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AACSB COLLEGE OF BUSINESS DEANS' PERCEPTION OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

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INTRODUCTION

For years, research studies and articles have emphasized the importance of communication skills. Today these communication skills have become more essential in obtaining employment and advancing in a business career. What business communication skills do university business graduates need? There has been an abundance of literature in recent years concerning needed business communication skills and abilities. What business communication competencies do AACSB college of business deans believe are most important? Are colleges and universities providing graduates with the needed business communication competencies required in the business world?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem of this study is to determine which business communication competencies AACSB college of business deans perceive as most essential. The business communication competencies studied include:

1. writing and speaking competencies
2. intrapersonal competencies
3. interpersonal/collaborative competencies and
4. global communication competencies.

METHODOLOGY

Communication skills used for this study were derived from the following sources: various research studies identifying critical management skills, a locally developed College of Business and Technology advisory group listing of skills and knowledge essential for a business major, and from various journals and business communication textbooks. After the business communication skills were identified, a questionnaire was developed and mailed to

FORTY WINKS: THE ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS OF REDUCING EMPLOYEE SLEEP DEFICIT

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ABSTRACT

Americans are tired and instead of working to live they are living to work. Previously, the pace of life was dictated by nature, hours of sunlight, and the tides. Now, it is being dictated by economic necessity, and the boundaries between work and life are being blurred. In fact, 70 million Americans are sleep-deprived. Many companies are now beginning to address employee fatigue because they recognize that fatigue is behind on-the-job accidents, absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher health care costs. This paper will describe the causes of sleep deprivation, the costs to organizations, the benefits of power napping, what employees can do, what companies have done, and what other companies can do to help their workforce feel better while improving productivity and at the same time reducing accidents and health care costs.

INTRODUCTION

“But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.”

Robert Frost

The human body has been taking a beating, sleep-wise, since 1879 and the invention of the light bulb. The invention of the light bulb and the Industrial Revolution changed everything (An eye-opener, 2001). Old diaries and letters suggest that people were logging about nine hours a night before 1913; then Edison invented the light bulb. Part of the reason he did was that he really felt people were using darkness as an excuse not to work and he wanted to increase our productivity (Kirkey, 2003). Now people sleep only about seven hours a night.

Americans, in large numbers, are tired. It shows up in lost productivity, depression, higher health-care costs, more car crashes, and tattered relationships. Sleep deprivation may kill concentration or cause behavior problems, mood swings, and memory lapses. We have a huge national sleep debt; and we are servicing that debt with high interest (Collins, 2006). We eat when we are hungry, and drink when we are thirsty, so why are people not sleeping when they are tired? Sleep, it seems, has become a luxury (Gordon, 2004). In addition, The National Sleep Foundation has said that Americans are getting both less sleep and less sex in the bedroom. Instead of working to live, Americans are living to work (Hatfield, 2001). Also, there is this notion somehow or another that if you sleep a lot, you are lazy and useless. Add that to our frenetic lives, the growing numbers of harried, dual-income families trying to cope with the demands of work and home, the seductive all-night allure of the Internet, and it is little wonder we have become a nation of walking zombies (Kirkey, 2003). Not getting enough sleep makes people clumsy, stupid, unhappy and dead. We are a society that has ritualized the sleep deprivation that caused such disasters as the Exxon Valdez, Chernobyl, and the Challenger accidents. And, human beings are the only known organism that sleep deprives itself (Sandberg, 2004).

Margaret Thatcher claimed that she needed only four hours' sleep. Leonardo da Vinci is reputed to have slept 15 minutes every four hours. Napoleon advocated six hours' sleep for a man, seven for a woman and eight for a fool (Crompton, 2003). Previously, the pace of life was dictated by nature, hours of sunlight, and the tides. Now, it's being dictated by economic necessity, and the boundaries between work and life are being broken. Many people go home from work, have their dinner, then start work again. So we spend more time in an aroused state, have less time to wind down, find it more difficult to fall asleep and find our sleeping patterns upset (Crompton, 2003). In fact, about 70 million Americans are sleep-deprived (McCall, 2004).

With employee health-related issues impacting the bottom line of many companies, management executives are addressing employee fatigue as a major factor behind on-the-job accidents, absenteeism, and lowered productivity, and they are looking at new ways to solve the problem (Atkinson, 2000).

Even folk wisdom contains truth: "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Aside from being a plea for the benefits of hard work, Benjamin Franklin was aware of our circadian rhythm, that 24 hour cycle biologically timed to daylight and nightfall. The first is our period of work, and the other our period of slumber, a phenomenon we share with most, if not all, mammals (Coates, 2004). This paper will describe the causes of sleep deprivation, the costs to organizations, the health benefits of power napping, what employees can do, what companies have done and what companies can do to help their workforce sleep better while improving productivity and reducing accidents and health care costs.

CAUSES

"Blessed barrier between day and day."

William Wordsworth

A National Sleep Foundation survey found that 68 percent of Americans get less than the recommended eight hours of sleep a night on weeknights, and 39 percent get less than seven hours (Barnes, 2004). Bedtime is getting later and the morning comes earlier all over the country. A comprehensive survey conducted by the Better Sleep Council found that 31 percent of employees surveyed admitted that lack of sleep affected their work, and 29 percent said they did not feel rested when they awoke before going to work. In addition, another survey found that 38 percent of employees admitted to napping at work. Most of them napped in break rooms, bathroom stalls, or in their cars in the parking lots so they wouldn't get caught (Atkinson, 2000).

There are numerous causes for this sleep deprivation. Technology adds to overworking. We are not just working 9 to 5 anymore. People are more overworked, because they are worried about job security. Terrorism warnings, war, and the economy are all folding into one perfect storm (Joyce, 2003). In addition, the challenges of advancing in careers, satisfying clients, reaching sales goals, rearing children, and maintaining homes have created a class of sleep-deprived workers. Finally, under pressure to raise efficiency and productivity, more workplaces are operating around the clock. But the toll on employees' health and wellness can be considerable, including fatigue, increased risks of certain illnesses, and a diminished social and family life. Fatigue, sleep deprivation, and stress are all present (Schur, 2005). In fact, at least 50 percent of the American adult population is chronically sleep-deprived (Atkinson, 2000).

