new action figure dolls in them. So all the kids read the comic books and want to buy the new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle, or whatever. Now that's content marketing. It's not an advertisement. The kids buy and read and enjoy the comic book for the comic book. But it convinces them to want to buy the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle. What's in a comic book? Stories. That's all it is. That's story-based content marketing. *Days of Our Lives* is also story-based content marketing; Procter & Gamble invented it because it's a story that they could put product-based advertising into.

Do you think people are mixing up non-story-based content marketing with story-based content marketing?

PS: Yes, and content marketing is still new enough that people are still trying to figure out what it is. I've heard people say—wrongly, I think—that content marketing is marketing that tells a story. I think that's just silly. Of course that's wrong. I just gave you an example of content marketing that has nothing to do with a story. I think that's part of this misuse of the word "story."

In fact, journalists do it too. When journalists write an article, usually it's not the kind of story that I would call a

You can have a successful presentation without telling a story. But it would be a better one with a story!

"story." The newspaper article has to start with the lede, like "Twenty-five people died in Paris yesterday during a terrorist bombing attack," and then the rest of the article gives you all the details. But if I were to tell you a story, I wouldn't say 25 people died in a bombing. I would say, "Bob and Sally went to the theater in Paris that night. They were having a lovely evening, and all of a sudden there was an explosion." You learn about the bad thing that happened at the end of the story or the middle of the story.

Can you imagine how bad *Star Wars* would have been if you had found out in the first five minutes that Darth Vader was Luke Skywalker's father? Or that Princess Leia was his sister? You don't give away the ending of the story at the beginning. But in a newspaper article, you do give away the ending of the story at the beginning. But that's how you do it, and you shouldn't call a newspaper article a newspaper story. [AQ](#)

Narrative No. 2 (TippingPoint) - Story. There is a time (two years ago), a place (University of Leeds), a main character (Dave Neild), an obstacle (cease and desist orders), a goal (of stopping the orders), and events (students sharing files and the university running the TippingPoint test). This has all the indicators of a story.

Narrative No. 3 (oral care) - Not a story. This one is still tricky. It's exactly the narrative professional salespeople use all the time, and they might easily refer to it as a story. But let's look at the criteria. There are time references to February and Christmas, but most of the text doesn't involve those times. There is no place mentioned. It's confusing who the main character is. Sometimes it appears to be "you," and sometimes it appears to be the shopper. It goes back and forth. The obstacle appears to be the current merchandising practices, and the goal is clearly to sell more toothbrushes. But the events are a hodgepodge of things the shopper does, things the buyer did, and things the buyer and seller did together. This one meets two of the six criteria well, and it's muddled at best on the other four. This narrative is best described as a persuasive sales pitch, and it's a pretty good one at that. But it's not really a story.

Narrative No. 4 (wood watches) - Story. This is perhaps the easiest narrative to identify as a story. It's a narrative about something that happened to somebody. Even a 10-year-old would recognize this as a story. It has a time (last week), a place

(the elevator in the loft), a main character (the unnamed author), an obstacle (difficulty meeting the woman in the elevator), a goal (to finally meet the woman in the elevator), and events (all the activity and conversation on the elevator).

So, now we know what a story is and how to recognize it. That was the hard part. Now for the easy part. What's a sales story?

A sales story is any story that's used in the process of earning a sale and maintaining a customer. That's it. Stories can be used in any phase of the sales process, from stories you tell yourself prior to the sales call, to building rapport with the buyer, to the sales pitch itself, to negotiating price, to closing the sale, and even after the sale to manage the customer relationship. All of these are sales stories.

Paul Smith quit his job as head of consumer research for the Procter & Gamble Company to dedicate his full-time efforts to sharing the lessons he learned in his 20-year corporate career and coaching leaders in the art and science of business storytelling. When not speaking or writing, he helps companies and their leaders craft their corporate stories, or teaches workshops and seminars on the art and science of storytelling and leadership.

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Why HR's Digital Divide IS BAD FOR BUSINESS

BY MATT POEPEL, PhD

The term “digital divide” has historically referred to inequalities between the groups that have access to communication and information technologies and those that do not.

This dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots can result in the advantaged group having greater capabilities, opportunities, and achievements than the disadvantaged group. Today, a similar digital divide exists within two groups that are essential for long-term business performance: job seekers and the human resources professionals who are charged with attracting and securing them.

Recruiters (or in their vernacular, talent acquisition specialists) are forced to make snap judgments when evaluating candidates in the earliest stages of the selection process. A portion of this fit determination—consciously or subconsciously—often includes evaluating a candidate’s technological proficiency. The first and most obvious exhibit is the candidate’s résumé. Having swiped left on hundreds of résumés, a savvy recruiter will take notice of basic word-processing format issues, outdated fonts and styles, and other telltale signals. If the candidate has a personal web page, its construction is also subject for technical skill evaluation. This is particularly true for highly technical jobs such as information technology or software engineering roles.

A candidate’s social media profile offers additional clues about his or her relative comfort with the modern technologies that have become a staple of life in an increasingly digital workplace. Even the innocuous email exchange with a job seeker provides indicators of how comfortable a candidate may be with essential tech. In some job settings, recruiters may use web-based video interview technologies or ask for digital work samples to make a more definitive determination of technical ability.

The evolution of technical skills is understandable, but considering how the current “war for talent” is challenging

organizations, managers cannot ignore the fact that the technological scrutiny cuts both ways.

DIGITAL PAINTS A PICTURE

After they’ve had a chance to peruse your company’s website, a significant percentage of the initial impressions job seekers form of your organization will come from their interactions with your HR personnel and processes. The most attractive job seekers will rely on technology tools such as Glassdoor and LinkedIn to gather as much up-front intelligence as they can about your company. Yes, they do this research in order to shine during the interview process, but they’re also informing their decision-making process around where to take their talents.

Top candidates will make judgments based on the way job requirements are captured and communicated. The same is true for the application process. For top candidates, there’s a noticeable difference between an easy-to-complete online job application, a crude Microsoft Word document to be completed, and (gasp) a paper-based application.

Even the scheduling process for phone screens and the first onsite interview is subject to job seekers’ scrutiny. Lackluster HR email messages, signatures, and etiquette reflect poorly on an otherwise tech-savvy company. Incomplete social profiles of key team members also indicate that tech tools are merely an afterthought at your organization.

THE TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

As you take a bird’s-eye view of the landscape, the Technology Competence Framework (see box below) can help illustrate HR’s digital divide and the opportunities and challenges that accompany each situation.

Technology Competence Framework

	HR = “Have-Not”	HR = “Have”
Candidate = “Have”	Long Shot	Power Couple
Candidate = “Have-Not”	Double Trouble	Buyer Beware

“Rapid changes in the business landscape and their impact on day-to-day job performance in a variety of jobs demand heightened levels of technological proficiency.”

Power couple. In this category, both the HR organization and the candidate are sufficiently tech-savvy. Impressions both ways are positive and uninhibited. HR professionals are projecting an image of a competent and contemporary digital presence and workflow. The candidate is providing confidence that he or she has mastered must-have technical skills and will keep those skills up-to-date. All things being equal, HR's ability to attract and secure the candidate will be relatively easy and efficient.

Long shot. What happens when a top candidate surfaces only to discover that your HR team is still stuck in the Stone Age? An uphill battle. The interview team will have to work hard to overcome any doubts a candidate might have as to whether he or she wants to come aboard. Top candidates understand that they are making a significant decision as to where they are going to invest their time and energy. Do they really want to take a chance on a company that is lacking in tech fundamentals? What other gaps may be lurking?

Double trouble. In this quadrant, neither the HR department nor the candidate is particularly strong in terms of technology. Both may be somewhat intimidated or lacking in knowledge about how to get it right. They either don't value technology, haven't made the investment to master the tools, or both. This situation may not be altogether problematic if tech skills and tools aren't a big part of the job, but it is becoming increasingly rare in today's hyperconnected world of work.

Buyer beware. When an organization and its HR representatives are comfortable with technology but the candidate is not, the situation can be cause for pause. Will the candidate be able to quickly learn the technical skills needed to survive and thrive in the role if he or she hasn't done so to date? Is the technical-skills gap a reflection of the candidate's lack of motivation or opportunity? In a tight recruitment market, this solution can actually represent a profitable source of candidates—those who have not yet mastered technology skills but are willing and able to do so. This talent pool can be very cost-effective, assuming that the hiring organization has the infrastructure to support employees who are on a development track.

If you're a hiring manager or executive, HR's digital divide is very much your problem. Your business dreams, strategic intent, operating efficiencies, and bottom line are all dependent on your organization's ability to attract and secure the talent you need to succeed. To evaluate where you

stand, take a look at your end-to-end hiring process with an impartial eye. Walk through the same sequential steps that your most desirable candidates will take: Visit your careers page, check out your company's LinkedIn and Glassdoor profiles, review the job description, and ask HR for a sample prescreening application.

If you're underwhelmed by what you see, impress upon your HR partners just how important it is to put your best tech foot forward in this highly competitive market for talent. Work together to identify three easy improvements that can be implemented in the next 90 days. Then choose and fix three more. There's too much at stake to take chances in this critical area.

If you're an HR professional, you may not have taken this type of tech-first perspective when looking in the proverbial mirror. This is the perfect chance to gauge your baseline. It's important to take this seriously. Be sure to look at competitors and comparative employers to understand what expectations are being set in the market and how candidates will be judging the selection experience and tech-savviness of your organization. Don't be afraid to ask your business partners for help and resources to make improvements. This will be a lot less expensive than missing out on a superstar candidate. When appropriate, don't be too hasty to dismiss a promising candidate with a less-than-stellar technical presentation. Technology skills can be learned by those candidates who are sufficiently motivated and capable of doing so.

HR's digital divide is real, and the difference between the haves and have-nots is steadily growing. Rapid changes in the business landscape and their impact on day-to-day job performance in a variety of jobs demand heightened levels of technological proficiency. The digital divide that separates candidates and HR functions poses a threat to the long-term health of most any business. Considering that talent is the only sustainable competitive advantage, it's worthwhile for business and HR to work together, understand improvement opportunities, and better position themselves to attract and secure the talent needed to properly execute the business strategy. [AQ](#)

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GOING FOR GOLD

in global business
expansion

BY NICK STANTON



The Olympic Games remind us that Brazil and other countries are particularly hard to do business in. Understanding the challenges can help you create a winning path.

