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Clips



Oct. 2004

Mix And Match

1

Katie Weeks.

- *Contract*; May, 2004, v46 i5 p106.

SUMMARY:

Cost-conscious, nimble, innovative companies are increasingly expecting their workspaces to be the same. The result, according to this article, is a new emphasis on modularity in office and product design. Flexibility and adaptability are the keynotes, with a particular eye on collaborative or mobile space – “You’re not making [employees] adapt to the environment – the environment adapts to them.”

Old panel systems connected only panel to panel at certain connection points; new systems allow panels to connect midpanel, allowing greater flexibility and cost savings. Products like sliding doors and flat screen displays take up less room, while modular units with built-in IT functions allow for plug-and-play setups, cutting out the cost of frequent rewiring and cabling.

The author lauds the increasingly broader palette in color, texture and design of modular units, which she sees as contributing to greater sales as modular units are finding their way into the executive floors of insurance companies and investment houses.

The Center Office

2

James McCown.

- *Boston Globe*; Feb 28, 2004 pD8

SUMMARY:

In the 1950s through the 1970s the offices of top executives were isolated, large, opulent and intimidating. In the 1980s the emphasis was on a Trump-esque “trophy” space – a splendid sanctuary with a spectacular view. In the tech-boom 90s “egalitarian chic” was the rage, with execs working out of cubicles. In 2004, according to this article, CEOs believe their offices – whether pared down or opulent – belong in the center of activity. The article notes that the head of Genzyme Corp. is officed adjacent to the lunchroom, where people feel free to pop in and talk over ideas. The centrally located offices of Mullen Advertising Agency (\$655 million in billings) head Joe Grimaldi and Staples CEO Ronald Sargent are touched upon, as is their attempt to keep their offices much like those of other executives in their respective firms. The key: a central locale and simple furnishings to promote “spontaneous interaction” with their employees.



The Not-So-Simple Office Life

Linda Burnett.

- *Contract*; June, 2004, v46 i6 p88.

SUMMARY:

The author believes that the quality of life in the office takes its cues from design. She points to the failure of hoteling and blames basic human psychology – “People, like animals, seek territory, however small and inadequate.” She reminds readers that office design should reflect more than just “modern day thinking and cost-cutting measures,” and include an understanding of how people are as people. “When we walk through an office our heart, mind and body make sense of it simultaneously . . . Sounds, smells, temperature, lighting and privacy must be considered in relation to how people process information through psychological experience.” Freezing people don’t work efficiently; people in low chairs don’t make big decisions.

The article notes that design can be influential but can’t wholly create a desired employee behavior. If a client wants to create teamwork, a designer has to envision more than an open plan, furniture on wheels and diminished privacy. The designer must take into account three factors: what environment is the employee used to, what is his/her personality, and what the prevailing culture is. If company leadership encourages teamwork in its culture, then a designer can support it with a plan. In a competitive office where hoarding information is rewarded, an open office won’t create collaboration.

Even if collaboration is built into a company culture, designers are advised not to jump into set plans they think are teamwork-inducing. Eliminating all cubicles and replacing lamps with shared overheads should not be automatic. Personal control is the number one factor influencing a positive psychological response to office design. This has different implications for each individual – e.g. controlling the light source or allowing for privacy. Some achieve “personal control” through non-designer factors like flexible work schedules.

Psychology of the work environment is fundamental to productivity and employee satisfaction. Design can tap into cultural and experiential cues to affect mood. Color, for example, can be used to shape behavior. Lighting can be creatively used for mood modification. “You can even give the illusion of privacy by giving more light to a cubicle than to a walkway.” Focusing the light helps employees concentrate on their work. Supplying individual dimmers and desk lamps also allows employees a personal say in their office space.

We know that daylight is important, overhearing phone conversations is bothersome and that control over lighting, temperature and air flow translates into worker satisfaction, but economies trump psychology in the absence of quantities of hard data. The article ends with a call for more research on the effects of interior lighting, color, layout and furniture on psychology and productivity.



Space Pioneer.

Andrew Wahl.

- *Canadian Business*; Apr 26 – May 9, 2004, v177 i9 p106.

SUMMARY:

Capital C designs promotional marketing campaigns for the likes of Microsoft, Hallmark, Kraft and Pepsi. Their forte is to knock down client preconceptions and creatively reposition well-known brands in the minds of consumers. The author of this article was curious as to how the offices would look for a company whose success hinged on making both clients and consumers think in a whole new way.

