

Teenage Workplace

Five Organizational Trends Leaders will See in the 2010s



As the new century reaches its teenage years, organizational leaders are left wondering: what more will change? Will the adolescent years of the next century be as unpredictable as the adolescent years of a teenage son or daughter? Organizational leaders and strategists alike are looking toward the future to find the trends that will shape the workplace in 2010. Here are five trends they've found so far.

Right Brain Rising

Dan Pink, author of the popular book, *A Whole New Mind*, believes that we've moved past the information age and are into the conceptual age. As the economy continues to push organizations to cut costs, it seems that anything that can be outsourced has been outsourced. As Thomas Friedman first revealed in the book, *The World is Flat*, even traditionally stable jobs such as those of lawyers and accountants are being outsourced to countries that can offer the same service at a lower cost. Futurist, James Canton, predicts that outsourcing will be a main component of organizations in the future. Pink argues that these jobs represent left-brain thinking (logical and repetitive) and that as they continue to be outsourced, they will trigger a rise in demand for right brain work (creative and meaningful). Leaders have been asking "can it be done cheaper?" and "can it be done by a computer?" for several years. This has lead

many to ask, "what's left to do?" In order to remain competitive, organization leaders will need to develop several competencies within their organizations. Pink describes these as design (engaging the senses), story (including the narrative behind products), symphony (gaining big picture thinking), empathy (engaging emotion), play (adding humor to the workplace) and meaning (finding organizational purpose).

Moving up Maslow

As the nature of work shifts from left brain to right, the traditional incentive-based system for motivation may not be the most effective way to boost performance. A series of studies collected by Mark Lepper and David suggests that in creative and intrinsically motivating tasks, monetary incentives can actually decrease individual performance and enjoyment. As many of us learned in Psychology 101, any discussion about motivation would be incomplete without paying tribute to Abraham Maslow. The results of these studies seem to suggest that workers are moving up the hierarchy of needs. Base salary takes care of workers' base level needs and, as more people are engaging in work that leads to self-actualization, the world of traditional incentives is at a loss for how to motivate workers. Again, author Dan Pink has a suggestion: leaders who want to encourage performance in these creative tasks should do so not with incentives, but

by giving workers autonomy, adding purpose to tasks and giving contributors a chance to achieve mastery in the given task.

Rowe, Rowe, Rowe Your Office

As the nature of work shifts from repetitive tasks to creative projects, many companies are finding that their employees needn't be tethered to their desks from eight to five. The chief promoters of this strategy, Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, call it ROWE for Results Only Work Environment. They describe the underlying principle of ROWE: employees need to be evaluated based on performance, not presence. Bruce Tugan, author of the book, *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*, argues that as the millennial generation continues to enter the workforce, a drastic demand for ROWE will enter with them. Ressler and Thompson cite companies such as Best Buy, which experienced increased morale and performance after implementing ROWE in its home office. To implement ROWE, organizational leaders need to encourage employees that there are no defined "work hours" and that workers shouldn't be in the office unless a meeting or presentation requires their presence.

Free Agent Demand

The economic conditions have left many organizations skeptical about hiring. Sharlyn Lauby, HR thought leader and consultant

with Internal Talent Management, a HR consulting firm, believes that most companies will opt to utilize a blend of freelance work and consultants. A study by CareerBuilder.com recently surveyed more than 2,700 hiring managers and human resource professionals. Three in ten, or approximately 30%, anticipated hiring freelance talent in 2010 and beyond. This number is up from 28% last year and shows signs of continuing to rise. Lauby offers the following suggestions to organizational leaders looking to evaluate if freelancers are right for their workforce. First, determine the skills of your current employees, as not every job can be outsourced. Next, ensure that your existing talent intends on staying with your organization, especially if that talent ranks among those whose work can't be outsourced. Finally, build relationships with outside resources, good freelancers and consulting organizations. It's best to create a network of trusted outside resources and stay within the network.

Coworking

As freelancing and ROWE continue to free workers from cubicles, many are finding that they still need some level of social interaction. What's a bathrobe-clad home-based worker to do? Enter coworking. Coworking refers to a gathering of independent workers in a shared, common workspace. According

David Burkus is the editor of LeaderLab, a community of resources dedicated to promoting the practice of leadership theory. He is an executive coach, a sought-after speaker and an adjunct professor of business at several universities.

ACHIEVER
FOR BREAK FREE WRITING

ADD Gel

ADD CORPORATION LIMITED, Business Park, 6th Floor, Chincholi Naka, S. V. Road, Malad (W), Mumbai – 400 064.
Tel. : (91-22) 2876 7171 / 6570 7171 • Fax : (91-22) 2876 7878 • E-mail : info@addpens.com • www.addpens.com

to the Inc. Magazine, coworking is a nationwide trend. Almost every major city in the US now houses a coworking environment. Coworking allows freelancers and ROWE-participants to work independently but connect with individuals and even leverage these talented and diverse viewpoints. At first glance, coworking may not appear to be a trend that organizational leaders need to be aware of. However, leaders who are implementing a ROWE environment should strongly consider encouraging workers to seek a coworking arrangement or start their own. Citizen Agency, a New York City-based consulting agency, leases out space in its own office for coworking. Encouraging coworking arrangements allows employees to take advantage of

connecting with outside viewpoints and even potential future hires.

Conclusion

It may be tempting to view these five trends as separate. However, they can also be viewed as a global system. In order to make strategic decisions regarding these trends, leaders must adopt systems thinking. Richard Hughes and Katherine Colarelli Beatty from the Center for Creative Leader believe that systems thinking is an essential element of strategy. Viewing these trends through systems thinking suggests that they may all be connected. Consider this systems perspective: as repetitive, left brain jobs shift across the globe from West to East, it triggers the demand for creative work and freelance arrangements, which, in

turn, influences the demand for ROWE and coworking environments. Strategist, Irene Sanders, would refer to connections such as these as a butterfly effect, where initial conditions trigger a cycle of changes leading to drastic variations in the system. Connected or not, the teenage years of the new century seem to mirror the teenage years of life, characterized by creativity and a drive for independence. Organizational leaders would be wise to avoid responding with typical parental resistance. These trends are not just a fad and in order to keep their organizations competitive, leaders need to embrace these trends and leverage the opportunities that these trends provide. ☺

© 2010 David Burkus. All Rights Reserved.

Reference # 03M-2010-07-08-10