On August 5, the 2016 Summer Olympics began in Rio de Janeiro. But preparation for the Games started long before then. As soon as the International Olympic Committee named Rio the host city, the process of getting everything ready for millions to attend the Games began. From an increase in construction projects to an influx of businesses and workers, Rio prepared to take center stage before a global audience. However, businesses looking to expand into Rio—whether temporarily or permanently—learned that it wasn't as simple as doing so in their own countries.

The challenges encountered in Rio are echoed throughout Brazil, as the country numbers among the most difficult to do business in, according to a ranking by the World Bank Group in its *Doing Business* project. Joining Brazil on this list are Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines, and Venezuela.

What exactly makes these countries more difficult than others? We've identified 10 considerations all companies should keep in mind when facing global expansion. Many of the 10 countries rank among the bottom when it comes to efficiently addressing business needs in these areas.

But just because a country is listed as one of the toughest to conduct business in doesn't mean you should completely rule it out. Instead, you can use the considerations listed in this article to gain a better understanding of what you're facing and how to steer the course for your company.

CHALLENGE, OR OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED?

Opening a business is a challenge. Period. Each country has its own way of doing things, from paying taxes to enforcing contracts. That's why we've evaluated the challenges that may be the toughest to handle and spotlighted how to maneuver through them.

Should you set up a local entity?

Setting up a local entity (or as locals see it, setting up your business in-country) may be the most important piece to a global expansion plan. However, 6 of the 10 countries struggle with making this process accessible to international companies. And without that local office, your business presence doesn't exist.

In Argentina, there are 14 procedures involved in starting a business. These include obtaining certificates, registering with local authorities, and estimating in-country bank accounts. Similarly, in Indonesia, executing the procedures

takes 13 days. When evaluating both countries, be aware of the timetables for the processes needed to start a business. These processes are usually able to be completed within the time period once you know what is involved.

How do you enforce contracts?

Possibly the largest issue with contracts is enforcement.

This is a major factor to watch out for in global expansion—primarily because contracts can take years to

uphold. There are certain countries that have such outlandish enforcement times that you could be out of business before your case has been settled.

Contract enforcement is difficult to address due to the process involved in resolving a commercial dispute through a local first-instance court. In fact, in India this process can take almost four years. Coming in at 1,402 days, India is behind other countries in how long this process can take. As a point of comparison, it takes 447 days to enforce a contract in Nigeria and 370 days in the United States.

What are the challenges with construction permits?

If you are looking to create a physical presence, the time needed to navigate through the permitting process can vary drastically by country. Take Brazil and the Rio Olympics, for example. Obtaining a construction permit may have taken building planners more than a year, which is normal for Brazil's approval and permit processes. The United States averages 89 days, while the United Kingdom is 105 days.

How do you obtain credit?

Obtaining credit for your business is different from getting personal credit, and this is an especially challenging process when entering a new country.

The trick to obtaining credit quickly is being prepared. Filing paperwork, getting credit bureau coverage, and being a strong candidate play heavily into how long this step will take. Fortunately, none of the 10 countries mentioned have extreme issues with the credit process.

What are the barriers to cross-border trading?

As one consideration that affects as many as 6 of the 10



countries, cross-border trading should be viewed with extra precaution.

Because cross-border trading encompasses both importing and exporting, one side may take more time than the other. Therefore, you need to plan for the longer timeframe. Such is the case in Nigeria, where reviewing border compliance to import takes 298 hours (12.4 days), while the same process to export takes 159 hours (6.6 days). In Cameroon, by contrast, importing and exporting still take a while, at 271 hours (11.3 days) and 202 days (8.4 days), respectively.

As you evaluate potential countries in which to establish an entity, cross-border trading may not be an immediate need. But this consideration can have a large impact if you plan to trade across borders at a later date.

How long will it take to register property?

Before cement is poured or the first nail is driven, you must register your property. And depending on the country, this can either be a quick process or a very time-intensive one.

Without registering the property, you won't be able to operate your business. And without registered property, your plans to erect a new building will fall flat.

In Algeria, for example, it takes 55 days to register property, compared with 12 days in the United States. On top of that, Algeria charges 7.1% of the property value during the registration process, whereas the United States charges 3.4%. These differences make a huge impact, as seen in the time and cost needed to complete registration.

Can electricity be obtained easily?

While having quick, reliable access to electricity is common in First World countries, this commodity is harder to obtain in some parts of the world. Connecting electricity can take over a year in some instances, such as the 404-day average in Bangladesh.

Also, since electricity can only be connected once a property is registered, a building is constructed, and other parts of the process to open your business have occurred, additional wait times in securing this commodity can severely delay your expansion.

What steps need to be taken to protect investors?

Both in-country and global investors want to know they're protected before they hand over cash (or write a check). Expanding your business into a new area can augment profitability, but understanding investor regulations will play heavily in your favor.

For any given country, you need to understand which indexes—such as the ease of shareholders suit index and extent of shareholder rights index—do and do not apply. This understanding can set you up for success through the filing process.

What are the potential pitfalls in navigating tax regulations?

Money talks—especially in the case of taxes and tax regulation because taxes can quickly add up. In any country,

chances are you're not only paying the taxes themselves, but also a tax preparer for the time and skill to complete them.

Take the Philippines, for example. With its total of 36 tax payments a year at a rate of 42.9% of revenues, staying in business there isn't cheap. And if you elect to outsource filing and submission, allot for 193 hours (eight days) for you or someone else to complete the process. Annually, this really begins to add up.

Additionally, the Philippines and other countries have rigid tax structures—such as submission deadlines and filing contracts—that must be followed to establish a business and keep it running.

Should the insolvency rate be considered?

A country's insolvency rate, or debt, can be a huge factor in the success or failure of a company's expansion.

Venezuela, for example, struggles with its recovery rate, taking four years to recover funds from a business that stops paying its in-country debt. The business repayment averages only 6.4 cents to the dollar, leading to even further debt.

After reading this checklist, you may not feel comfortable leading your company's expansion into other countries. But you don't have to go it alone. With the right global expansion partner to advise you on your expansion efforts, you can circumvent many of these requirements while still achieving your global strategy.

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Once you've decided that a global expansion partner can help you establish your company in another country, ask yourself these questions to ensure you choose the right partner:

Do they have knowledge of the local market?

If the answer is no, find a partner that does. Your partner should have complete knowledge and understanding of employment laws, legislations, and local cultures in the market you want to enter. A partner also may have insights on how to improve your business model.

Do they have experts on the ground?

It's important that your partner see everything in person and experience employment red flags that may go unnoticed in a virtual environment.

Can they grow with my organization?

Evaluating a partner's ability to handle your needs now and in the future can save you time and money during your next venture.

The largest takeaway is that growing into new marketplaces is tough. But if you know what to look for and consider in your global expansion, you can determine whether to spend your time worrying about how to enter the country or finding a partner to help you make a more seamless transition. [AQ](#)

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ONBOARDING MILLENNIALS

— for — Long-Term Success

BY MARIA BLACK



You've hired the right person for a crucial position after a long search. Go ahead and breathe a sigh of relief. You deserve it!

But there's still crucial work to be done. An accepted job offer is only the first step in setting a new associate on a path for success.

Onboarding is critical to making a new hire a vital part of any organization, but it's something that companies continue to struggle with. Why? And what can you do to ensure that all the time and money you invested in finding the perfect candidate pays off in the long run?

First, some companies simply lack the HR mechanisms or expertise to enable strong onboarding. According to an ADP study, more than 50% of companies either have no formal onboarding program or use a homegrown solution that was not built for the competitive digital age. The study also found that even for those companies that do have measures in place, only 19% of HR professionals feel their company does onboarding "extremely" well.

Second, the shifting needs of today's workforce make it crucial to engage and retain top talent right off the bat, placing even more importance on a new employee's first week. These first few days form a lasting impression that shapes how an employee engages with the organization moving forward. Unfortunately, many companies are not doing a strong job at creating early, effective engagement. Gallup research in January 2016 found that only 32% of U.S. workers were considered engaged in their jobs in 2015.

Third, the rising influence of Millennials has changed the expectations of the workplace. They surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest share of the workforce in 2015, according to Pew Research, and they are reshaping the way we work, bringing with them new considerations about such things as corporate social responsibility, work-from-home policies, and remodeled office spaces. As a result, HR leaders are expected to be more hands-on and creative in their approach to managing not only in their company's structure and hiring practices, but also its culture and training. As Millennials continue to dominate the workforce and Baby Boomers head into retirement, the needs of today's employees are rapidly changing—and many employers find themselves challenged to engage and retain top talent.

This task is especially difficult for small businesses. ADP's research has found that the majority of small businesses lack confidence in the hiring process and outcomes, and their biggest concern is to ensure they hire employees who will stay and grow with the company. Other ADP data shows that 80% of small businesses do not have any employees with formal HR or hiring expertise. Small business owners

stated that they struggle with basic hiring tasks such as finding qualified and reliable candidates.

Long gone are the days when setting up a comfortable workstation, assigning a mentor who can help with questions, and introducing the new person around could be called a successful orientation. In fact, today that would be seen, quite frankly, as the bare minimum an employer should offer when onboarding a new employee. Providing a bagel breakfast on the first day and a binder of phone numbers is no longer effective.

Today, new employees crave a chance to be engaged and achieve results. They want to feel connected to the fabric and culture of an organization, and they want to feel that they have been set up to succeed. As a result, companies are investing an average of 32 hours per new hire as well as nearly \$1,000 on processes such as screening and interviewing candidates, onboarding hires, and navigating paperwork, according to unpublished ADP research. While some companies have improved their capabilities, others still lag behind. Still, most business owners agree that their biggest concern is how long new hires will stick around in their positions. After spending considerable time finding the right person for the job, nobody wants to replicate the process six months later.

When done well, onboarding will help new hires to more quickly become productive, engaged members of an organization. Also, it will enable them to shift their focus to filling other open positions and improving other necessities, such as fostering a positive, engaging company culture.

Although all organizations are different and have their own specific needs, almost all companies can improve their onboarding standards. Whether a company does not have formal processes or its current ones come up a little short, HR leaders should continually assess the measures they have in place and how they can improve them.

Given the influx of Millennial workers and tight competition for talent, onboarding is more important than ever. As the labor market recovers, in-demand employees have many options. Getting them comfortable and connected with the right people in the first week can set the tone for a long, successful tenure. If you've invested time, resources, and effort in hiring the perfect person, you want to protect that investment, right? A successful onboarding process can help do so, allowing the new employee to become an active, effective contributor to your company's long-term success.