Capital C’s downtown Toronto offices began as a converted brick and beam warehouse. The president, Tony Chapman, wanted something that would get “people, as soon as they walk through our door, to feel their hearts beat.”

Sessions at Capital C are an intense five hours long, never longer. They start in the main boardroom where, instead of a large table, there are rolling lounge chairs complete with cup holders and small tablets hinged to the arms for note taking. Everyone is exposed and upfront. A computer-networked 36” flat panel references previous campaigns, movie clips and other snippets of pop culture.

Within 45 minutes this group breaks into smaller teams, which are immersed in different environments, with people constantly shuffled around to keep the ideas fresh and flowing. The scenarios range from a two row movie theatre to a bistro café. After hours socializing at a wet bar leads to “an entirely different, but just as important, kind of communication.” A wall of industry awards is testament to the unconventional in design and thought.



Oct. 2004

5 How To Make Creativity Contagious.

Stefan Stem.

- *Management Today*; March, 2004, p. 52.

SUMMARY:

According to this author, creativity doesn't dart down haphazardly from the blue. A company's "next great idea" requires effective management and at least as much perspiration as inspiration. So how do companies adapt their operations and culture to unleash the creative genius within?

One expert quoted in the article states that every company he has worked with has had creativity and innovation as core values but 90 percent of them have done nothing about it. In assessing breakthrough innovation over a ten year period for one large company he found that they all came from a small number of people categorized by their colleagues as "difficult to work with." None of them was still with the company.

This illustrates a key difficulty that companies wrestle with – creativity can be disruptive and often incompatible with the smooth running of a commercial concern. People get promoted for cutting costs and getting things done on time, not for taking risks and creating surprises – the very heart of innovation.

This article calls for companies to cut back on their rules and allow employees the freedom to have pet projects. Above all, management should praise and reward people who try new things and be more tolerant of uncertainty. The author recognizes that it is difficult to allow people the time to explore new ideas when short-term pressures on management make the time and space needed to create a new service or explore a new idea seem frivolous. Companies simply have to allow longer-term projects to flourish.

Readers are then provided with insight into what sort of corporate culture fosters creativity and innovation. It cannot be a culture that is risk-averse, intolerant of differences or focused solely on smooth sailing. It must be a culture that values and rewards success, risk and even a splendid failure or two. The surroundings should include the sorts of music, art, color and sense of play that became discredited after the fall of the dot-coms.

Examples are given of companies that have succeeded with this formula. The article warns that companies need creativity every day to achieve operational excellence. It also warns that companies may lose many of their best creative minds anyway, as a natural course of events. But as the CEO of media giant WPP puts it, "Every CEO wants the power of a global company with the heart and soul of an entrepreneurial company."

The article ends with a list of "Twelve Things People Say To Kill Good Ideas." They make for interesting reading.



Oct. 2004

6 Have Fun, Don't Stay Late And, Sure, Bring The Dog.

Annemarie Mannion.

- *Chicago Tribune*; May 24, 2004, p.1.

SUMMARY:

Employees today are more concerned about a company's culture than ever before because of a greater importance today of being happy on the job. This article examines a number of companies that have established vital and effective corporate cultures that foster creativity and minimize turnover.

Chicago-based package design company Kaleidoscope has employee desks on wheels to facilitate impromptu meetings, has scooters for employees to use to get to the other side of their 27,000 sq. ft. office space, and occasionally has employees bring their dogs to work. New York apparel company Eileen Fisher, on the other hand, focuses on achieving a good balance between work and home. Working after 5pm is discouraged and employees receive an annual \$1,000 "wellness" account and an annual \$1,000 to spend on such things as art classes and foreign languages.

This article notes that the building of viable and productive cultures depends on both employers and employees. The owners and managers usually are responsible for setting the tone and vision, but employees have to embrace the vision and work in collaboration to build and nurture the culture.

The author talks about using the hiring process to reinforce a company's culture, and how to help cultures evolve as the company does. The article ends with tips on how to define a company's culture, how to encourage balance between work and home, how managers can make themselves available to hear new ideas and how to rethink office hierarchy so that culture flows from bottom to top as well as top-down



7 The Future Of Work.

Tim Barlow.

- *Public Relations Tactics*; July, 2004, v11 i7 p26.