In addition, globalization has brought about the 24-hour business day. Thousands of companies have baton-passing rituals. Offshoring, or the migration of jobs to lower-cost countries such as India, China and Russia, has started this cycle. Cheaper labor and faster work flow have made offshoring a fact of life for many companies. This offshoring has resulted in longer, stranger hours for white-collar workers in the United States. Silicon Valley workers grumble that communicating with colleagues overseas requires midnight teleconferences, 6 a.m. video meetings

and cellphones going off all night long. The 24-hour business cycle is extremely stressful. And today's long hours are less likely to result in windfall bonuses or stock options, and there is no end in sight (Konrad, 2005).

COSTS

"There is a time for many words, and there is also a time for sleep."

Homer

The National Commission on Sleep Disorders recently reported that decreased productivity and accidents in the workplace cost the nation \$150 billion a year (An eye opener, 2001). In simple terms, tired managers and employees cost an organization money. Among the expenses are increased workers' compensation costs from accidents and injuries; increased health care costs and absenteeism from increased illnesses, and reduced profits from lower levels of productivity. Lack of sleep leads to drowsiness during the daytime, and drowsiness leads to decreased motor performance, cognitive performance and reaction time. Drowsiness also leads to reduced concentration, memory, communication skills, decision making skills and ability to handle complex tasks. Even minimal sleep loss over the period of a few days will make you stupid (Atkinson, 2000).

Shortened sleep can lead to reduced brain levels of leptin, the hormone that controls appetite. Get too little sleep and the brain signals us to eat complex carbohydrates, starches and sugars which make us fat. In addition, studies have found that people who sleep six hours or less a night have an increased risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks and stroke. Just one bad night can have a dramatic effect on alertness, concentration, and judgment, and chronic sleep deprivation can lead to anxiety and depression (Kirkey, 2003). Sleepiness has now surpassed alcohol and drugs as the greatest identifiable cause of accidents. If a person is up for 22 hours, the deficit in cognitive and motor skills is equivalent to having a .08 blood alcohol level which means the person is considered legally drunk in some states (An eye-opener, 2001).

Not surprisingly, sleeplessness is a growing problem in the United States as well as a growing business. A record 43 million prescriptions for sleeping pills were filled last year, resulting in more than \$2 billion in sales for drug companies. Medication is one answer. Relatively new prescription drugs like Ambien and Lunesta are generally effective and pose a lower risk of dependency than earlier sleeping pills (Lazarus, 2006).

Another way to address sleeplessness is to take a "wake pill." Modafinil (sold as Alertec in Canada and Provigil in the United States) can keep you awake for 40 hours without the jitteriness, agitation, anxiety, and insomnia associated with other brain stimulants, including caffeine. In fact, "wake-promoting" agents have become one of the hottest fields of drug research with a vast, mostly untapped, market potentially worth millions. People have always searched for ways to get by on less sleep. Coffee has become the second most commonly traded commodity in the world, next to oil. But now athletes, CEOs, college students, and everyone who wants to stay awake all day long with minimal sleep are asking their physicians for prescriptions for Modafinil (Kirkey, 2003).

POWER NAPPING

"Rest is not idleness . . . "

Sir J. Lubbock

Napoleon did it on the battlefield. Brahms did it at the piano. Edison did it on his desk. Einstein did it between equations, da Vinci between paintings, and Winston Churchill throughout World War II. John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton did it when they were president; they all took naps (An eye-opener, 2001).

The mechanics of the human body don't mesh very well with a 9-to-5 day. Researchers have found that when humans are fed at regular intervals and deprived of all sources of time, such as light and clocks, they have the greatest tendency to fall asleep during two periods of the day: between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. and 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. These are natural dips in our biological clocks, or circadian rhythms, and the core body temperature drops along with a person's eyelids. In the afternoon, all these physiological and mental processes begin to go into a dip. This dip used to be thought of as a post-lunch dip. But it has been shown to occur when people eat or don't eat. In fact, from the moment you wake up in the morning, there is pressure driving you back to sleep (Sandberg, 2004).

Napping is an established part of the day in many cultures, including India, Italy and Mexico. But U.S. businesses overwhelmingly remain resistant to embracing the siesta culture. In fact, a survey by the National Sleep Foundation shows that less than one in five U.S. adults have napping privileges at work (Barnes, 2004). Strangely, most workplaces consider artificial stimulation more acceptable than true rejuvenation, when it comes to combating daytime sleepiness (O'Connor, 2004). Employers don't mind if their employees take a coffee or a smoke break, but if you take a nap, you will probably get fired. The problem is that many workers don't get breaks, and those who do don't have the time or place to nap (Barnes, 2004).

Yet, in this era of litigation, companies should not underestimate the danger of working employees to burnout levels. And, the good news is more and more companies are realizing that power napping can result in increased productivity, creativity and general alertness of their employees (An eye-opener, 2001). In fact at Firefly Communications, a "re-charge room" has been established where staff can power-nap for 20 minutes. It has comfortable chairs, dim lighting and earphones with music (Gordon, 2004).

WHAT CAN EMPLOYEES DO?

"Sleep is the best meditation."

Dalai Lama

There are a number of things that employees can do to reduce their sleep-deprived condition:

- ◆ No caffeine late in the day
- ◆ Limit alcohol
- ◆ Lots of exercise but not before bedtime (Lazarus, 2006)
- ◆ Eat healthy snacks and avoid eating too much or too little
- ◆ Get enough rest; fatigue makes it harder to cope with stress situations
- ◆ Seek out positive people
- ◆ Meditate or pray
- ◆ Do volunteer work for a favorite cause or charity
- ◆ Go to a funny movie (Olsztynski, 2006).

WHAT SOME COMPANIES HAVE DONE

"Bored people, unless they sleep a lot, are cruel."

Renata Adler

While nap rooms may sound a bit out there, there is a precedent for napping at Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. When trains are stopped, crewmen can nap as long as one remains awake, and maintenance workers can nap in their vehicles during breaks (Mandell, 1999). Guess provides its employees with pamphlets that focus on stress and fatigue management. Also, Guess has an on-site cafeteria that provides balanced meals and a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol in the

workplace (Atkinson, 2000). In addition, British Airways allows pilots on transoceanic flights to catch a few winks so they will be more alert when landing. A number of Silicon Valley companies have set up nap rooms, complete with reclining chairs, blankets, alarm clocks, even piped-in classical music, for their employees. Nike is just doing it, too, and so is the U.S. Army, whose studies have convinced their top brass to allow officers a nod or two while on the job. Also, Pizza Hut International allows its employees nap time, and executives at companies such as AT&T, Metropolitan Life and McDonald's have at least participated in Power Napping workshops (An eye-opener, 2001).