Here are a few onboarding best practices that you can easily adopt to bolster your capabilities and enhance engagement for new hires.

Start before the new employee arrives. Employers should evaluate their current onboarding program by speaking with recent recruits to determine how to improve and prepare their team for the arrival of a new employee. It is often helpful to share the new hire's résumé so that other employees know his or her background and how that person will fit into the team. Employers also should set the stage in advance; it may sound basic, but simply setting up the workspace for new hires with the tools they need to work can make a world of difference (this includes removing the dust bunnies in the corner!).

Recognize that the first few days are crucial. Ensure that the new hire's immediate supervisor is on hand to greet him or her and get the person settled. Assign a helpful employee to answer any questions. Having a go-to person can make people feel more comfortable when asking simple but necessary questions (such as "Who do I call when the copier is out of toner?"). Employers also should create an itinerary for each new hire's first few days that includes time for benefits enrollment and other HR-related tasks, as well as time to meet with colleagues and learn more about the role. Finally, check in frequently to ensure employees are getting acclimated, review their progress, and answer any questions they may have.

Today's associates want to know the mission, vision, and values of the company they work for. Take the time to review job responsibilities, expectations, and short- and long-term goals. It may be helpful to do this in conjunction with a review of the employee's job description, and how his or her role interacts with those of peers in the organization. Also, take the time to review company policy on issues such as attendance, dress codes, break periods, and pay and benefits.

New hires also should participate in any training that may be required by law. For example, California, Connecticut, and Maine require supervisors to participate in sexual harassment training. California also requires training on abusive conduct. You should have your new hires complete any skill training that can help them perform their job.

Follow up and assess. Over the first 90 days of a new recruit's tenure, it's a good idea to follow up periodically to confirm that both sides are feeling that it's a good fit. After a few weeks, employers should be able to get a sense of how things are going. It's also a good time to get feedback from new employees on how they feel about the workload, resources available, their colleagues, and the overall employment situation. If any potentially negative issues are raised, address them immediately.

Once employees get up to speed, supervisors should provide regular performance feedback. While feedback

is vital throughout the employment relationship, it is especially important as employees continue to learn new skills. Supervisors should also take the time to discuss new employees' career interests and look for ways to help develop skills that are in line with their goals.

Show that values have meaning. Simply identifying a mission statement and posting it in the cafeteria is not enough when it comes to corporate values. It's really about clearly communicating those values to employees through your actions, policies, and practices. One way to do this is to create a training session where you can outline your values, why they were selected, and why they are important to your company. Provide examples of how they regularly shape everyday life in the office. For instance, if your firm values supporting the local community, make sure your new hires know that the food-collection box in the cafeteria is for the local food pantry and how they can support the community in other ways.

Share goals and expectations clearly and frequently. Communication is key. It's imperative to communicate openly with all employees, especially new hires, about the company's goals and business results, what is expected of them, and how they will be evaluated. As much as possible, try to define what success looks like—after three months, after six months, after a year, and beyond.

Employees will become much more engaged with an organization when they see a clear path to success, and onboarding a new hire is a great opportunity to start that relationship on the right foot. To do this, ensure that you spend some one-on-one time with a new hire in the first few days of employment and share these thoughts on how to do well. If success in your organization comes through effective collaboration, make sure new hires know it and help them identify some potential partners from the get-go. In today's world, it's not all about individual performance—it's about team success and overall contributions to the business.

Take the time to listen. It seems simple, but there's a lot you can learn from simply listening to a new hire. You've selected this person to join your team for a reason; now that he or she is here, take time to learn what new or different opportunities this "fresh set of eyes" may see. Then, help provide what a new employee specifically needs to succeed in the new role. It's all about keeping the human connection in your organization by offering support, opportunity, and insight. If a new hire tells you that a former employer had weekly informal brainstorming sessions and it was helpful, give it a shot. You have nothing to lose, and even longtime employees may appreciate the chance to try new things to increase their own engagement and professional development. [AQ](#)

Maria Black is president of ADP TotalSource, the largest professional employer organization (PEO) in the United States with more than 400,000 worksite employees.

Preparing Graduates for the **NEW** **WORKPLACE**

BY EDWARD KAIRISS, PhD

Modern organizations exist in an increasingly complex, globally interconnected environment. They must adapt and rapidly reinvent themselves in response to new challenges.

Innovation, creative leadership, and fluencies in multiple domains are hallmarks of many successful institutions. What kind of employee do these organizations need to continue to be successful?

Employers in any professional discipline are looking for employees who approach problem solving by drawing on multiple varieties of knowledge and can apply quantitative and qualitative methods to find a solution. Being able to think critically and write effectively are essential proficiencies. Many business situations require a collection of critical thinking skills, such as being able to distinguish good data from bad, asking smart questions of clients and colleagues, and thinking about a problem from multiple perspectives. In addition to being able to work in a team of diverse individuals, people who can acquire new skills quickly and independently will bring more value to an organization.

Many business schools highlight the success their students experience in the postgraduation job market—no doubt an important factor in attracting students to this academic

discipline. However, there is also data suggesting that the lifetime earnings of many nonbusiness majors can equal or exceed that of business graduates. Indeed, there are numerous examples of highly successful CEOs and other business leaders who majored in humanities or another liberal arts discipline.

THE GAP IN CRITICAL THINKING

An analysis by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that typical undergraduate business curricula offer few opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills, demonstrate creativity, or develop broader perspectives on business in society. Similarly, a study by the Council for Aid to Education found that on tests of critical thinking and writing skills, business majors substantially underperformed students in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and engineering.

As recently noted by Matthew Sigelmann, CEO of Burning Glass Technologies, “The liberal arts live within the core

We must create the conditions for our teaching faculty to innovate, experiment, and develop new approaches to graduating the kind of students that are in demand.



framework of interdisciplinary synthesis and critical evaluation,” precisely the talents that employers are seeking. Forward-thinking business schools are integrating the best elements of liberal arts learning with students’ proficiency in business disciplines to produce graduates that will have the skills needed to meet the demands of modern careers. Bryant University’s dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Wendy Samter, PhD, concludes that “success at the highest levels of business can only be achieved among those who develop some usable relationship with the arts and with the sciences.”

To be competitive, universities must seek to become more innovative and to leverage the creative talents of their staff, faculty, and students to meet the challenges of the new workplace. What constitutes academic innovation? How do we facilitate and encourage it?

The answers to these questions are still evolving, yet we know we can bring innovation to our roles as higher education leaders through strategic interventions in the classroom, in the academic community, and in areas beyond

the physical campus. We must create the conditions for our teaching faculty to innovate, experiment, and develop new approaches to graduating the kind of students that are in demand.

INNOVATE TO TEACH CRITICAL THINKING

Here are some recommendations based on the approaches that are being pursued at Bryant University to help students achieve the 21st-century goals of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creative problem solving.

Create incentives for teaching innovation. Trying something new in the classroom inevitably involves risk and additional work. By creating funding sources ranging from small microgrants to larger course-redesign projects to help faculty get started, we can lower the practical barriers to innovation. Bryant University’s Center for Program Innovation awards grants each year to faculty members introducing a substantial innovation into the classroom at Bryant. Academic leadership can give credence to innovative teaching in the merit and promotions process. We should encourage faculty to reflect on their teaching and include appropriate evidence in materials submitted for annual evaluations or promotion reviews. When a teaching innovation is successful, we should ensure that teaching awards are available and become recognized as genuine reflections of teaching excellence and innovation.

Develop school- and campus-wide policies to encourage innovative practices and behaviors. These efforts can range from simple guidelines at a departmental level—such as “try one new thing in your teaching this semester”—to regular and systematic reviews of courses to ensure that they are refreshed and updated with regularity.

Invest in resources that support innovative teaching. Faculty can feel frustrated if they have an idea for a course innovation but are restricted by the physical facilities or a lack of required resources or technologies. Modern classroom design creates spaces that are flexible and can be reconfigured to facilitate group work or other active learning protocols.

At Bryant University, we have responded to faculty requests for more flexible teaching spaces by engaging them in the design of a new classroom building, the Academic Innovation Center, which will represent state-of-the-art designs for active, engaged student learning. Kip Ellis, the project’s architect, has designed these innovative spaces to “combine the wild experimental side with the rigor and discourse of traditional teaching.” Nontraditional learning spaces help prepare students for modern work environments, which bear little resemblance to traditional classrooms.

Create transdisciplinary courses and curricula. Courses that are co-taught by faculty from different disciplines help students to develop multiple perspectives and problem-solving skills. Such “fusion” courses provide conditions for students to explore the interconnectedness of disciplines and sharpen their critical thinking skills in several domains.

Combining a literature or psychology course with a finance or management course can deepen students' learning in both domains.

Encourage scholarship of teaching and learning. University professors are expected to teach, engage in scholarship and research, and contribute service to the university. For many faculty, their teaching can become the focus of their academic inquiry, in the form of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). We should encourage such efforts and provide the needed resources and consultation to help faculty become productive scholars in this area. We also should recognize publications in SoTL as equal in weight and validity to other forms of academic disciplinary scholarship. At Bryant, we are facilitating our SoTL scholars with workshops and personalized support designed to encourage the SoTL inquiry process in their respective classrooms.

Create communities of practice and communities of inquiry around innovative teaching. Encourage faculty leaders to talk about their courses, their innovations, and their successes and failures. Help faculty organize discussion and exploration groups based around common interests in pedagogy and other topics related to their courses and curriculum. Bryant's "Talking About Teaching" conversations are intended to spark important dialogue among faculty who can learn from and inspire each other's pedagogies.

Make teaching more public. Develop and support opportunities for faculty to visit each other's classrooms, not as evaluators but as colleagues seeking to learn from each other. Encourage peer visits to help faculty support each other's innovative practices. This process can be formalized to make it an integral part of the teaching culture at a university. For example, at Bryant we schedule a two-week "Faculty Without Borders" program each semester to facilitate faculty visits to each other's classes, followed by informal group conversations to exchange ideas and reflections.

Create opportunities for innovative teaching beyond the campus classroom. The classroom should not be viewed as the only (or even major) space where learning takes place. Help faculty develop innovative opportunities in the community and in businesses, governments, and research labs, where students can have experiential learning opportunities. Leadership must sustain these relationships through funded internship programs and study abroad opportunities, and work with administration to ensure that student and teaching credit is available.

