microskills™

Welcome to the latest edition of the microskills™ network for participants of microskills™ training around the world.

This edition concentrates on how we will be working and engaging staff in the future:

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- Generation Y
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The Future of Work project

Never has the world of work been so confusing and demanding with so many conflicting pressures. Lynda Gratton, Professor of Management Practice at the London Business School, has been publishing some of the findings of her major research programme, the Future of Work. She shows how there are 5 main forces shaping tomorrow's business:

- technological developments
- globalisation
- demography
- societal trends and
- low carbon.

The Future of Work Consortium is a collaborative co-creation research project that brings together academic and business pioneers in a revolutionary methodology to answer a simple, yet very challenging, question, "What will it be like working in 2030 for individuals and organisations?"

To find out more and to sign up for newsletters and articles go to: www.hotspotsmovement.com

Singapore signs up

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower has become a sponsor of Gratton's work and major organisations like Singtel, SembCorp and Pan Pacific Hotels have signed up. With the Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network (NextGenNBN) well under way providing a digital superhighway at astonishing speeds to businesses, schools and homes, Gratton's suggestion that Western organisations should look East is well supported.

Employee engagement and branding

There is yet another endorsement that a marketing brand that attracts and retains customers also works for attracting and retaining staff as Google remains the world's most attractive employer.

Universum has released the global talent attraction index. The World's Most Attractive Employers 2010, based on close to 130,000 career seekers with a business or engineering background were:

World's Top 10 – Business (last year's position in brackets)
1 Google (1)
2 KPMG (8)
3 Ernst & Young (5)
4 PricewaterhouseCoopers (2)
5 Deloitte (10)
6 Procter & Gamble (6)
7 Microsoft (3)
8 The Coca-Cola Company (13)

9 J.P. Morgan (7)
10 Goldman Sachs (4)
(It is noticeable that Goldman and Morgan are the only financial services organisations and both have dropped since last year.)

World's Top 10 – Engineering
1 Google (1)
2 Microsoft (2)
3 IBM (3)
4. Sony (7)
5. BMW (4)
6. Intel (5)
7. General Electric (6)
8. Siemens (8)
9. Procter & Gamble (10)
10. Apple (new entry)
(The success of the iPhone and iPad has probably lifted Apple.)

Engagement and Generation Y
More than half of employees aged 16 to 28 are looking to leave their jobs within the next year. This revelation comes from Sodexo Motivation Solutions, one of the world's largest motivation solutions providers. This is despite the downturn in the global economy and high unemployment rates. The unemployment levels, of course, disguise the skills shortages and perhaps the GenYs have those skills.

Engagement and working away from the office
Home working can widen the recruitment pool by attracting people who have traditionally struggled to find work, such as single parents and those with disabilities.

Employees are more likely to have high morale where employers are seen to take account of their needs. Employers as diverse as the Nationwide Building Society and the Ministry of Defence are reporting productivity gains achieved by home working.

Good employment practices can enhance the reputation of businesses. Home working and flexible working can extend the hours when businesses are in touch with customers.

New PwC research reveals that the cost of replacing a competent staff member is approximately equal to a year of the employee's salary. Lost skills and productivity, cost of replacement and training of new recruits are all contributing factors costing UK businesses £42bn a year.

Not working in an office environment can reduce exposure to colds, flu and other contagious diseases. Cutting out the commute can reduce stress.

Home working can save on car parking space, office rent and running costs. BT saves £2.2 million per year through home working and flexible working, whilst Suffolk County Council was able to cut the size of its new central services office block by a third by using these practices.

Nearly one in five workers want to work from home but are being prevented from doing so by their employer, the UK Trades Union Congress claims.

Nine out of ten British SMEs now give staff the option to work outside the office. So it would seem that it is the biggest employers who have the furthest to shift.

Malcolm Gladwell
Having always enthusiastically recommended Malcolm Gladwell's

earlier books, *Tipping Point, Blink* and *Outliers,* we now also commend his latest, *What the Dog Saw*. It is a bit of a 'greatest hits' of articles previously published in *The New Yorker* but still contains that combination of good research and good writing. Almost inspirational.

Sprinting an extra mile

We have always advised against customer service staff 'going the extra mile'. It is too far out of the ordinary. Once it has happened a couple of times, it becomes the norm and customers become disappointed if the same level of service cannot be extended every time. Our preference has been to go the extra yard.

The new mantra now, though, is apparently to 'sprint the extra mile'. Whatever next!

Experiences, comments and questions

We always like to hear from readers with views and experiences they have either for publication or for reply off-line.

microskills™, problem ownership™ and Supportive Manager™ are part of a stable of methods used by the Tim Russell Group for consultancy and training of staff around the world in organisational change and interpersonal skills. User organisations come from finance, travel, hospitality, retail, manufacturing, government, education, health services and telecoms. Applications range from customer service to management development, team-building to support skills, negotiations to managing meetings, interviewing to selling.

For more information

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