SUMMARY:

The author of this article interviewed four individuals familiar with the frontiers of business, both active business people and academics. The topic: what will work would look like in 2014. Among some of the more interesting predictions:

- Offices of the future will resemble a combination of Kinkos and Starbucks, where people interact in comfortable but informal surroundings.
- The cost of communications is trending to zero, along with the rationale for centralizing things. There will be an “unbundling” of organizations as people pick and choose the projects they want to become involved with.
- Quick trips for short meetings will become less necessary, while the most productive type will be those that allow geographically dispersed individuals to spend extended time collaborating and socializing.
- Outsourcing will become more commonplace, but differences in cultures will limit this. Smart, cutting-edge companies won’t outsource any more than 20-25 percent of their work.

8 Questions Abound For The PR Office Of 2014.

Mike Marino.

- *Public Relations Tactics*; July, 2004, v11 i7 p24.

SUMMARY:

This article is a prediction of what office life will be like in 2014. Among the more interesting forecasts:

- The size of company home offices will shrink as it will make no economic sense to maintain fulltime workstations and office spaces for employees who aren’t regularly on-premises. Employees with part-time and reduced work schedules will share offices, plug-and-play workstations or visitor cubicles.
- The new offices will be physically smaller but much more technologically advances. New teleconferencing capabilities, for example, will support telecommuting and client relationships.
- With a work model built on smaller physical spaces, companies will find it much easier to expand geographically. They will find a client/market, hire a small staff (some virtual), secure a small, cost-efficient space and build local and regional business.
- Continuous education will gain increased momentum as clients and their products and strategies become more sophisticated.
- The author notes that these trends spell trouble for companies that aren’t proactive about achieving a good work-life balance, establishing good training programs, accepting of flexible work schedules and generally providing a stimulating work environment.



Q&A: Divining The Future Of Work.

Toni Kistner.

- *Network World*; June 21, 2004, v21 i25 p71.

SUMMARY:

The future will see dramatic changes in how, where and with whom we work. In this article the managing editor of high tech magazine Net.Worker talks with two leaders of the “future of work movement” about their forecasts concerning the future of work. Among the findings:

1. Demographic trends will change the workforce, which will become older and more diverse, with more lower-skilled workers entering earlier.
2. The economies of work will change. Instead of making more products more cheaply, companies will pursue premium prices paid for customized products that meet individual needs.
3. Job growth will be greatest in creative endeavors – teachers, healthcare professionals and designers (software to clothing).
4. Our talent shortage will worsen. Today, there are more knowledge-based jobs than qualified people to fill them.
5. Technology will continue to make remote and mobile work as efficient as being in the next door office.
6. The “rules of engagement” are changing. More and more creative talent, not company management, will control the game. Like today’s sports and entertainment figures, gifted people in the professions from engineering to liberal arts will define when and where they work.
7. People will move back to smaller groups, teams and microbusinesses, particularly as big companies lessen the hold of health insurance and retirement benefits.
8. American businesses, as we know them, may become obsolete. The best electronics engineers are in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia; the engineering powerhouses of tomorrow will likely be China and India. People once went to work to access the tools they needed – a telephone network, a mainframe computer, research assistants. Today many professionals own their own computers, run wired and wireless phone systems, have fax machines and printers, and possess online access to vast databases. Corporate affiliation means less and less and the ability of businesses to manage people and events within a known, stable environment means even less than that.

Next Generation Consulting did a study that found six key characteristics that will make companies sustainable over the next hundred years:

1. **Meaning** – making the company mission meaningful to employees;
2. **Voice** – giving employees a say in decisions;
3. **Enrichment** – providing opportunities for individual growth;
4. **Membership** – helping employees to identify with and within the corporation;
5. **Appreciation** – monetary and otherwise; and
6. **Harmony** – balancing work and home life.

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Companies that want to be sustainable are advised to:

- Be driven by a clear vision that focuses on long-term goals;
- Place a priority on finding and developing talent;
- Isolate and embrace core competencies and shed the other 60 percent of company interests by helping middle managers in non-core areas to set up their own businesses, investing in those businesses and then contracting work back to them;
- Invest in educational and public service institutions that build talent pools of potential employees;
- Renegotiate with the “talent” in the organization and quit calling them “employees.” The employee/employer relationship is not a “shared responsibility partnership.” The new contracts have to be about life/work balance, performance standards and co-investments in our future. This way we can put output-bases performance standards in place that we can audit; and
- Take the company private – a market that cares only for quarter-to-quarter financial measures won’t sustain a company with long-term investments in talent, partnerships and community.