Create secondary curricula that develop critical skills. Employers increasingly look for skills in communication, teamwork, and critical thinking independent of discipline-specific skills and knowledge. The regular classroom offers many opportunities for faculty to help students grow in these areas, but innovative programs can ensure that all students can engage in activities that will build their proficiency in these areas. For example, Bryant University has developed the Bryant IDEA (Innovation and Design Experience for All),

an immersive 72-hour program that introduces students to design thinking and teamwork to generate creative solutions to real-world situations in areas such as the arts, social services, and the business sector.

Start early. Bryant University recognizes the need to provide its freshmen with a learning experience that balances the curricula of business and liberal arts. First-year students at Bryant enroll in a required one-year program known as the Gateway. One semester is devoted to "Foundations of Business," whereby a baseline of business knowledge is designed to provide students a common schema. The second semester provides them with various course offerings under the heading of "Foundations of Character and Leadership."

In the second semester, students explore various topics in order to show proficiency in five learning outcomes: effective communication, critical thinking, diversity awareness, ethical reasoning, and informational literacy. Professors design the Gateway courses to ensure that learning outcomes are met through myriad strategies and topics, all with the focus of ensuring that first-year students are armed with the same foundational knowledge, shared by the community of learners who expose them to a mindset that blends business and liberal arts.

Promote international experience. Today's global economy demands that students graduate with strong international perspectives, derived from studies of foreign languages, cultural awareness, and international politics. In addition to regular curricular components, specialized programs can give students a head start and competitive advantage in the global job market. Such skills should be introduced as early as possible. Bryant University's first-year Gateway curriculum includes studies such as the "Global Foundations of Character and Leadership" and the "Global Foundations of Organizations and Business," themes that are carried through the entire four-year undergraduate curriculum. Bryant's International Business program prepares students to become creative and responsible leaders in the global business arena by cultivating global perspectives and an awareness of the complex international issues related to culture and other factors.

By transforming our approach to providing a reflective and rigorous education through innovative instruction and a dynamic learning environment, we believe our students will be better prepared for the challenges they face in the workplace. Graduates of forward-looking institutions will generate long-term benefits for their own careers and industries, and they will lead our society to greater productivity and prosperity. [AQ](#)

Edward Kairiss, PhD, is the director of faculty development and innovation at Bryant University. With more than 25 years of experience in innovative teaching and learning, Kairiss joined Bryant this spring. He came from Yale University, where he served most recently as director, strategic projects, for Yale's Center for Teaching and Learning. To learn more about the innovations taking place at Bryant University, visit <http://innovation.bryant.edu>

Incentivized Wellness Programs Are Here to Stay

The EEOC may be skeptical, but employers like the results.

BY MEGAN NORRIS



In recent years, many companies have implemented wellness programs—voluntary programs designed to improve the health of employees. While these programs vary, common offerings include smoking cessation and weight-loss classes, exercise and physical fitness activities such as aerobics classes or group walks, employee assistance programs, vaccinations, and medical screening for indicators of health problems.

Some employers set up wellness programs primarily for the benefit of employees, believing they want opportunities to get healthier at the worksite and that nonwork group

activities help encourage collegueship and thus boost morale. However, many employers are also motivated by studies showing that wellness programs can reduce healthcare costs by helping to eliminate risk factors such as smoking and obesity and providing employees with early warnings of potential health issues. Employers often offer incentives to encourage employees to participate in wellness programs. The incentives range from free company T-shirts to reductions in health insurance costs. While these incentives are usually tied to some level of participation, in some cases they are based on results.

Wellness programs: voluntary or not?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was enacted in 1990 and went into effect for most employees in 1992, precludes employers from making medical inquiries of applicants or employees except in limited circumstances. For example, an employer cannot require a pre-hire medical examination until after an offer of employment has been made, and then can reject the applicant on medical grounds only if he or she cannot perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodation. Once an employee has begun working, the

employer can only ask questions that are job-related and consistent with business necessity. Thus, an employer could ask a ceiling painter if she has any medical limitations that limit her ability to climb ladders but could not ask an administrative assistant whether he has any restrictions that limit his ability to run 100 yards.

The ADA specifically provides that the regulated “medical inquiries” do not include “voluntary medical examinations, including voluntary medical histories, which are part of an employee health program available to employees at that work site.” Therefore, it is clear that Congress, in drafting the ADA, intended to allow employers to continue to conduct voluntary wellness programs notwithstanding the ADA’s restrictions

a penalty, such as a surcharge on healthcare costs for failure to participate in a program (which could also be viewed as a reward for the participants who are not taxed).

While most of the press coverage regarding the Affordable Care Act has focused on the health insurance requirements, the law, which went into effect in 2010, also has a number of provisions regarding innovations that may improve public health. The law allowed for financial incentives for the participation in wellness programs, required the Centers for Disease Control to provide employers with resources and training regarding the effectiveness and evaluation of wellness programs, and required the

programs through both incentives and disincentives. For smoking-cessation programs, the incentive could be as much as a 50% reduction in the total cost (employee contribution plus employer cost) of employee-only health insurance. For most other programs, the incentive is capped at 30%.

Notwithstanding the clear indication by Congress and three federal departments that wellness programs were to be encouraged, the EEOC remained uncomfortable with the idea that a program could be truly “voluntary” if there were meaningful financial incentives attached. In the summer and fall of 2014, the EEOC filed three separate federal lawsuits challenging wellness programs, each of which included medical screenings. In one case, the company contributed up to \$1,500 to a participant’s healthcare savings account, and nonparticipants were assessed a \$500 surcharge toward health insurance costs, which were otherwise fully subsidized for all employees. In another, participation in the wellness program was a requirement for inclusion in the insurance plan. In a third, participants received healthcare coverage at no expense, while nonparticipants had to pay \$400 a month (and an additional \$50 a month for nonparticipation in a fitness program). The companies argued either that the programs were voluntary or that they fell within a “safe harbor” established in the ADA for medical exams that are part of a bona fide benefit plan.

The EEOC took the position that the failure to provide such reductions to those who did not participate in the wellness program acted as a penalty.

on medical inquiries. However, this begs the question of what is “voluntary.” The longstanding position of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency charged with enforcing the ADA, has been that a program is voluntary if the employer neither requires participation nor penalizes employees who do not participate.

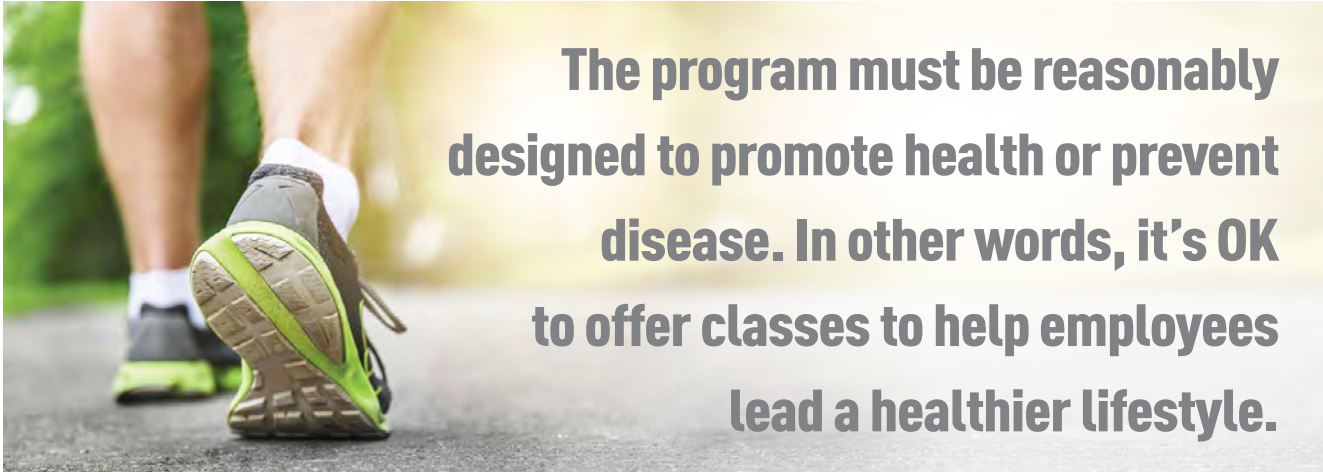
The problem is that one person’s reward is another person’s penalty. When companies were only offering a free lunch or a baseball cap, the EEOC seemed to agree that these were rewards and thus were allowed. However, when companies began to offer significant financial incentives, such as reduced insurance rates, the EEOC took the position that the failure to provide such reductions to those who did not participate in the wellness program acted as a penalty. And in some cases, employers have specifically imposed

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to commission a study regarding the effectiveness of wellness programs. HHS did so in conjunction with the Department of Labor (DOL), and a report was issued by the Rand Corporation in 2013.

This report concluded, in a nutshell, that although the evidence of an actual decrease in healthcare costs is limited, wellness programs are good things because they take “advantage of employers’ access to employees at an age when interventions can still change their long-term health trajectory” and result in “statistically significant and clinically meaningful” improvements in healthy behavior over an extended period of time. In June 2013, DOL, HHS, and the Department of Treasury issued joint regulations specifically allowing employers to reward employees for participation in wellness

The rules for wellness programs

Needless to say, having the EEOC file lawsuits alleging that wellness programs with financial incentives were unlawful at the same time that the rest of the federal administration was encouraging such wellness programs was awkward. In April 2015, after more than a year of political and administrative wrangling among the various federal agencies involved, the EEOC proposed regulations that attempt to be compatible with other federal agencies by allowing employers to provide monetary incentives for



The program must be reasonably designed to promote health or prevent disease. In other words, it's OK to offer classes to help employees lead a healthier lifestyle.

participation in wellness programs. In May 2016, the EEOC issued final new regulations for the ADA and amended regulations for the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). These regulations provide that a wellness program must meet several tests:

- The program must be reasonably designed to promote health or prevent disease. In other words, it's OK to offer classes to help employees lead a healthier lifestyle, and it's OK to provide medical screening for early warning signs of disease, such as high cholesterol or obesity. But an employer cannot simply gather medical information without telling the employee the results or providing any advice.

- Employees must be given clear notice regarding the extent of medical information that will be obtained, how it will be used, and how confidentiality will be maintained.

- Employee medical information must be maintained confidentially. Employers can only receive information in aggregate form, not in a way that discloses the identity of specific individuals except as necessary to administer a health plan. The ADA already required employers to keep all medical information in a separate file, apart from the personnel file, and to limit access. The EEOC regulations extend this requirement to information obtained through a wellness program. An employer cannot require an employee to waive this confidentiality under any circumstances. Nothing in

these provisions, however, prevents an employer from making medical inquiries under the circumstances allowed by the ADA outside of the wellness program provision, such as obtaining information in response to an employee's request for accommodation of a medical condition.