Yarde Metals, headquartered in Bristol, Conn has built a "corporate facility leisure room." This room has a waterfall in the center and is surrounded by four smaller rooms. Yarde Metals' nap policy works because the boss encourages it and sees its benefits. Senior management's thumbs-up to the idea can go a long way. It's not problematic, there is little cost, and there is a productivity gain (Fox, 2000).

WHAT OTHER COMPANIES CAN DO

"It is better to sleep on things beforehand than lie awake about them afterward."

Baltasar Gracian

There are many things that companies can do to help their sleep-deprived employees. For example:

- ◆ Purchase furniture to suit office naps, including power nap executive chairs that recline, massage the head, and envelop it in darkness.
- ◆ Schedule regular rest periods. It is important to get the body used to napping at about the same time every day, for about the same length of time. Most people feel tired about eight hours after awakening (Fox, 2000).
- ◆ Consider replacing the common five-day, eight-hour shifts with four-day 10-hour shifts. This will give employees opportunities to catch up on sleep.
- ◆ If you require employees to work a great deal of overtime, provide transportation home or encourage them to take public transit. The chances of auto accidents are greatly multiplied if overtired employees drive themselves home.
- ◆ Maintain a temperature on the cool side.
- ◆ Provide a nap room. Short naps, 15-20 minutes long are better than longer ones because employees are less likely to awaken feeling sluggish (Mandell, 1999).
- ◆ Maintain good indoor air quality.
- ◆ Make the work environment ergonomically correct.
- ◆ Provide sleep resources such as the National Sleep Foundation at www.sleepfoundation.org, America the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research at www.aasmnet.org to your employees.

CONCLUSION

"Sleep perchance to dream"

Shakespeare

Whether employers like it or not, employees are already catching up on their sleep in bathroom stalls or in their cars on lunch breaks. For many, it is the price paid for economic prosperity and an American work ethic that is in overdrive. We now work longer hours than any other industrialized country in the world, have longer commutes, and are connected to the office 24

hours a day through a variety of electronic communication devices. Napping might sound like a crazy idea, but it really is a natural extension of our current working climate. What companies will receive in return is lower absenteeism, lower health care costs, fewer cranky employees, and higher productivity. What's not to like about that?

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ONLINE RECRUITMENT: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF JOB SEEKERS

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ABSTRACT

The Internet has changed the way companies conduct business, including how they attract and recruit employees. As a result, online recruiting has become a major Internet business tool. Effective online recruiting processes increase firms' competitive advantage through increased efficiency and lower costs, and offers benefits and opportunities to job seekers. We found citizens to be more comfortable with online recruitment and used it more frequently than did non-citizens. Older applicants and those with work experience also applied more often and made more job searches. Minorities applied more frequently for jobs online than did whites. We found no differences in gender in online recruitment behavior or attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of computer technology and the Internet in the current volatile business market has changed the way businesses compete. One change has been the use of online recruiting when recruiting and hiring the best available employees. Online recruiting is the process of recruiting through company websites or commercial job sites that promotes employment opportunities and retrieves potential employee information. Today, the Internet is a popular method to recruit potential employees with over 90% of Fortune 500 companies using some form of online recruiting (Feldman & Klaas, 2002). Job seekers are also conducting their searches online with over 52 million Americans have used online job searches (Jansen, Jansen, and Spink, 2005). Online recruiting and hiring as a business tool has not only changed the way companies recruit employees and how job seekers search for jobs, it has also impacted both parties involved.

METHODS AND PRACTICES EMPLOYED IN ONLINE RECRUITING

Online recruiting techniques include company websites, online job boards, online newspaper classified advertisements, and specialized job boards or professional certification sites. A survey by iLogos.com found 92 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a website solely for careers and 96 percent of the recruiters polled reported posting jobs on their company's websites. The Monster Fact Sheet (2006) reported having a resume database of more than 52 million resumes, 200,000 company members, and 61 million job seeker members worldwide. Both company websites and job boards are important tools for organizations and job seekers wishing to become active in the online job market.

IMPACT OF ONLINE RECRUITING ON BUSINESSES AND JOB SEEKERS

Businesses find many favorable reasons to use online recruiting, including increased efficiency, lower recruitment and hiring costs, attracting more qualified applicants and simplifying the entire selection process. The collection of applications and resumes online allows companies to quickly acquire large amounts of data on potential job applicants and to streamline the recruiting and talent deployment processes. Online recruiting lowers recruitment cost by prescreening applicants, processing applications, and maintaining applicant information for forthcoming employment opportunities (Zall, 2000). It exposes recruiting companies to many more applicants searching for jobs (Gale, 2001) and simplifies the overall selection process (Wyld, 2005) by electronically transferring relevant information to departments involved in the hiring process.

However, HR Departments are often swamped with too many applicants, and experience technical problems (Lin & Stasinskaya, 2002). Online recruiting tends to decrease personal attention for applicants by recruiters and allows competing companies to use online information to recruit candidates from other firms. Businesses also find passive job seekers and potentially good employees who may not be internet fluent reluctant to post resumes online. Legal issues such as disparate impact on job seekers, the ability to access the Internet (Wyld, 2005), and the use of a key-word search as a selection tool (Flynn, 2002) could present problems if they screen out members of a protected group or if they discriminate.

IMPACT ON JOB SEEKERS

Online recruiting affords job seekers with many benefits including speed, convenience, exposure, and information. The Internet provides a quick and convenient way to reach employment professionals, increases access for candidates, and allows candidates to apply for multiple jobs while submitting their resume only one time (Perry, 2002). Online searching provides candidates with data such as company reports and financial status as well as information on the company's culture. However, challenges also exist for job seekers. Slow online recruiting processes, unclear follow-up procedures, privacy issues and potential discrimination are often identified. Unclear guidelines for follow-up procedures and privacy in online hiring are important issues that are raising concerns among job seekers, along with another potential online danger, identity theft. Another concern is discrimination. Some protected groups may have limited access to computers and the internet, little knowledge regarding use of computers, lack of knowledge regarding language and writing skills, or unfamiliarity with prime words used in key-word searches.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

The purpose of this study was to research the perceptions and behaviors of college students towards online recruiting. 186 business students were surveyed to determine who and how they were using the Internet to job search. Demographic features included citizens (74%) versus non-citizens (26%); ethnicity (64% white, 15% African American, 1% American Indian, 4% Asian, 12% Latino, and 4% other), gender (50% female and 50% male); age, presented in years (66% were 18 to 25; 23% were 26 to 35; 7% were 36 to 45; and 4% were 46 or over); and work experience (39% full time, 39% part-time, 12% unemployed and looking, 10% did not work and were not looking). Of the respondents who were employed, 40% had 1 to 5 years experience, 25% had 6-15 years, and 8% had 16 or more years.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Respondents provided information about their fluency with the Internet by self-evaluating their level of technological expertise. The results of all surveyed were as follows: beginner (9%); medium (15%); intermediate-computer literate and comfortable with technology (65%); and advanced-technology guru (11.3%). Results showed that the majority were comfortable using the Internet.