The experts interviewed don’t think this is 20 years out – they see it coming within the next three years.



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I’m A Bad Boss? Blame My Dad; More Execs Are Studying Their Family Past To Root Out Workplace Dysfunction.

Michelle Conlin.

- *Business Week*; May 10, 2004, i3882 p60.

SUMMARY:

There’s a new strain of organizational therapy percolating through the inner sanctums of corporations. The basic concept, according to this article, is that people tend to recreate their family dynamics at the office. The logic seems straight forward enough – families are the first organizations people belong to, with parents as their first bosses and siblings as first colleagues. It is even supported by brain research over the past decade that shows that brains are hardwired to default to “defensive family scripts” during times of conflict and stress.

As a new frontier of productivity, “emotional inefficiency” includes “all that bickering, back-stabbing and ridiculous playing for approval” that occurs in the modern workplace. A two year study by a Seattle psychologist finds that such dramas routinely waste 20 percent to 50 percent of workers’ time. Corporations realize that the most talented employees quit bosses, not companies and that CEOs are often hired for their skills and fired for their personalities.

Buttressed by this and new research in workplace dynamics, high profile coaches are now applying family-systems therapy to business organizations. Although seen by some as “so much EST-era drivel,” these “psychological x-rays on clients’ pasts” have helped executives at companies as diverse as American Express, State Farm Insurance and the Los Angeles Times. Clients learn to understand their own and others’ dysfunctional behavior and how to recognize the emotional subtext that drives many encounters. They then use this information to deconstruct how they sabotage themselves.

The author discusses the reasons this corporate headshrinking is gaining ground, particularly in an era when teamwork is vital and new hires have families “more likely to resemble The Osbournes than Ozzie and Harriet.” The article ends with a charting of common “family dynamics” [e.g. “Child’s achievements were never good enough”] and their “workplace reenactment” [e.g. “Perfectionist. Approval seeker. Fear of being a fraud.”].



11 Privacy Screens Filter Distractions.

Robert Gutsche, Jr.

- *Chicago Tribune*; June 14, 2004, p1.

SUMMARY:

A common complaint from employees is that too much time is wasted on idle chitchat with coworkers who are encouraged to talk by the open cubicle environments of modern offices. Some desperate workers have taken to blocking their cubicle entrances with filing cabinets; one employee uses police tape.

A number of entrepreneurial companies have responded by developing doors that close the entrances to cubicles, providing greater privacy and deterring drop-in schmoozing from coworkers. One Ft. Worth company has been selling mesh cubicle doors since 2003. Another firm in Chicago has developed the Cube Door™ which acts like a roller shade as it's drawn across the cubicle entrance and attached at the other side. The catalogs of Office Depot, Staples and Boise Cascade will soon show a number of these doors. Products range from sliding panel privacy screens (\$120 to \$135) to transparent mesh Cube Doors priced under \$30.

The article also touches on other offerings, including a small push-light that hangs outside of cubicles to tell workers the occupant is busy.

12 Some Furniture Is Home To Toxins.

Tasha Eichenseher.

- *Chicago Tribune*; May 23, 2004, p17.

SUMMARY:

This article pulls no punches. It notes that traditional furniture is likely comprised of a frame made of unsustainably harvested wood treated with formaldehyde and varnishes, unrecyclable foam cushions doused with flame-retardant chemicals that accumulate in fish when released into the environment, and upholstery colored with chlorine-based dyes and tacked on with toxic glues. The volatile organic compounds (VOCs) leach into the air for years.

The author explores the full range of toxins found in home and office furnishings. She then explores the organic, non-toxic and sustainable alternatives and provides readers with Internet addresses and telephone numbers where further information can be found.



There's Something In The Air.

Sarah Sabaratnam.

- *New Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur)*; June 17, 2004, pO7.

SUMMARY:

This article raises the possibility that poor air quality in the office may be the cause of the sneezing, runny noses and itchy throats that occur after walking into the workplace in the morning. The author discusses the proliferation of microscopic fungi and other airborne allergens that can cause lung infections if unchecked. She notes one expert's estimate that 95 percent of the causes of sinusitis is due to such mold spores.

Other sources of airborne allergens are discussed, as well as "out-gassing" from office furnishings and carpets, volatile emissions from cleaning compounds and floating microscopic matter from the ink of photocopying machines. Readers are cautioned against purchasing air filters and other products before knowing their facts, particularly since most of these products don't work. The article ends with a long list of tips for building owners, employers and employees.