- The EEOC now agrees that financial incentives consistent with those provided in the early joint HHS/DOL/Treasury regulations are "voluntary," except that it does not allow incentives above the 30% cap for tobacco-cessation programs that include medical examinations. The incentive can be either positive or negative (such as a reward for participation or a surcharge for failure to participate).

- The program can incentivize not only participation but also results. However, if the reward is based on results (such as blood pressure being in a desired range), the program must provide an alternative way to get the reward (such as participation in classes designed to achieve lower blood pressure).

- If an employee requires an accommodation of a medical condition in order to achieve the incentive, such as a sign language interpreter for a smoking-cessation class, the employee must be accommodated absent undue hardship.

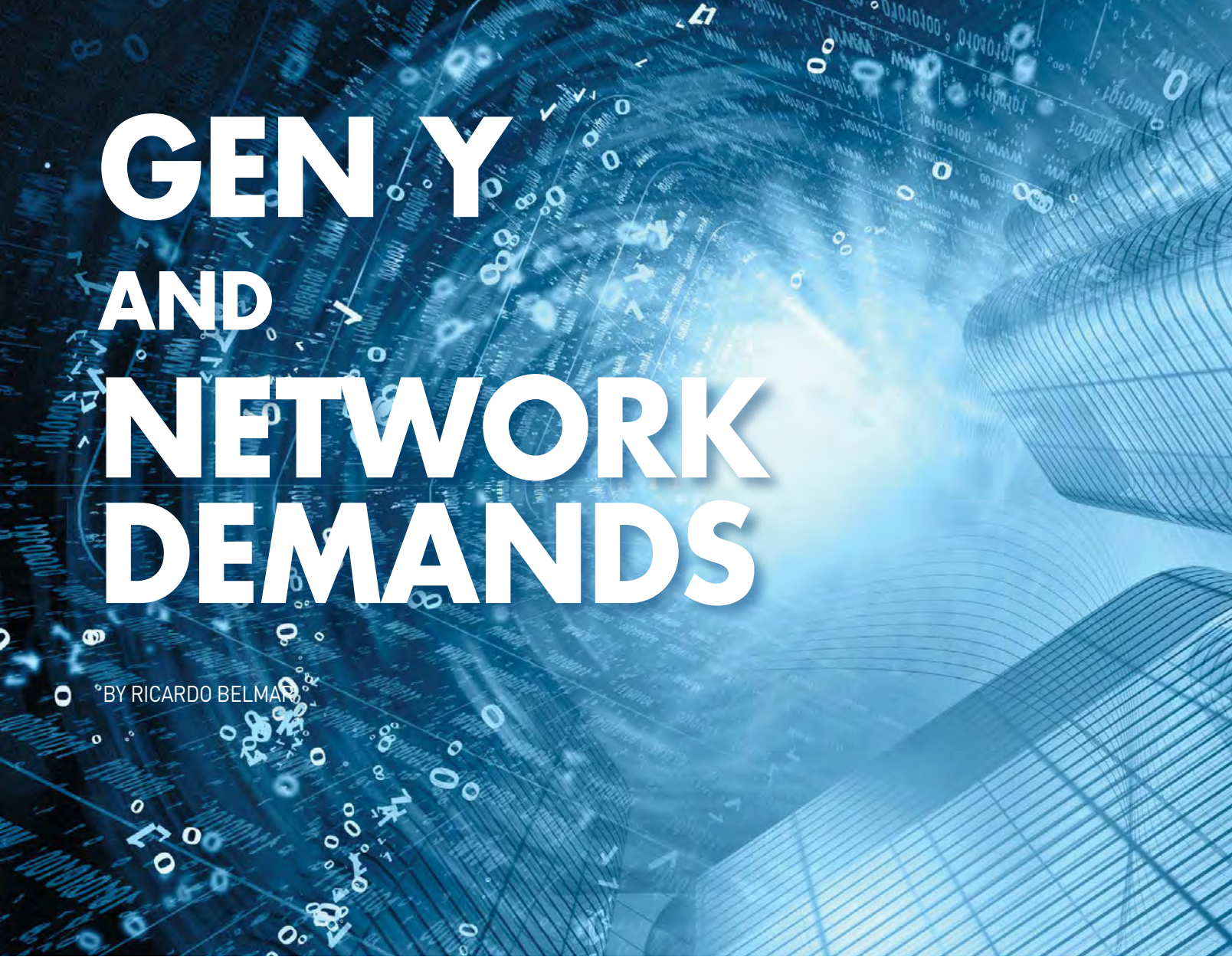
While employers now have some clear guidance regarding wellness programs, there are still some gray areas. Although one of the EEOC lawsuits was dismissed by the court, and in a second one the court denied the EEOC's request for preliminary relief, the EEOC

has not withdrawn any of the cases or indicated that it will not file more.

Furthermore, in its final regulations the EEOC specifically asserts that wellness programs do not fall within the safe harbor for benefit plans, despite that being the basis for dismissal in the case the EEOC lost (in a ruling relying on a prior appellate case). And the EEOC specifically states that an employee health program must still comply with laws other than the ADA and GINA and that it makes no representation that complying with the EEOC's own regulations will ensure such compliance.

Therefore, it remains to be seen whether the EEOC will maintain its skepticism regarding wellness programs or will enthusiastically embrace them as other federal agencies have done. Either way, the Rand report indicates that as many as 80% of all employers currently have some kind of wellness program, and that they all believe they are helpful in reducing medical costs, low productivity caused by medical problems, and absenteeism. Therefore, it looks like wellness programs are here to stay. [AQ](#)

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GEN Y AND NETWORK DEMANDS

BY RICARDO BELMAN

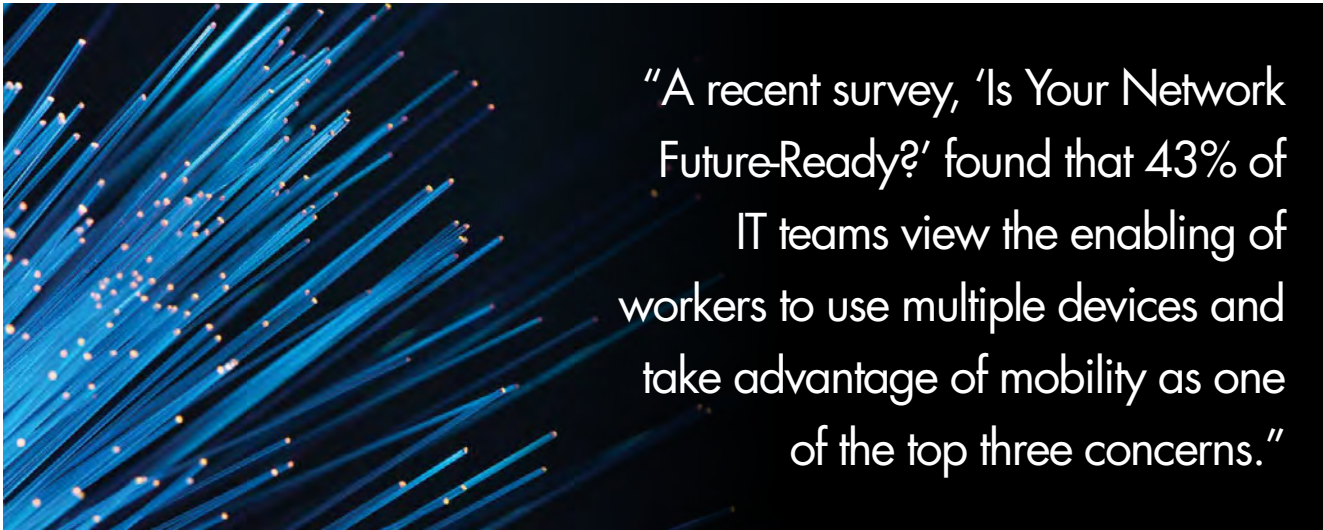
With Generation Y taking over the workforce, network demands are set to spike.

The workforce is changing in a big way. It's no secret that generational shifts in office culture and workplace attitude happen on a pretty regular basis throughout history. Technological advancement, politics, and "hot industries" have always influenced the work we do and how we do it. Even the staid 9-to-5 desk job, despite seeming like a relic from prehistory, is a relatively modern construct.

But work and life today are changing significantly faster than for other generations of the past century-plus. While the outfits, messaging, and workplace on the TV show *Mad Men* may have seemed drastic when looking at the near decade of change on display over the show's run, those differences seem marginal when comparing the workplace of today with that of 2006.

The world has gone digital, and while remnants of the 9-to-5 workday still dictate the cordial hours of doing business, technological advancements have given today's employees the ability to choose whatever hours are best for their purposes. Some jobs don't require that employees ever set foot in a main office, and employees that do so embrace an open layout and collaborative setting that may look more like a college lounge than a place of business to older generations.

This cultural shift is reflected in the new faces entering the workforce. Generation Y, a.k.a. the Millennials, the demographic cohort born between circa 1980 and 2000, has little hands-on experience working in offices filled with cubicles and towering file cabinets. They used desktop



“A recent survey, ‘Is Your Network Future-Ready?’ found that 43% of IT teams view the enabling of workers to use multiple devices and take advantage of mobility as one of the top three concerns.”

computers in school during their adolescence, but they completed their assignments during college on a mobile device or laptop computer. Because they didn't have to deal with dial-up modems and expect at least a 4G mobile network or high-speed Wi-Fi to be available everywhere, waiting when it comes to technology is something they are not accustomed to.

As with the shift to digital, speed characterizes the attitude of Gen Y. With the Brookings Institute anticipating in 2014 that 75% of the 2025 workforce will be in this age bracket, employers will need to accommodate Gen Y's expectations for agility if they want to attract top talent in the coming years.

A PERFECT STORM OF GROWING NETWORK COMPLEXITY AND APPLICATION TRAFFIC

The challenges for employers that want to attract and retain the best of Gen Y are many. Networks are denser now than ever, which has made assuring application and network performance a massive challenge for both enterprises and communications service providers.

There are also more devices now than ever before that rely on network bandwidth, and this demand makes congestion over networks during times of peak usage a major hurdle for mobile operators who are responsible for guaranteeing performance. In the context of a workplace, if a wide swath of employees rely on network bandwidth for application usage on multiple devices during peak hours, there's a very real threat that latency issues could cause service degradation, ultimately grinding productivity to a halt.