Two questions were used to measure participants' level of experience and preference toward online recruiting. Twenty three percent preferred online job boards; 30% preferred online company websites; 30% preferred newspapers, and 15% preferred using an employment or recruiting agency. Forty-seven percent of the sample did not utilize online sites. However, when asked if they would be willing to post a resume online, 62% reported yes, anywhere (job board or company website); 18% yes, only on a company website; 8% yes, only on a job board; and 11% would not post their resumes.

CITIZENS AND NON-CITIZENS USAGE OF THE INTERNET FOR A JOB SEARCH

Regarding differences between citizens and non-citizens in our sample, a chi-square test showed a significant relationship ($p=.01$) between citizenship status and use of the Internet to look for a job. We found 67% non-citizens and 41% citizens had never used Internet for job search. However, 20% of citizens conducted five or more job searches whereas only 6% of non-citizens had done so many ($p = .03$).

The differences between citizens and non-citizens in obtaining an interview for a job found online, for obtaining a job from an online application, willingness to post a resume online, and for comfort using the Internet were not significant. 96.4% of citizens, compared to 93.4% of non-citizens were comfortable using the Internet. 88.4% of citizens would post their resume online, and 89.6% of non-citizens were willing to post online. We found significant differences in self-reported technological expertise between citizens and non-citizens with non-citizens ratings themselves as having less expertise.

Of the 186 students surveyed, 95 were actually looking for a job. For the 95 looking, the percentage of non-citizens who never used the Internet to look for a job was significantly higher than the percentage of citizens who did not use the Internet.

JOB SEEKERS GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

Of the 95 job seekers, 50 were white, 20 were African American, 13 were Latino, five were Asian, one was American Indian, and six were classified as other ethnic groups. The 45 nonwhite job seekers were classified as minority, and their responses were compared to those of the white job seekers. There was no significant relationship between ethnicity and number of online job searches. On questions concerning applying for a job online, obtaining an interview from online application, receiving a job from the internet, comfortable using the internet, and willingness to post resume online, there was a significant difference only in applying for a job with 36% white applying and 58% of minority applying, ($p = .03$). Differences in computer usage between white and minority students were not significant. White students tended to assess their technological expertise at a higher level than the minority students.

JOB SEEKERS BY GENDER

Of the 95 job seekers in the survey, 45 were male, and 50 were female. The statistical test used was a z-test for differences in sample proportions. The results according to gender for the number of Internet job searches that were significant were:

Searches by Gender	Men n=45	Women n=50	
1 or 2 searches	48.9%	26%	p = .02
More than 5 searches	8.9%	26%	p = .03

AGE AND ONLINE JOB ACTIVITY

Of the 95 people who were either actively or passively searching for a job, 67 were 18 to 25 years old, and 28 were over 25. Job seekers over 25 appeared to be more likely to use the Internet to search for a job. In fact, 43% of age 18-25 had not searched for a job online whereas 39% of over 25 had made five or more searches for jobs.

Differences in age were significant concerning applying for a job on the internet, obtaining an interview from online application, receiving a job from online, and researching a company on the Internet. The older students reported significantly more use of the Internet than those in the 18 to 25 year old group. For level of technological expertise, the only significant difference was that a larger proportion of the older students considered themselves advanced.

DISCUSSION

The issue raised in the literature concerning the safety of posting resumes online seems to be of little concern. Of the people surveyed, 89 percent were willing to post their resumes somewhere online. This suggests that as people learn more about the Internet and become more comfortable with it (96 percent of respondents) their perception of security issues regarding personal information on the Internet decreases.

When using the Internet to apply for jobs, posting resumes on company sites were more prevalent than on job boards. Company websites were also found to be the most popular places to search online for jobs. This, combined with the fact that over half of the respondents researched a company via its website suggests that a company's website is an invaluable tool in the online hiring process. It should also be noted that of the people who visited company websites, most of them had a more positive image of the company after viewing this site.

Moving hiring processes online allows companies to find and evaluate more candidates at a much lower cost than other processes. The results of the survey suggest that companies who are seeking candidates with at least some college education may not face the dangers associated with discrimination in the areas of online fluency, unfamiliarity with prime words in key word searches, and access to computers. In our study, females were comfortable with and applied online with the same frequency as males. As far as minorities, they rated themselves with less expertise online; however they applied for significantly more positions than did whites. Concerning age, older applicants and those with work experience were more likely to use online recruiting. Future research needs to be conducted that would include the groups not represented in the survey findings. Any future research should focus on the use of the Internet as a job search tool and not on household access to computers, as they may return different results.

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KAPTOLOGY: THE NEW GENERAL SCIENCE OF COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Kaptology (from Gr. kaptein - swallow, gulp down, grasp), a new general science of communication (human and non-human) introduced by this article, not only generalizes the available theories of communication (A. Mattelart & M. Mattelart, 1995, 1998; Shannon, 1948; etc.), but also creates a theoretical breakthrough to a unified science with a new name, vision of communication, basic unit of communication, and mathematical classification of types of communication. It applies the graph theory-based universal model of sign, language, speech and heuristic act, which has already demonstrated its unique explanatory power in other fields (Aleinikov, 1979-1992) to the field of communication. Finally, the new science lays theoretic foundations for future research. Since communication as a process forms the foundation of any society, Kaptology is of great importance to all specialists working in the fields of education and management, media and information, negotiation and conflict resolution.

INTRODUCTION

An analysis of hundreds of books and articles on communication shows that among numerous concepts and theories available in the works of multinational and multicultural researchers, there is no unified understanding of the communication phenomenon. It is ubiquitous and continues to defy attempts to put the reduction hurdles of definitions to its enormous spread in human and non-human worlds. Perhaps because of this lack, there is still no general science of communication. However, it is becoming clear that the study of communication, in trying to find its own identity, is close to a breakthrough, and the research community is, to some extent, on the brink of delivering a young science.