Fitness; Bodywork; Making It Easier To Work Out At Work; Companies Looking To Cut Healthcare Costs Are Adding Fitness Programs To Keep Employees Active And Healthy.

Jeannine Stein.

- *Los Angeles Times*; July 12, 2004, pF1.

SUMMARY:

Skyrocketing healthcare costs and climbing obesity rates have companies scrambling. Firms are taking notice of recent studies showing that those who exercise regularly and eat healthful diets have fewer medical claims. This article focuses on companies that are setting up or planning to set up fitness programs for their employees. These programs range from fully subsidized on-site fitness centers to off-site gym memberships, walking and running clubs, and Internet fitness and wellness coaching when there is no room for a fitness center at work. Some companies acknowledge the low (less than 25 percent) employee participation rates by providing discounts on insurance premiums for those who participate.

This is more than a new trend – the article notes that a recent survey by the Washington D.C.-based nonprofit National Business Group on Health found that 77% of respondents have an onsite fitness center, 69% have onsite fitness programs and 38% have health-related Web-based tools available for employees.

Readers are also provided with an insightful look into the innovative programs at Electronic Arts, Mattel and Pfizer.



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15 Let The Sun Shine In? Fluorescents Drive Some Workers Batty.

Jared Sandberg.

- *Wall Street Journal*; June 9, 2004, pB1.

SUMMARY:

This article is concerned with the adverse effects of fluorescent lighting in the office. It is replete with the stories of various individuals who have found unique ways to disconnect the fixtures, hide the on switches, and generally abolish the ghastly pallor of this brand of lighting.

Fluorescents do have their good side. They run on a quarter of the electricity that incandescent bulbs require and they last roughly ten times as long. The problem is, "people apply efficient light stupidly." Most office workers get a lot more of it than they need, canceling out much of the efficiency.

Too much light, especially with computers, can cause glare and eyestrain. Add to that the fact that older fluorescents flicker at a rate of 60 cycles per second, inducing headache, eyestrain and seasonal affective disorder. Workers under the lights were also found to have higher levels of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenocorticotrophin in their blood.

Newer fluorescents have an increased cycle time that eliminates flicker and alleviates many of these old problems, presenting a more natural balance of colors. Unfortunately, many of the older systems remain in use, constituting half of the operating systems in offices today.

Natural light can improve on even the newest fluorescent systems. Research has shown that workers perform better when exposed to natural light. In one study, "office workers were found to perform 10-25 percent better on tests of mental function and memory recall," when having a window with a view of vegetation. If they can't give out windows with a view, the author implores companies to get their old systems replaced with the newer models and watch morale rise as absenteeism falls.



Oct. 2004

Health-Care Firms Push To Heal Their Buildings.

Melita Marie Garza.

- *Chicago Tribune*; June 20, 2004, p1.

SUMMARY:

This article praises healthcare firms for being in the forefront of pressuring manufacturers to create healthier commercial office furnishings. In 2002 Kaiser Permanente gave an ultimatum to longtime supplier Dalton-Ga.-based Tandus Group: "We want no carcinogens, mutagens [chemicals that cause gene mutation] or reproductive toxins. Create a quality carpet without the controversial chemical polyvinylchloride (PVC) or forget about further contracts." In June of this year Tandus announced that it had achieved success, and was awarded a contract to cover 30 million square feet of floor space in the coming decade.

Tom Lent of the Healthy Building Network, a group that advocates "green building" techniques, praises Kaiser Permanente's efforts and believes this strategy will work with other suppliers. Shaw Industries now sells PVC-free carpeting and will make only PVC carpeting by the end of 2004. Architects and designers are pushing for this also. Window treatment manufacturers are introducing PVC-free systems while several upholstery products without PVC have come onto the market. The article also notes that rail and wall guard systems and office furniture pieces are now available PVC-free.

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17 Telecommuting Comes Of Age.

Ellen Gragg.

- *Office Solutions*, July/August, 2004, v21 i4 p46.

SUMMARY:

The International Telework Association and Council (ITAC) estimates that by the end of 2004 there will be 30 million Americans who telecommute regularly. The Gartner Group estimates the worldwide count of telecommuters will be 137 million by 2008. This article delves into the reasons that telecommuting will grow long-term, despite a recent slowdown due to the economy.