The “hypothetical” scenario of workers using applications on multiple devices is hardly far-fetched, especially when you look at the speed with which businesses have embraced workplace apps. For starters, a recent survey conducted by InfoVista and BT, “Is Your Network Future-Ready?” found that 43% of IT teams view the enabling of workers to use multiple devices and take advantage of mobility as one of the top three concerns on their business agenda. In addition,

69% of the organizations surveyed have implemented unified communications (UC) and video conferencing applications such as Microsoft Skype-for-Business into the workflow in just the past two years. At the same time, 52% have embraced cloud-based productivity apps and collaboration tools such as Google Drive, Evernote, and Slack.

While businesses seem to be adopting UC and cloud apps without hesitation, they appear to be doing very little to actually guarantee application performance. This disconnect is especially troubling when you consider that business networks aren't only supporting applications that are used for business. Gen Yers often intertwine their work and personal lives, which means their applications usage shifts from business critical to personal throughout the day.

AS THE STORM BREWS, ORGANIZATIONS ARE SLOW TO PREPARE

The InfoVista and BT report found that while 94% of the organizations surveyed agreed that the corporate network is critical to business performance, only 51% claimed to have any insight into which applications could negatively impact network performance. These include personal and social applications, such as Facebook Messenger, that use network bandwidth but contribute nothing to the business mission. In all, only about 57% of the businesses had any kind of IT governance in place for application performance, which is surprising considering the near consensus agreement among those surveyed that the performance of the corporate network is mission critical.

It's not as if those working with poorly managed networks aren't noticing or speaking up about their dissatisfaction. The same survey found that 90% of the IT departments have received complaints from people in their company related to application performance. All of this is happening in the context of a workforce in transition between older workers who may be more accustomed to downtime and are newer to the world of business apps. With three of every four

workers expected to be Gen Y in less than a decade, these performance numbers indicate that the IT management model in place at many businesses simply won't cut it, especially as networks become more complex and application usage inevitably becomes the business standard.

BUSINESSES CAN SEE WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON, BUT BUDGETS ARE ALREADY STRETCHED

An additional challenge that many individuals face is a drain not just on network bandwidth but on the IT team's time. Even though the challenges of network performance have increased markedly in the past two years—and are poised to only get bigger—IT budgets are taking a hit as businesses are forced to tighten their capital and operational expenditures.

In the current business climate in both the private and public sectors, 54% of the IT professionals surveyed by InfoVista and BT are asked to deliver more in terms of application and network performance management on budgets that are either the same or lower than those of the past.

One costly mistake that many IT teams make to meet performance demands is to simply invest in capacity upgrades—literally purchasing more network bandwidth—on a continual basis. The problem with this approach is that the networks are growing exponentially; therefore, the capacity upgrades will need to happen more frequently and on a larger scale every time. This can only be viewed as a short-term solution to a long-term challenge.

However, 64% of the IT teams who took part in the survey said that their preferred method of improving corporate networks is to implement increased network governance in the form of tools that measure and predict application performance.

ORGANIZING GOVERNANCE AND TOOLS

So what should a governance approach to delivering optimal application performance look like? And how should these tools be used?

For starters, the governance approach should provide visibility into all the applications across all devices that are taking up bandwidth over the corporate network. These include the business-critical applications that keep employees in communication with each other and the personal applications that live on both corporate and personal devices, sharing network capacity.

With this information, IT teams can build predictive models based around traffic patterns they observe, with a focus on peak traffic periods during the workday. These models empower IT to allocate bandwidth and capacity on the network toward key end points and business-critical applications primarily during peak hours at the expense of personal applications. This same view into the network will give IT the ability to adjust application flows in real

time to guarantee an optimal user experience. A proper approach to governance, including the ability to control application performance, needs to be proactive to prevent complaints from piling up after service degradations impact workflow. Control mechanisms such as traffic shaping and prioritization are required to establish the user experience Gen Y users expect across all of their connected devices.

Another integral part of the ideal network-performance governance program is the introduction of the hybrid wide area network (WAN). This involves marrying the enterprise WAN with the Internet so that at times of high network traffic, applications can be routed to the Internet rather than being saddled by network congestion.

The hybrid WAN model pays off in ways that improve both business function and the attitude of employees, since those non-business-critical personal apps won't lose functionality once they've been booted from the corporate network. During times of extraordinarily high traffic or WAN downtime, the Internet can be the primary connection for all applications—business or personal—so that service is never compromised. With the proper application control and the ability to dynamically select the optimal network link for each application, companies can maintain the user experience at the level Gen Y users demand.

One important concern that many businesses will have with the hybrid WAN model is that using the Internet during times of enterprise WAN congestion could pose an information security risk. In fact, the pervasive use of mobile devices by employees to conduct business—whether on the enterprise network or the Wi-Fi at a coffee shop—has known risks to security that businesses need to watch out for.

Any hybrid WAN deployment will need to include appropriate security tools to reliably safeguard business data. Secure web gateways will be a popular method used by enterprises to achieve the security needed, given their speed to deploy and ease of configuration.

When participants in the InfoVista and BT survey were asked what solutions they thought would help their company get the most out of the corporate network, their answers reflected the suggestions outlined above. Sixty-four percent agreed that they needed to implement better network governance and tools to measure and predict performance, while 47% recognized the deployment of hybrid WAN as a great way to ease strains on capacity. This is good news as Gen Y looks to take the helm of the international workforce.

While corporate networks may not be quite up to task yet, the decision makers and IT departments currently steering the ship are cognizant of the needs of the corporate network and the high expectations of the next generation. [AQ](#)

Ricardo Belmar is the senior director for enterprise product marketing at InfoVista, where he helps develop market positioning and strategy for InfoVista's enterprise solutions globally.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A UNIVERSAL CURRENCY

BY KIMBERLY R. CLINE , EdD



In an economic culture that has always celebrated innovation, entrepreneurship has reached a tipping point that transcends business and permeates our overall cultural zeitgeist.

From bestselling biographies and multiple biopics focused on the late Steve Jobs to the televised pitch competition of ABC's *Shark Tank* and the fictional startups of HBO's *Silicon Valley*, we see a successful entrepreneur not just as a success, but as a celebrity. Entrepreneurs play themselves on hit cable TV series, serve as models for big-screen superheroes, and make philanthropic gifts and pledges that capture the public imagination.

Business giants such as Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, and *Shark Tank*'s Barbara Corcoran and Mark Cuban are the most prominent modern symbols of our celebration of entrepreneurship and innovation, but these words no longer apply exclusively to business owners. Both Millennials and Generation Zers are growing to regard entrepreneurship and innovation as core traits of successful individuals in all fields of endeavor, including efforts to address longstanding social challenges, where new approaches and disruptive thinking can make a massive difference around the world.

The spirit of entrepreneurship and consistent innovative thinking enhance the likelihood of new ideas, and a 2012 study by Millennial Branding found that innovation is one of the top traits recruiters focus on when evaluating job candidates. Hiring managers look for the skills that are in the DNA of this new breed of workers: confidence, big vision, resilience, positivity, and a drive to succeed.

Many of these innovative thinkers will create their own businesses, aiming to launch the next Facebook and contributing to the ongoing growth of the innovation economy, which is expected to add as many as 1 million new jobs by 2020 in the New York metropolitan area alone. Others will be wooed by Fortune 500 companies, private equity firms, and existing startups, all seeking to capitalize on the talent available in the "gene pool" for their own purposes. This new generation of thinkers is able to envision the product that has not been invented and develop a path to market and monetize the asset.

LEARNING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship courses are no longer limited to business schools, but rather are accepted and even encouraged in college disciplines such as healthcare, liberal arts, and sciences as the value of an entrepreneurial mindset

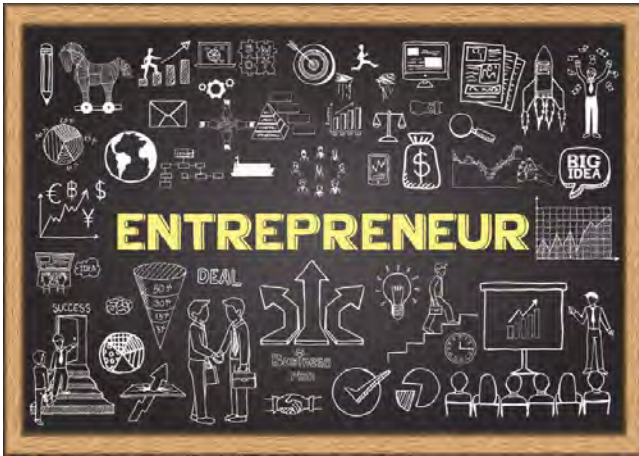
becomes increasingly apparent outside traditional business environments. The ability to inspire and collaborate with others in your field to bring a new product, service, or technique into the world is a skill whose applications expand into law, medicine, education, the arts, and every other field of endeavor.

Entrepreneurship courses at the collegiate level enjoy their greatest success when they are supplemented by engaged learning opportunities that enable students to put their classroom instruction into practice and develop executive-level experience. As competition increases, the ability to identify competitive advantages and capitalize on them in a fast-paced, high-tech global market will be critical to success. Preparing students to meet these challenges with engaged learning opportunities will put them at an advantage as they graduate and embark on their careers.

To optimize the impact of entrepreneurial education, schools need to align the experiences gained by students with skills that companies seek, such as innovative and critical thinking, high-quality and influential presentation skills, and an unwavering drive to succeed. These opportunities can take several forms, including these programs currently in place at Long Island University:

Student-run businesses. Students at LIU create, operate, and manage independent businesses, gaining real-life expertise to leverage as they develop into leading executives and entrepreneurs. Students are responsible for every aspect of the businesses' success, from product selection and marketing to daily operations and financial accounting. While these businesses draw heavily from LIU's business programs, the campus-wide initiative draws from across the university, attracting students with a wide variety of skill sets and instilling an entrepreneurial mindset that is applicable across all fields of study. LIU is constantly expanding opportunities for students to gain executive experience through student-run business, using half of all profits from existing businesses to fund new student-led ventures.

This practice aligns with other entrepreneurial leaders in higher education that offer opportunities for students to create and market their own companies. The experiential learning component of education is creating a new



generation of graduates who enter the workforce with unparalleled experience.

On-campus incubators. LIU's on-campus entrepreneurship incubators are modeled after the shared workspaces at the heart of New York's vibrant startup culture, with environments that lend themselves naturally to productive brainstorming sessions and private meeting rooms for developing business ideas. Students also have access to the business expertise of LIU's business faculty, who can provide guidance as students launch their ventures.