Case studies from the history of science show that when a large number of researchers combine their efforts in one direction, the number of papers, articles, and books multiplies until a critical number of theories grow within the field of inquiry. One or two theories begin to dominate the public mind, thus stabilizing into a commonly-accepted opinion or paradigm. However, since contradictions are not yet resolved, a scientific crisis (Kuhn, 1962) becomes obvious to researchers, which often happens when a breakthrough discovery or explanation changes the frame of reference and makes previous arguments obsolete. As a result, a new science comes into existence as a unified move to provide a common foundation for further explorations.

Sciences, both established and new, have names, a defined field of study, a distinguished place among other sciences, a basic unit, specific methodologies and specific results derived from their application, a system of classification of the subject matter, scientific laws and, finally, scientific predictions, which are included as sub-topics in this article.

DISCRIMINATION: WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

Women make up more than half of the population of this country but they are vastly under represented in the top levels of management. There are many types of discrimination that have been identified as being used against women in business. Although great strides have been made in the last 20 years, there is still a very long way to go and a lot of perceptions to change along the way.

Discrimination in the business world toward women takes on many different forms and although they are all very destructive, some may be more visible than others. The glass ceiling, which is the invisible barrier that separates women from positions with power, is still an ever present obstacle in today's business environment. There are only four sectors of the business world that women seem to transcend this barrier. They are in consumer advertising and marketing, the beauty industry, local small businesses and education (Peiss, 1998). Though this is a good start, it only represents a very small percentage of all business. There are many speculations as to why there are not more women in upper level management of companies, but when this question is looked at in a historical perspective, it is observed that 10 years ago women were having a difficult time just breaking into middle management (MacRae, 2005). This could lead one to believe that in another ten years, the glass ceiling will be completely lifted. Unfortunately, the only way to prove or disprove this theory is through time.

The purpose of this paper is to look at some areas of discrimination toward women in business, some areas of opportunity for women to overcome discrimination, and some ways for women to overcome discrimination and move forward.

THE SUPERVISOR AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

The workforce in the U.S. continues to be challenged with diversity concerns and more attention is being given to diversity issues that evolve from generational differences. Four distinct generational groups have been identified. The focus of this paper is to discuss the uniqueness that exists among the four generational groups, with particular emphasis on the effect of generational differences on management. Recommendations are provided on additional research needed in this area.

INTRODUCTION

The workforce in the U.S. is entering a difficult period. The typical business will continue to be challenged with issues associated with diversity, and there are suggestions that there is going to be a serious labor shortage. Historically we tend to think of diversity as being related to differences in age, race, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and gender. However, more and more attention is being given to diversity issues that evolve from generational differences.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Human Resource Departments are now focusing on the effects of generational differences in the workplace (Zeck, 2002). The U.S. workforce can be divided into various groups. Pontell (2005) has identified the following five groups along with the percentage of the workforce they each constitute: Mature Generations: 65 years and older-20 percent; Baby Boomers: 52-63 years old-16 percent; Generation Jones: 40-51 years old-26 percent.; Generation X: 27-39 years old-21 percent; Generation Y: 18-26 years old--17 percent.

The work of Pontell (2005) notwithstanding, most experts divide generational groups into four basic categories rather than five. They exclude the generation identified by Pontell (2005) as Generation Jones (40-51 years old) and focus on the following four basic groups: Veterans (also known as Traditionalists) born between 1920 and 1940; Baby Boomers born between 1947 and 1967; Generation X born between 1970 and 1980; and Generation Y born between 1980 and 1999. All experts do not agree on the specific age parameters to include for each generational category, and there are other subtle variations among experts in their discussions of generational differences. However, there is general agreement that each generation has distinct values, attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits, motivational buttons, view of authority and expectations of leadership (FGI, 2004).

The Houston Association of Realtors (2005) describes the generational mix of the entire U.S. work force. Veterans (what The Houston Association refers to as Civics) were born between 1920-1940 and grew up during the Depression and WWII. This generation experienced rationing and hardship. As a result, these individuals have a tendency to be disciplined and respectful of rules

and regulations. They prefer consistency and are comfortable with the management style that provides information on a need-to-know basis and gain satisfaction from a job well done.

The Baby Boomers, born between 1947 and 1967, is the post-WWII generation that grew up in relative prosperity and safety from terrorism, pollution, child abductions, and the general pessimism that seems to exist in our society today. Baby Boomers tend to embrace growth, change, expansion, and, similar to Veterans, have a commitment to work that includes loyalty to the employer. While similar to Veterans in that they respect authority, Baby Boomers seem to prefer to be viewed as equals. Baby Boomers experienced significant social and technological changes during their lifetime such as: 1950s: The development of television; 1957: The Soviet satellite Sputnik was launched; 1960: The development of the pill; 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis; 1962: The first American to orbit the Earth-John Glenn; 1963: The Martin Luther King march on Washington; 1963: The John F. Kennedy assassination; 1960s: The Vietnam War; 1968: The assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy; 1969: The first lunar landing and Woodstock (Houston Association of Realtors, 2005). There are approximately 78 million Baby Boomers in the work force, and they currently represent the largest generational group. Although they have lived through some very difficult yet prosperous times, most remain optimistic and driven to succeed (DiCecco, 2006).

Baby Boomers are very competitive and many are considered to be workaholics (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association Office of Diversity, 2006). However, since they prefer to be viewed as equals, Baby Boomers do not like rules just for the sake of having rules. They are the "show-me" generation. Although respectful of authority, they will challenge the system. Veterans work hard because they think it is the right thing to do while Baby Boomers work hard because they think they have to.

Generation X, born between 1970 and 1980, are the children of the workaholic Baby Boomers and tend to feel overlooked and less appreciated. These latch-key kids were taught to be self-reliant individuals. However, they tend to desire more of a balance between work and life. Somewhat mistrustful of corporations, Generation Xers are less loyal than their Veteran and Baby Boomer counterparts. They tend to embrace change, particularly as it relates to technology and, since they are more outcome/results focused, they expect specific "constructive feedback on their performance" (FGI, 2004). As indicated above by Pontell (2005), Generation X represents about 21 percent of the work force. Generation X is considered to be more insecure when compared to Baby Boomers and Veterans. Many Xers grew up watching their parents work long hours for one company, only to be downsized into unemployment (Foley & LeFevre, 2001). Job instability is a natural part of employment and the prudent individual looks out for one's self. In addition to the insecurity created by downsizing and unemployment, Generation Xers are experiencing declining wages. As indicated by Foley and LeFevre (2001), the median income in 1971 was \$27,057; in 1981 it was \$24,057; and in 1991 it was 21,595. This is bad news for Generation Xers who lack skills. Generation Xers seem to be more independent and tend to lack political alliances. They also tend to be a bit more cynical about life when compared to their Baby Boom and Veteran counterparts.