Employees

This article notes that employees gain a great deal by telecommuting. They save the time, money and frustration of commuting, making it possible for people to work remotely for companies that would otherwise be too far away. Employees also benefit from scheduling flexibility, involving everything from doctor and dental appointments to being home for in-home repairs and deliveries. Caring for children and elderly parents and participating in middle of the day school activities also become possible. The greatest benefit for many, however, is the chance to work uninterrupted, particularly on creative projects. Many employees [but not all] will gladly give up the collegiality that makes going to work pleasant for the chance to finish a big project or get a fresh idea.

Employers

Companies also benefit from telecommuting employees. The article points to increased employee job satisfaction, potential real estate savings, and reduced absenteeism -- particularly from those who stay home rather than endanger colleagues with a touch of cold or flu. A major benefit comes from enhanced employee productivity. A number of studies by large employers, including J.D. Edwards, Compaq and American Express, have found that teleworkers put in more hours of actual work and are more productive per hour worked than their in-office counterparts.

The article notes that telecommuting requires a real commitment from both employer and employee. It advises that a formal plan be created that incorporates goal-setting, with employees providing high quality work and being reliably available for scheduled conference calls or in-office meetings. Managers must not micromanage the little things while insisting on accountability on the big ones. The real question for managers, the author insists, is "Do I care whether the employee is on the computer at 3pm or 2am, or do I care if the research is stellar?"



18 Blending Work And Personal Spaces Is Tricky.

Sue Shellenbarger.

- *Deseret News (Salt Lake City)*; June 27, 2004, pMO1.

SUMMARY:

The number of full-time home offices is growing and there is currently a clear trend toward integrating home offices and home life. Part of this trend involves more people taking over their formal living room for work. In response, office furniture makers like Steelcase are designing hip, upscale office furniture that makes work furniture look more like home furniture. Patterned, colorful fabrics, glass tables, and cabinets with doors all make offices blend into homes.

The author warns that integrating home offices into homes takes more than furniture -- it takes people skills and family communication. Examples are given of how families have changed their habits to accommodate the needs of the home office worker. The author notes that many home officers eventually rent space outside the home, often from providers like HQBusiness Centers [www.HQ.com] or Regus Group [www.regus.com]. The government also supports a number of telework centers [www.telework.gov], mostly around Washington, D.C.

19 How To Create A Successful Home Office.

- *The Grand Rapids Press*; July 25, 2004, pL7.

SUMMARY:

A person's home office environment can be critical to their success, yet only 20 percent of home office users say their office is set up the way they like it, and only 16 percent say it is a stimulating place to work.

This article notes that there are many great options for desks, chairs and storage solutions that won't break the bank when creating a functional and visually pleasing office space. The article taps designer-author-Emmy Award-winning TV personality Christopher Lowell for office decorating tips that range from ergonomics and organizing to pampering and mood creation.



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Despite Technology Advances, Office Remains The Place To Be.

Robert Weisman.

- *Boston Globe*; June 14, 2004, pC1.

SUMMARY:

The last two articles in this section offer a contrarian viewpoint of telecommuting. This article notes that the growth in telecommuting has proven to be slower and less revolutionary than expected. According to one expert quoted here, "[Telecommuting] has become an adjunct to, not a replacement for, the traditional office ... It's morphed into multiple work situations." Among the 12.2 million telecommuters employed by US business this year, some work from home, some work from the road – hotel, Starbucks, client site – and a growing number do both.

When push comes to shove, however, economic and cultural factors appear to trump the enabling technology that allows unfettered telecommuting. The tight economy of the last few years has caused companies to cut back on employee inducements and has caused workers to fear that if they are out of sight they'll be the first ones fired. It has also forced managers to fall back on what they know best, namely on-site managing. The revised forecasts on the annual growth rate for telecommuting have fallen from 5 percent to 2 percent through 2008.

The bedrock arguments in favor of telecommuting remain, however, and the office, with its interruptions and water cooler schmoozing, can be a terrible place to get work done. The author still sees telecommuting as a coming trend, just one that is slower to arrive. A quickening economy could change all that.



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Telecommuting And Flex Time Come With Job Penalties.

Andrea Kay.

- *Gannett News Service*; May 13, 2004, p1.

SUMMARY:

Career consultant Andrea Kay offers her viewpoint of telecommuting and flextime based on the experiences of a number of her clients. One client, for example, works a flexible working arrangement for a Fortune 500 company. Her supposed 20 hours per week results in 35-40 percent less pay than her peers, a lost promotion and 30-32 hours worked by the time she resolves issues that seem to arise just before she leaves for home. Add to that the fact that she now pays her own healthcare benefits and the potential down side of nontraditional working arrangements becomes very clear.