The collegiate environment is particularly fertile for emerging ventures, as the diversity of academic disciplines among the campus population ensures that young entrepreneurs have access to everyone they could conceivably want to work with in forming and growing their companies. They have access to students of finance, marketing, and other business disciplines, students of the hard sciences who can help make their ideas a reality, and creative students in the visual and performing arts who can assist in marketing their products or services. They also

benefit from the wisdom and experience of professors who are committed to their students' success, an invaluable resource for students who may lack the technical knowledge to bring their ideas to life, and have immediate access to a potential "test market" in their fellow students.

A startup culture on campus. Many successful entrepreneurs are extremely gracious and generous with their time when presented with the opportunity to mentor the next generation of innovators. Because they have no reason to regard aspiring entrepreneurs as a threat or as having ulterior motives, entrepreneurs can speak more openly to college students than they might to others seeking their advice. Colleges and universities that can facilitate connections between students and those who are actively involved in the innovation economy give their students access to a vast repository of entrepreneurial expertise.

LIU students are connected to New York's startup culture through the university's participation in Start-Up NY, a first for private universities on Long Island. LIU's participation in Start-Up NY brings young companies to LIU Post's innovative community of scholars, giving students an opportunity to participate in emerging ventures and inspiring their own startups, which they develop in the on-campus entrepreneurship incubators.

Students at LIU Brooklyn benefit from the university's membership in the Brooklyn Education Innovation Network (BEIN), a valuable connection between the higher education community and the dynamic entrepreneurial energy of Brooklyn's technology cluster, which is second only to Silicon Valley in its size and rate of growth. LIU Brooklyn hosted BEIN's BE.INnovative Symposium in April 2016, welcoming more than 1,100 students and aspiring entrepreneurs to panel discussions with a distinguished group of innovation experts, networking opportunities, and special events, including a "hackathon" dedicated to tackling local sustainability challenges. The connection of

"Many successful entrepreneurs are extremely gracious and generous with their time when presented with the opportunity to mentor the next generation of innovators."





“Forward-thinking universities are fostering and nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit in their students, sending them out into the world with a mentality that is increasingly prized among potential employers.”

technological, creative, and academic communities fosters collaborations that result in meaningful contributions to economic growth, thereby creating additional opportunities for entrepreneurially minded students.

Fee-based consultancy. LIU Post’s fee-based student consulting program, LIU-iQ Consulting, is quickly building its reputation as a highly competitive consulting group, affording LIU students the opportunity to work on projects for a range of domestic, international, and in-house clients. LIU-iQ Consulting’s corporate projects allow students to build experience with business structures holistically while strategizing and executing tactics for successful performance. Consulting also creates additional opportunities for students to interact with entrepreneurs and their emerging ventures. Two of LIU-iQ Consulting’s first external clients were Israeli search engine startup Sneezz and American uniform supplier eParel. Consulting for these young companies gave students access to the internal workings of a startup in its early stages, allowing for additional insight into the process of launching and growing a new venture.

A 2015 Adecco survey of 1,001 students (including 557 Millennials and 444 members of Generation Z) found that students’ top two aspirations for the next 10 years are to achieve financial stability and to find their “dream job.” Universities that encourage student entrepreneurship empower their students to create their “dream jobs” while building skills that will aid them as they pursue financial stability, whether or not they remain in the innovation economy.

College students are uniquely positioned to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. They come to campus with relatively few financial commitments, and the university environment often affords them access to resources that could be much harder to come by as a young professional. These resources range from consultants and test markets

to more practical necessities like meeting rooms and high-speed internet access.

The advantages do not guarantee a successful venture—far from it, even with a potentially profitable business concept—but even in failure, student entrepreneurs demonstrate proactivity, creativity, and drive. These attributes will distinguish them to hiring managers as valuable potential employees. Forward-thinking universities are fostering and nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit in their students, sending them out into the world with a mentality that is increasingly prized among potential employers. Students also gain unparalleled experience that they can use to distinguish themselves from their peers as they enter the workforce.

Peter Drucker said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it,” and while his first book on corporate management was written 70 years ago, his words are as true as they have ever been. One of the most important aspects of preparing students to enter a constantly evolving economic environment and enjoy a prosperous future is giving them the tools that they’ll need to create it for themselves.

As entrepreneurship has become a universal currency in the professional world, forward-thinking universities that encourage student entrepreneurs are giving their students more than an education: They’re sending them out into the world with large “bank accounts” upon which to draw as they become the architects of their own success. [AQ](#)

Kimberly R. Cline, EdD, became the 10th president of LIU in July 2013, assuming the leadership of one of the nation’s largest and most comprehensive private universities. She oversees a nearly 90-year-old institution that encompasses multiple campuses, educates more than 20,000 students, and offers over 500 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degree programs and certificates. In her three years as president, Cline has moved the university into the vanguard of the emerging field of experiential learning, which combines rigorous academic instruction with real-world training and entrepreneurship.

Rise of the Renaissance Employee

BY AMERICAN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Whether business is booming or anemic, chances are you're looking for ways to increase the productivity and performance of your organization. At the root of productivity are the skills of your employees. Do they have what it takes to do their jobs?

Do they work well together to create high-performing teams? Having the right skill set offers organizations a competitive edge, but which skills will employees need to make the organization successful?

In the past few years, there has been a stronger focus on "hard skills" and a drive for organizations to focus on explicit skills—the "what" part of how to do something. These skills often are easier to learn, teach, and evaluate. Yet while pundits bemoan American students falling behind in technical skills such as math, sciences, and engineering, research confirms that most people believe "soft skills," sometimes called tacit skills, are just as important as

technical abilities. For example, in a study by Pew Research Center, communication was rated the number one skill Americans felt was necessary to succeed, followed by reading, math, and more collaborative skills like teamwork.

Even in highly technical environments, excellent communication, relationship building, and collaborative skills often are game changers. Consider the Forrester survey of more than 100 IT leaders into why IT project failure rates are so high: All six reasons listed boiled down to poor "soft skills" of the IT project manager. Research confirms that it's not hard skills or soft skills. True success requires both. What does all this mean for employee development?



DRIVING IS AN ART, NOT A SCIENCE

While some argue that professionals should focus only on mastering their strengths, employees actually need proficiency in a wide range of skills to execute their jobs effectively. Engineers are discovering this same principle about self-driving cars: Having technical skills is not enough to be successful. When the car reaches the first intersection, it'll become blindingly obvious that reading the subtle interplay of the intentions of other drivers, traffic police, and pedestrians is crucial to determining whether it's safe to move forward or even in which direction to go. Driving requires knowing the rules of the road, knowing how to operate a car, and being able to communicate with and anticipate the moves of others. Drivers need to be well-rounded and facile in a variety of skills. The same can be said about business.

The concept of a renaissance employee—someone proficient in a wide range of both types of skills—is the basis of AMA's new Total Professional. Through AMA's own research and more than 90 years of experience in developing leaders, the organization has identified the four core areas all professionals need working knowledge of:

1. Professional Effectiveness

2. Relationship Management

3. Business Acumen

4. Analytical Intelligence

How well employees navigate between these sets of skills determines the overall organization's success. Let's focus on just one.

INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION: UNDERVALUED SKILLS

From entry-level employees through the ranks, a person's ability to communicate effectively and build relationships is fundamental to performing on the job. The art of managing up—asking for clarification on goals, managing expectations from above, requesting and learning from mentors—separates the good from the great. These skills are early indicators of high-performing individuals and future leaders.

Individual contributors and mid-level managers need to be able to exert influence even when they have no authority over the stakeholders in a situation. The same soft skills that make a great manager, such as the ability to defuse conflict and turn potentially damaging situations into positive outcomes, are just as important in lower-level positions such as customer service or sales reps.

As employees move up in the ranks, deficiencies in soft-skill competencies such as relationship management skills become more detrimental to the organization as a whole. It's a silent killer—of team collaboration, of productivity, and of an organization's overall health.

POOR RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: THE SILENT KILLER

While there's a ton of discussion around employee engagement—its link to productivity, employee loyalty, and even customer satisfaction—too little time has been spent thinking about what really drives employee engagement. Developing a productive manager/employee relationship is the best way to improve engagement, productivity, and overall performance. Employees leave managers, not companies.

Therefore, the importance of a manager's ability to create a collaborative environment, to build lasting team spirit among

that organizations typically are afraid to talk about. Most managers dread performance-management conversations, restricting them to once a year because it's painful to talk directly to employees about where they are having trouble. This is true even when the performance goals are clear and measurable. Softer, less tangible capabilities are much harder to discuss openly because they can be subjective.

Making things more difficult is the complexity of communication and leadership skills. One situation might require strong leadership and a more directional communication style, while the same employee in a slightly different situation may need coaching and a more hands-off approach.

Ignoring trouble spots, however, does both the employee and the organization a disservice. Difficulty with pinpointing and targeting intangible capability gaps can hold organizations and employees back. Moving forward is only possible if

“American Management Association research lists communication, teamwork, and collaboration among the top 10 skills that differentiate the organizational competencies of high-performing organizations.”

colleagues, and to get them aligned to a common goal can't be underestimated. These all come back to the ability to manage relationships, or as AMA calls them, relationship management skills.

In a 2015 AMA study of organizations in 20 industry sectors and 20 countries, an organization's ability to execute on its strategic vision was found to correlate with its ability to communicate well and often with employees. For individual contributors and leaders, the ability to build and sustain strong relationships with customers, vendors, and colleagues is important to completing even the smallest of projects. It's no surprise then that research by American Management Association lists communication, teamwork, and collaboration among the top 10 skills that differentiate the organizational competencies of high-performing organizations from those of low-performing organizations.

Yet, shockingly, even for customer-facing jobs, only about a third of companies require their employees to complete soft-skills training, according to Forrester research. What happens if these skill deficiencies are not addressed?

FACING THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

It's difficult managing an employee's interpersonal skills—it requires being open and honest about things

you accurately evaluate and address skill gaps head on—with compassion and tact, but also with confidence that employees are focusing on the right skills. Communication, trust building, leadership—these are arts, not sciences. They require practice and development.

So how do you approach organizational development systematically? How do you evaluate what each employee needs to develop and where his or her strengths are? How do you figure out what your organization as a whole needs to take it to the next level?