Downsizing and outsourcing are not the only factors associated with this look out for oneself attitude of Generation X. The majority of Generation Xers' parents worked outside the home, leaving them to take care of themselves. Generation Xers' parents have experienced the highest divorce rate in our history, a rate which has tripled since 1960 (Foley & LeFevre, 2001). The number of children born out of wedlock has increased 28% since 1960. Both of these factors resulted in an increase in the number of families where the father was absent.

Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1999, is the most educated, well traveled and technologically sophisticated generation that we have ever had. They live in a world of computers, the Internet, DVDs and cell phones. This group seems to be less process or outcome focused. Generation Yers are sociable and have a sense of morality and civic duty, but making a lot of money

is less important to Generation Y. Their contributions to society and their role as parents are equally important to them. Generation Y is similar to their Generation X counterparts in that they are independent, techno-savvy, entrepreneurial, and hard workers who thrive on flexibility (Tulgan & Martin, 2001). Generation Yers are far less fierce than Generation Xers in their independence. In the long run, this generation works to live as opposed to living to work. Having watched their parents work long hours only to be downsized, younger workers conscientiously work toward a more balanced life-even at the expense of income and promotion. If Generation X is the me generation, Generation Y can be called the why me? generation.

Since each generation is different, experts suggest that managers adjust their style of leadership in order to avoid problems. This is particularly true in the area of communication. According to Hammill (2005), management communications have to be different for each generation in order to minimize problems. However, the recommendations for managing generational differences tend to be somewhat simplistic and general. The focus of the recommendations tends to be on Generations X and Y. Less attention is given to Baby Boomers and Veterans-after all, they are about to retire. For instance, Hammill (2005) provides the following suggestions on how to manage the different generations.

Traditionalists: This group represents a supervisor's dream employee. After all, they want to work and have respect for authority. Respect and trust are key components to relationships. Most experts suggest managers demonstrate compassion and understanding as key components of an effective relationship, particularly due to the experience that most Traditionalists possess. As stated by DiCecco (2006), the ideal boss is directive, logical and, most important of all, consistently fair.

Baby Boomers: Because Baby Boomers prefer being treated as equals and have a show-me attitude, a leadership style that is collegial and consensual is recommended. Participation and involvement become key components in the creation of an atmosphere of collegiality (Hammill, 2005). Traditional hierarchically-based approaches to leadership have been recommended. However, to exemplify some of the differences between Baby Boomers and post-Baby Boom generations, traditional styles of management are not recommended when supervising Generation X or Y.

Generation X: The supervisor should be sensitive to the independence and skepticism that exists with most Generation Xers. The move-on attitude and the focus on me cannot be overlooked when dealing with Generation X. Communication and flexibility seem to be the key. Generation X values information and there is no such thing as too much communication. Continuous feedback is recommended in order for the manager to be effective. Specific suggestions provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce (2001) are as follows: Use e-mail as a primary communication tool; talk in short sound bites to keep their attention; ask them for their feedback and provide them with regular feedback; share information with them on a regular basis and keep them in the communication loop; and use an informal communication style that emphasizes the positive.

Generation Y: The recommendations provided to manage Generation Y are similar to those for Generation X. However, there seems to be more of an emphasis on continuous, instant feedback as this generation expects instant gratification. This is because Generation Yers add an element of entitlement that is slightly different from Generation X. The work environment should be positive and supportive and managers should seek feedback from the employees. The following specific recommendations are provided (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2001): Use action words to challenge them at every opportunity; communicate using their preferred method-e-mail; seek their feedback constantly and provide them with regular feedback; use humor and create a fun work environment; and encourage them to take risks and break the rules so that they can explore new ways of doing things.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2004) suggests that when supervising Generation X managers should respect the experiences that have shaped their beliefs and thinking, tell them the truth, clearly identify boundaries, honor their sense of work/life balance, offer mentoring programs, clearly communicate that repetitive tasks and quality checks are part of the job, and offer learning opportunities. When supervising Generation Y, managers should take time to orient them with respect to the organization's culture, provide structure and strong leadership, be clear about expectations and long-term goals, and offer mentoring programs (SHRM, 2004).

Allen's (2004) suggestions are similar to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2004). According to Allen (2004), in order to be effective managers should: Establish comfortable work environments, flexible work hours and project-centered rather than function-based responsibilities; ensure that individual jobs fit the personality of the worker, especially for Generation Y; be flexible, challenging, creative, and empowering in your management style; initiate programs geared toward reducing stress-related problems; consider offering a cafeteria style benefit package that allows for flexibility; and explore the role of the Internet in the delivery of benefits and related information-Generation Xers want access to information all the time.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations above that have been provided in order to manage based on generational differences tend to be simplistic and somewhat superficial. It seems that it is easier for conclusions to be made as to the differences in experiences that individuals have had because of their age. For the most part, that is simply observing and reporting history; i.e., basic anecdotal research. However, when we try to make conclusions about the effects of these events, let alone how to manage the assumed consequences, it is probably wiser to be general-there are dangers in specificity. Consider the recommendation of Allen (2004) to offer cafeteria-style benefit packages. Aren't most companies today reducing choices when it comes to benefit packages as part of their strategy to control labor costs?

Many experts also seem to recommend the creation of a fun-filled, flexible work environment for Generations X and Y. Fun and flexibility are commendable goals, but creating such an environment is easier said than done. The typical business operates in a service-focused economy that is controlled by technology. Computers and the process of providing a good or service have inherent structural components that are a hindrance to flexibility. When customers pay for a service, a process that is structured and standardized is anticipated. For example, stores have hours of operation, work is scheduled, and computers work only when you follow the required programmed procedures.

The recommendations provided to manage differences among generations are too one-sided. The focus of the recommendations is on what the manager should do to supervise each group. However, in the real world when individuals are employed, the individual has to also adjust to the job; in other words, management is a two-way street. The employee has to meet the requirements of the job, not vice versa. This is the way it always has been and it probably always will be that way. The recommendations are also too generalized. In attempting to understand the different generations, stereotyping tends to occur as assumptions are made about individuals within each generation. However, sweeping generalizations do not describe individual members of each generation.