In a recent study conducted by Families and Work Institute in New York, nearly 40 percent of workers said that employees who use flexible work options are less likely to get ahead in the careers. A separate study by the Boston Globe confirms this. Another seven-year study of 324 working mothers found managers and professionals who "teleworked or worked part-time even for some part of that span suffered dramatic wage gaps compared to peers," making 27 percent less than office workers in similar situations. Under such circumstances, telecommuting and flextime programs seem predisposed to failure.

The author calls for more care in structuring telecommuting and flextime arrangements and for training managers to have both skills and an open mind in regards to the programs so that employees don't get penalized for participation.



22 New Logitech Keyboard Designs Place Premium On Comfort And The Digital Experience.

Annmarie Geddes Lipold.

- *Business Wire (New York); July 20, 2004, p1.*

SUMMARY:

Logitech has recently announced an inventive new keyboard design that combines advanced ergonomics with an improved control of digital entertainment and rich media. The design is incorporated into three new cordless desktop keyboard models, the LX-500, LX-501 and LX-300 and one corded model, the Logitech Media Keyboard. The physical proportions have been redefined to achieve low profile with a "Zero Degree Tilt" feature that makes all the key rows the same height from the space bar to the function keys, minimizing wrist extension and the hand and wrist strain that goes with it. Enhanced navigation controls include small wheels that alleviate much of the strain involved with mouse scrolling, while new function keys, circular in appearance, enable users to launch MSOffice applications or complete popular Windows and MSOffice commands such as Print and Save.

Both the LX-500 and LX-501 (\$79.95) include the Logitech Cordless Click!™ Optical Mouse that allows scrolling in three dimensions and effortless zooming in and out. The corded LX-300 (\$59.95) has easy-to-use media playback controls and includes the Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse.

23 Can You Handle IT? Modern Office Technology Can Create Stress, Especially In Meetings.

Alan Cane.

- *Financial Times; July 13, 2004, p12.*

SUMMARY:

Siemens, the German electronics group, commissioned a survey to find out how office technology -- computers, emails and mobile phones -- has changed social behavior in the workplace, particularly in meetings. The results were not surprising. More than half of the executives surveyed said it was "inappropriate" to use any form of IT equipment during face-to-face meetings. This was especially true of cell phones.

The article notes that most respondents reported that their companies had voluntary codes of conduct covering the use of IT equipment based on respect for other people and their time. Codes were involuntary, however, in two out of five companies where personal mobile phones were barred from the workplace.

The author notes that a "cultural divide" seems to be developing between older staff and younger colleagues who respond to calls regardless of the situation. The Siemens study sets out rules of business etiquette in the digital age, including turning off phones and computer screens during meetings and warning others when an important call is expected.



Nationwide Search Discovers "Most Obsolete Office."

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- *Business Wire; July 22, 2004, p1.*

SUMMARY:

From March 16 through June 30, Xerox and Entrepreneur Magazine called on US small businesses to enter their "Help! My Office is Obsolete" contest, with the winner receiving office design services and a host of new office technologies.

The winner was Mad Science, a successful provider [ironically enough] of children's science education programs. The article notes that "Mad Science's offices currently look like a scientific experiment gone awry," standing out from fellow entrants in terms of obsolete technology and poor business processes and designs. Comments Mad Science owner Kathy Havlett, "Our technology is so outdated that we have to practically kick it to make it work."

The centerpiece of the office is a 12 year old fax machine that uses paper on a roll and a number of old, slow inkjet printers. The office itself is a hodgepodge of folding chairs and self-assembly bookshelves. With no storage system, books, papers and supplies are scattered about the floor.

Design guru Thom Felicia of hit show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" was horrified, but gamely declared, "We're about to put the Bunsen burner under this company!"

Xerox will supply new document technology, including multifunction systems, software, network color printers and flat-panel display screens. Office furniture will be supplied by the Hon Company. The results of the makeover will be featured in the November issue of Entrepreneur, due out in late October.



25 Hidden Asset.

- *Fast Company*; March, 2004, i80 p93.

SUMMARY:

This article explores ideas and their influence on corporate culture and the bottom line. In particular, it focuses on the big questions surrounding business ideas: Where do the ideas come from? Who are the idea advocates? How do they get new initiatives started?