ASSESSMENTS OFFER PRECISION LEARNING

Just as precision medicine offers customized treatments most likely to work with a particular individual, and cars have sophisticated precision instruments that adjust to changes in driving conditions, you can adjust your learning and development practices to changing business needs. Assessments offer an objective way to evaluate individuals and look at where they are compared with their peers, their team, their industry, and your organization overall.

To help organizations assess competencies and target development initiatives, AMA has a wide range of diagnostics, from 360-degree assessments to online knowledge-based assessments. Call us to find out how we can help. [AQ](#)

Building Your Virtual Brand

A strong online presence will help your organization compete for top talent.

BY PAUL FALCONE

Up to the early 1990s, the business world ran ads in newspapers to attract candidates. Recruitment ads were short and almost cryptic because newspapers charged by the word. In large-city newspapers, you could easily end up paying \$800 to \$1,000 for an ad that barely stretched the length of your thumb. So needless to say, there was very little fluff about the company or its culture and vision, and the entire message was dedicated to the job's critical requirements.

Around the year 2000, Monster and other online job boards were established, providing much more room for the hiring organization to be creative and express its true spirit. Job applicants uploaded their résumés online, and both internal recruiters and headhunters had volumes of résumés to choose from at the click of a button.

Flash forward to today's job market, and LinkedIn and other social media sites have clearly overtaken the larger online job boards in capturing talent. Researchers will tell you that employers and recruiters today are looking to the "Big 5" social media locations to source top talent.

Websites Where Employers Are Searching for New Talent

Website or Type of Site	Percent of Employers Using the Website
LinkedIn.....	94
Facebook.....	65
Twitter.....	55
Blogs.....	20
YouTube.....	15

Jobvite Social Recruitment Survey, 2013



In similar fashion, job candidates are defining their résumés by searchable keywords, creating a comprehensive social media presence, and identifying which social media platforms are optimal for their target audience.

Where does this massive change in such a short time leave you? You guessed it: investing in and beefing up your online presence to compete and attract the best and brightest talent that your industry and local job market have to offer. It's nothing less than critical that your company—large or small, public or private, international or domestic, union or nonunion—invest heavily in creating and developing your online brand across multiple platforms such as the Big 5 listed above. Ask yourself:

- What are you doing to create visibility and credibility to attract highly qualified applicants?

- Would someone looking at the

career page on your website, your company's LinkedIn or Facebook pages, or your YouTube presence be over- or underwhelmed by your message? Likewise, when was the last time you made a significant change to your online presence?

- Are you engaging in best practices in terms of maintaining your online persona, and are you aware of the ROI (return on investment) of social media in terms of your recruitment brand?

If you are unsure of the answer to any of these questions, you're probably missing out on one of the most fascinating and creative times in recruitment history! Enlist the services of an external consultant for a short-term project to spruce up your online profile and tell your organization's story. Understand that applicants will access your company's website on Google first and foremost, but LinkedIn, Facebook, Glassdoor, and similar sites will also be accessed. The Internet has made so much possible in terms of company intelligence gathering that it would be very shortsighted of an organization to fail to establish a compelling presence on the Internet that describes the company's vision, values, and achievements. Be sure you make your Internet presence especially friendly to mobile devices, where so much initial access and research take place.

Next, create a recruitment/marketing brochure that can be downloaded from your website's career page or otherwise emailed to candidates once they're selected for an interview. (Your applicant tracking system should be able to automatically email a brochure once an individual's résumé is moved to the interviewing bin.) Your marketing

and communications department or a recent new hire who just graduated from college and has solid writing or graphic arts skills can create a recruitment brochure. Sections of a typical recruitment brochure might include:

1. A brief company history (year founded, founder's mission and vision, annual revenue, number of employees, stock market ticker symbol, locations, corporate governance structure, customers served, market niche, and the like).

2. The hiring process, including the fact that your organization conducts background checks and drug screens

if your company offers one, be sure to explain how it works. Do the same for tuition reimbursement, wellness programs, generous paid-time-off (PTO) policies, and the like.

5. Miscellaneous information that employees normally might not learn about unless they ask: parking options and costs, mandatory versus voluntary union membership, employee services (e.g., gymnasium, onsite childcare, movie discounts, and ride-share public transportation subsidies). Casual dress days on Friday can serve as a positive inducement for strong candidates choosing among multiple offers.

Candidates are generally more attracted to the organization than to the job, so sell your company aggressively.

as well as reference checks before someone can begin working. You can also use this as an opportunity to clarify in writing that you generally expect new hires to provide you with copies of recent performance evaluations to demonstrate their strengths and areas for self-development.

3. Starting salaries and performance reviews: Clarify that merit increases occur either on employee anniversary dates or on specific dates for the whole company (e.g., the second payroll period in January) and that first-year merit increases are typically prorated based on the number of months served up to that point. Likewise, address whether new-hire evaluations include salary increases or are used strictly to provide initial feedback after 60 or 90 days.

4. Benefits: Take this opportunity to sell the value of your company's benefits programs! Benefits and paid-time-off privileges are typically worth 30 to 40% of a full-time employee's base salary at many organizations, so be sure to highlight the value of your programs that will attract new talent. Defined-benefit pension plans are rare these days, but

Likewise, consider creating and posting a video in your company website's career page or on YouTube that introduces prospective candidates to your current employees. Companies are even creating online avatars so that prospective employees can walk through the online hiring experience and learn firsthand what it's like to work for you. The various ways and means of developing your online presence and your website career page go beyond our scope here, but the point is simple: The recruitment process has become highly automated and digitized, and your investment in developing a best-in-class online experience will pay considerable dividends.

Similarly, consider drafting a freestanding document titled "What to Expect When You First Come to Work for Us" if you're hiring large volumes of entry-level employees who may not have prior industry experience. Such expectations flyers can serve as a one-sheet handout for applicants who want a clearer understanding of the job they're applying for. Better yet, they can be used as a tool during the interviewing process

to discuss the challenges of the position. A typical flyer might include:

- The particular challenges of customer service in your organization

- Work schedule demands, including weekend work, shift structure, and last-minute overtime

- The physical demands of the job, especially if they include anything out of the ordinary (like standing for eight hours or spending excessive amounts of time in a warehouse freezer)

- An emphasis on internal audits and compliance

- Excessive travel demands, on-call requirements, and the like

Finally, when adding new life to your recruitment advertising campaigns, remember two basic rules: First, candidates are generally more attracted to the organization than to the job, so sell your company aggressively. Outline what makes your organization stand out from the competition, what you value, what achievements you're proudest of, and where your vision and priorities lie. Second, don't underestimate the value of career websites that invite worker feedback regarding working conditions, pay, benefits, and opportunities for growth. And while there's no way to validate salary information that's volunteered, for example, the overall tone of the feedback that workers share online is exceptionally important for your branding. Therefore, whenever someone is promoted internally or receives some form of an award or formal recognition, consider encouraging them to log on to a site like Glassdoor to share their experiences. Building that shadow presence may take some time but could pay off handsomely over the long run. [AQ](#)

Paul Falcone is a presenter, an author, and a former corporate HR executive at Paramount Pictures, Nickelodeon, and Time Warner. His consulting practice specializes in helping senior corporate executives, front-line operational managers, and HR departments build higher-performing teams via in-house training, executive coaching, and offsite facilitations.

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In Memoriam: Florence Stone 1945–2016

**Former Editorial
Director at AMA**

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Florence Stone, former editorial director and longtime employee of American Management Association, who passed away on February 11, 2016, at the age of 71.

Florence's 44-year career with AMA started in AMA Periodicals, where she progressed to group editor and managed AMA publications including *Supervisory Sense*, *Supervisory Management*, *Health Services Manager*, and *The Take-Charge Assistant*. She eventually became editorial director of *MWorld*, AMA's quarterly journal, and also contributed to AMA's eNewsletters, including *Leader's Edge*. The content she wrote and edited enriched AMA members and customers over her long career.

Florence was the author of more than nine books that were translated into five languages. They include *The Oracle of Oracle*, *Coaching, Counseling & Mentoring*, *The High-Value Manager*, *The Manager's Question and Answer Book*, *The Essential New Manager's Kit*, *The Manager's Balancing Act*, *How to Resolve Conflicts at Work*, and (under the pen name Rebecca Saunders) *Business the Amazon.com Way* and *Business the Dell Way*.

Florence was a key contributor to the podcast series *AMA Edgewise*, appearing as a guest, introducing business luminaries, and helping with overall editorial direction for our first two years of production. She consistently brought great guests to sit in front of our microphones and helped us think through the best questions, which invariably led to compelling conversations.

Florence, we will miss your stories, your undying passion for the art and culture of American Westerns, and your many contributions to AMA's published materials over many years.

Rest in peace.



Education Key to Well-Rounded Employees

From technological advances that change the way we communicate and sell to customers to shifting demographics worldwide, the fundamentals of business are changing rapidly. The kinds of skills employees need to be successful are shifting as well. Gone are the days when employees could specialize in one area and succeed on that knowledge alone. Employees in jobs traditionally considered technical are being asked to participate in change management initiatives that require sophisticated influencing and communication skills.

Likewise, even “nontechnical” jobs—from HR to corporate communications—now require employees to think analytically and be more technologically savvy. These radical changes are forcing a paradigm shift in higher education toward building the competencies students will need to be competitive in the workplace.

Managers are looking for new employees who have innovation and critical thinking skills. They want advanced communication capabilities such as influential presentation skills. Employees need strong personal effectiveness skills and the ability to envision the abstract. In short, there’s a need for a more well-rounded employee who is proficient in multiple areas.

As an AMA member, you already know that we design our courses to deliver performance improvement in knowledge, skills, and behavior. New this year is AMA’s Total Professional framework that outlines four areas of talent development: relationship management, analytical intelligence, professional effectiveness, and business acumen skills. AMA’s Total Professional is part of a larger, more comprehensive Talent Management Model developed by AMA to help you ensure your organization always has the talent it needs to accomplish critical goals and remain strong and competitive.

AMA’s process starts with a careful assessment of staff to determine areas that need development, for individuals and for teams. Assessments are an incredibly effective way to judge skills and compare employees’ progress with that of their coworkers, their industry, and their organization. Through these diagnostics, AMA is able to create organization-wide leadership development plans to address skill deficiencies with customized onsite training. Find out what AMA can do for you. Give us a call.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward T. Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Edward T. Reilly
President and CEO
American Management Association

TRANSFORM YOUR TALENT— TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

TALENT MANAGEMENT MODEL

With AMA's onsite capabilities and proven Talent Management Model, you can achieve enterprise-wide success through talent transformation.

.....

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