We need more research before we abandon age-old management practices that have historically been somewhat successful. Are the traditional hierarchically-based systems of management outdated? What are the long-term effects of downsizing, outsourcing and buyouts on the basic relationship that exists between employers and employees? A fundamental change in this relationship seems to be occurring-loyalty and long-term employment are no longer the norm between employers and employees. "Generational differences" is an important factor that may influence behavior, but there are numerous other variables that affect behavior and outcomes. The published literature on this subject leads to more questions than answers.

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THE PROBLEM WITH PROBLEM OWNERSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM AN ACTION LEARNING CASE WITHIN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Action Learning has been employed around the world in a variety of settings and contexts to address challenges faced by large companies, entrepreneurial problems, and even the needs of entire industries and countries. The Action Learning client in this case was responsible for providing telephone directories to all business and residential customers within a regional service area. The client's organization was the directory advertising and publishing subsidiary of a large, parent telephone company. Unfortunately, the client's business process was flawed by a costly tendency to distribute unwanted and unnecessary duplicate telephone directories to customers. To provide some semblance of scale, the total number of directories involved in the service area was substantial, amounting to approximately fifty-million throughout an annual distribution cycle. This case suggests that one of the principles of Action Learning—that of “problem ownership”—can be problematic, in practice. The client's estimated savings from decreasing instances wherein duplicate telephone directories were needlessly distributed to customers were reported to be in excess of \$1 million annually.

DEFINITIONS OF ACTION LEARNING

Several authors have tried to create a definition of Action Learning that is more formal than participants' sketches above (Anderson & Thorpe, 2004; Law & Chuah, 2004; Marsick & O'Neil, 1999; Smith & O'Neil, 2003; Vick, 1997; Whetherley, 1995). Professor Revans (1981) articulated his own composite outline (albeit a somewhat lengthy one), “regarded by several pioneers of action learning as a clear definition of it” (p. 9), when he wrote:

Action learning is a means of development, intellectual, emotional or physical, that requires its subject, through responsible involvement in some real, complex and stressful problem, to achieve intended change sufficient to improve his observable behaviour henceforth in the problem field.... The learning achieved is not so much an acquaintance with new factual knowledge nor technical art conveyed by some authority such as an expert or teacher (although fresh acquaintance is not ruled out), as it is the more appropriate use, by reinterpretation, of the subject's existing knowledge, including his recollections of past lived experiences. Action learning particularly obliges subjects to become aware of their own value systems, by demanding that the real problems tackled carry some risk of personal failure, so that the subjects can truly help each other to evaluate in what they may genuinely believe. Action learning demands real-time and hence observable activity on the subjects' parts, and thus tests whether the subjects are committed to what they can, in other conditions merely asservate. (pp. 9-10)

Dr. Mike Pedler, who was awarded the title of Revans Professional Fellow with the Revans Centre for Action Learning and Research at the University of Salford, in Salford, England (Awards, 1997) lamented the difficulty of writing a concise definition (for uses such as in brochures) in his book (1991), *Action Learning in Practice*. Nevertheless, he suggested an effort of his own:

Action Learning is an approach to the development of people in organisations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning. On the whole our education system has not been based on this principle. The method has been pioneered in work organisations and has three main components—people, who accept responsibility for taking action on a particular issue; problems, or the tasks people set themselves; and a set of six or so colleagues who support and challenge each other to make progress on problems. Action Learning implies both self-development and organisation development. Action on a problem changes both the problem and the person acting upon it. It proceeds particularly by questioning taken-for-granted knowledge. (pp. xxii-xxiii)

The earliest Action Learning program began in 1952 when a consortium of mining managers was formed under a the National Coal Board in England (Revans, 1986) . This was followed by a project in which ten large London-area hospitals exchanged ideas about each other's troubles and what could be done to improve their conditions (Revans, 1981). Revans was also invited by Lord Weinstock of the General Electric Company to set up an Action Learning program there (Pedler, 1991; Revans, 1981, , 1986).

Since some of these early programs, Action Learning has been employed around the world in a variety of settings and contexts including companies, industries and countries. Digital Equipment, General Motors, GTE, Ameritech, AT&T, Corning, Cigna, Whirlpool, Dow Chemical and Prudential Insurance have used Action Learning (Froiland, 1994; Pedler, 1991); countries that have imported Action Learning include the U.S., Belgium, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Saudia Arabia, Norway, Sweden, Egypt, Nigeria, Singapore, China and others (Pedler, 1991; Revans, 1981).

THE CLIENT AND PROJECT SET

“The client is the person who ultimately owns the problem under investigation—the person who will finally be held responsible for the resolution of the project on which the participants work” (Garratt, 1991, p. 56). In this case, the client was the director of distribution, an individual who was responsible for providing telephone directories to all business and residential customers throughout the region of the United States serviced by the RBOC (Regional Bell Operating Companies) under which his organization operated. Telephone directory distribution was divided into two phases: 1) a massive annual disbursement when new directories are published and old ones are replaced for every customer; and 2) an “interim” phase during the year when, for instance, a new customer from out-of-town established phone service. To provide some semblance of scale, the number of directories involved was substantial, amounting to approximately fifty-million throughout an annual distribution cycle.

An Action Learning set is a group of people who meet together to work with each other. Sets work on problems, not puzzles (Revans, 1978). One thing that must be kept in mind is that although an overarching problem may bring this assembly of set members together, the role of the set is to facilitate learning. Set members should be genuine “problem owners,” such that adequate commitment is garnered to participate in the first place (Revans, 1978, p. 16). Set members in this case were a mixed group from several organizations: managers from the client organization were always present; an official telephone company liaison was also present in many meetings; and the contracted distribution company was represented; the author of this paper served as the set advisor. Meetings were regular, spaced out at about every two to three weeks over a period of several months. Besides the regular set members, during the course of the project a variety of others associated with related processes were invited to participate.

In this case, the client was at the mercy of a variety of persons and procedures that required the input and problem solving commitment of several parties. For example, if telephone company customer service representatives were going to change their behavior, then their training,

compensation, and work procedures would have to change. Since the client couldn't force any such changes on those service representatives (or *their* employer), what other choice did he have but to ask telephone company management and other separate units to participate in the problem solving?