The article focuses on nurturing and protecting ideas, the importance of careful timing in any innovation, and what the “critical linkages” are between ideas and action. The article also provides readers with an eight point game plan for winning with ideas with each step fully fleshed out and illustrated with real life business examples. Companies win with ideas – this article will help readers develop and protect good ideas until their potential is fully realized.

26 Independence In Pursuit Of Happiness; Workplace Freedoms Offer Benefits For Employers As Well As Employees.

Amy Joyce.

- *The Washington Post*; July 4, 2004, pF5.

SUMMARY:

In choosing a new job, 95 percent of Americans say they want independence in how they do their job. This article notes that workplace independence does not just mean a flexible schedule. It also means the chance to explain ideas and take chances. A number of executives are quoted concerning this issue. One feels that his role is more a coach than a dictator, noting “When people feel they have ownership or independence, they tend to be happier.” Another defines workplace independence “as having a say in how work gets done while understanding there are rules and guidelines to follow.”

One of the executives interviewed for this article left her position to start up a new company because of a lack of independence. She now coaches managers to be coaches rather than bosses and concedes it can be difficult. “Letting go doesn’t mean a manager is not managing anymore. It simply means learning that coaching is another tool to being a good manager.”

The author declares that it is not entirely up to the manager to create this sort of environment. If employees want more independence they have to determine their goals within the organization and communicate this to their employer. Autonomy and responsibility walk hand-in-hand.



Handling Oddball Co-workers.

Neil Palmar.

- *Psychology Today*; July/August, 2004, v37 i4 p30.

SUMMARY:

Research presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association declares that as many as 5-10 percent of workers – bosses as well as colleagues – may suffer from a personality disorder. This article notes that people tend to choose careers based on their personality type, which tends to reinforce their traits and fuel problems in the workplace.

The article lists four of the most common types of personality disorder, what types of jobs the sufferers of each disorder likely hold, what their typical behaviors are and strategies to follow when faced by each.

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Fear In The Workplace: The Bullying Boss.

Benedict Carey.

- *The New York Times*; June 22, 2004, pF1.

SUMMARY:

Researchers have long been interested in the bullies of the playground, exploring what drives them and what effect they have on their victims. Recently, researchers have turned their focus to the bullies of the workplace. This article gives an overview of what psychologists have discovered about why cruel bosses thrive, how employees cover up for managers they dislike, and under what conditions workers will confront and expose their bullying bosses.

Studies find that bullying bosses differ from their schoolyard counterparts in that they are already in positions of dominance and are as likely to pick on a strong subordinate as a weak one. Women are at least as likely as men to be aggressors and more likely to be targets.

In a corporate setting bullying has to do more with a boss’s desires than with employees’ needs. The bully may want to swat a threatening subordinate, find a scapegoat, or, more often than not, simply enjoy the sheer pleasure of exercising power. The mystifying thing about this pattern, the article notes, is that it doesn’t seem to affect productivity. While workers might be loathe to go to work each day, they still perform. Research has found little relationship between job attitude and productivity.

Workers do, however, withhold the extras not directly tied to compensation, such as customer courtesy and helping coworkers with problems. Yet this falloff is smaller than expected. While some shirk the extras, others do a lot, partly to cover for their slacking peers and partly to advance themselves at the expense of their peers. From the outside, therefore, tyrants appear to be doing a good job.

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Employees know the inevitable cost of going around a boss and very few do it. Psychologists speculate that bullying bosses often elicit defensive habits from subordinates, habits developed in childhood, like reflexive submission and explosive rage. The subordinate is transported back to a different reality and no longer sees what is really happening to them.

Experts see ambition among subordinates as the most insidious ally of tyrant bosses. In simulation tests, with groups of three people arbitrarily assigned roles as top manager, #2 manager and subordinate, the top managers quickly dominate and transform the #2 managers. If the top manager is aggressive and mean, that's the way the #2 manager became irrespective of how low-key and compassionate they looked on personality tests.

Research has found that the first reaction of workers witnessing the humiliation of a colleague is relief that the sword has fallen elsewhere and pleasure in the fact that they look more competent by comparison. Coworkers watching a colleague being bullied resolve their guilt by wondering what they did to deserve it. The brutal treatment goes unchallenged, the victim feels isolated and people who abhor the bullying become complicit in the behavior.

The article goes on to examine how resistance to bullying arises and is often diverted. It examines who is likely to speak up and who isn't. The article ends with a discussion of the best strategies to manage a bully in the workplace.