THE "PROBLEM"

Even though the client's responsibility was conceptually straightforward, it was the organizational structure itself that in this case became a gargantuan stumbling block, which at times appeared impenetrable and immovable. The parent telephone company was comprised of a collection of companies, all ultimately operating under the umbrella of the holding company (that is, the RBOC). In this case the organizational structure created a complex set of interrelated problems. The client's overall problem showed symptoms that in part had to do with how orders for phone directories from telephone customers were processed. In short, it was handing out far more phone directories than it had in prior years. Experience in making projections, based on factors such as population growth rates, showed that the increase was far beyond "normal," according to the client. The initial question was, "Why?"

Another related issue was the fact that directory orders were taken by telephone company service representatives who were largely evaluated on the basis of their expediency. In other words, they took orders for phone service (a part of the service includes phone books) and entered these into a computer; handling orders quickly was a top priority. As a consequence, a few complications for the client resulted: 1) getting the order "right" was not tied to representatives' compensation; 2) various computer screens that were displayed to the representatives during the process were designed by a different computer service subsidiary; 3) training for the representatives was a wholly separate issue.

Even the notion, getting the order "right," became complicated from the client's vantage point. If a telephone service order addressed a customer who was merely moving locally—from an apartment to a house, for instance—that customer might not need another directory, or a set of telephone directories. In larger cities, a set of directories may amount to several yellow and white pages books, each with a printing and distribution cost of a few dollars each. When a customer who didn't need these books receives them anyway, \$20 to \$30 may simply go down the drain. If this scenario was repeated thousands of times across a region that has millions of customers, the waste amounted to a significant sum. A challenging manifestation was created in the wake of this structure: an accountability linkage was directly tied to the profit objectives of the ultimate holding company, resulting in an "It's Not My Problem" mentality.

THE OUTCOME

Although it had been strongly suspected all along, confirming evidence finally showed that directory order increases were directly correlated to wildly successful second line sales, and the client finally had exact numerical findings to go by (note that the extent of that success had previously been information that the telephone service provider didn't want to share). One aspect of the aforementioned suspicion ultimately became useful in the solution: while the client—for budgetary reasons—wanted to reduce the number of directories being distributed, a question raised (before the above confirming evidence was found) was, "Isn't the real goal to serve the customer, so that just the right number of directories is received—not too many, and not too few?" Meanwhile, the telephone service provider organization had been on a "quality mission" which had impacted a number of its strategies. Its management had implemented numerous customer service programs, which had included training and other employee development efforts. However, it did not initially want to entertain the costs of making changes in the service representatives' normal procedures.

At one point, underwriting the costs of changes such as these was considered the problem, and burden of the client. After all, *he* was the one sending out more phone books than planned for in *his* budget—it was therefore *his* problem. At that time a message was sent to the telephone service provider organization, to the effect, “The customer doesn’t know about all these separate subsidiaries and issues; rather, as far as he or she is concerned, it’s ‘the phone company’ that can’t get its orders right.” Thus, in the customer’s eyes, it was ‘the phone company’ that looked inept while it was simultaneously heralding its customer service and quality efforts, publicly.

That message was received; and although the changes did require several months to implement, the client’s problem was rendered under control. Estimated savings for the client company were reported to be in excess of \$1 million, *annually*. Experience in this case suggested that in practice, the notion of problem ownership can be problematic. Indeed, the outcome in this particular case demonstrated that reallocating the ownership of the problem became the impetus for the solution itself to prevail.

CONCLUSION

One word of advice to future sets might summarize the critical action in Action Learning: *persist*. Hopefully, the results reported above will inspire those who are in doubt (or are unfamiliar with) the usefulness of Action Learning. In this Action Learning case, a complex problem in an organization “struggling within itself” was effectively addressed. While the Action Learning literature addresses issues of risk and problem ownership somewhat definitively—stressing the underlying importance of genuine and sustained commitment—the real point is that risk and ownership are infinitely variable. In essence, one can own a problem to some extent, while another *owns* a problem. In practice, ownership even seemed to shift among set members on their good days versus their lesser days, much like the weather outside over the course of the set meetings themselves. This case does not purport to offer a final solution to offer to the dilemma of problem ownership. However, future Action Learners and researchers may benefit from further evaluating the notion of problem ownership within sets.

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NOT FEELING WELL, WHY ARE YOU AT WORK?

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the findings from an exploratory study of presenteeism within organizations. Presenteeism, going to work while sick, is an unrecognized factor costing organizations thousands of dollars per year within organizations. The authors explored awareness of presenteeism and health factors affecting presenteeism. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to find gender, age, educational and organizational rank differences in levels of employee perceived diminished presenteeism. Differences were unfounded and not statistically significant within this study. Although differences within specific variables were not uncovered within this study, literature highlights the importance of diminishing presenteeism. Further research needs to be uncovered to identify what support structures organizations should consider to increase employee performance and productivity during presenteeism events. Presenteeism is an emerging field requiring additional research for organizations and employees to design wellness-driven organizations that support the company as well as the employee. Recommendations for organizations to institute are presented as presenteeism becomes a more mainstream issue for organizations.

HELICOPTER PARENTS AND THEIR MILLENNIAL CHILDREN: WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?

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ABSTRACT

According to school officials and employers, parents are showing up at interviews and calling to negotiate everything from dorm-room assignments to salaries for their children. Many educators and employers are concerned that such parental involvement in young people's lives indicates that the Millennial cohort group – those people born between 1980 and 2001 – may be less likely or able to solve their own problems.

Cell phones and email accounts make frequent contact between parents and children simple, fast, and inexpensive, even when the children are at school or work far away from home. This paper reports on an investigation of the relationship between the frequency of parent/child contact and the parents' role in the child's personal decision making.

Based on this research, no correlation was found between frequency of contact and a number of measures of independence and decision making. If the Millennial cohort group really is more dependent on their hovering parents into their 20s and 30s, frequency of contact does not provide a simple explanation.

"BECAUSE EQ CAN'T BE TOLD": DOING SOMETHING ABOUT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

Interest in emotional intelligence (EQ) has grown exponentially over the past decade, thanks to several widely reprinted articles in the Harvard Business Review and subsequent best-selling books by Daniel Goleman and other EQ authors. Growing along with that popularity is a demand for management training programs and graduate business courses that help clients and students enhance their EQ awareness and behaviors. So far the response to that demand has been tepid – limited, for the most part, to educating participants on the theory of EQ, offering assessment instruments, and suggesting action plans. This discussion reviews the current state of EQ training and offers an outline for changing EQ attributes based on a course developed for graduate business students at Seattle University.

