

Gen Trends

Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come!

March 2009

Thanks for Your Service – Get Out

As the economy has slowed, the number of layoffs has soared. But the way some of them are being handled troubles me greatly. Last week, I was told of a librarian with 16 years of service who was escorted from her desk unexpectedly by two security guards. She was told that she could return on the weekend to collect her personal belongings and would be given 15 minutes to do so. In another case, the manager of a college facility was escorted out the door with no notice, once again with two security guards in tow. In both cases, the individual is being provided with an appropriate severance, but the insensitivity with which these and others are being handled astounds me.

Human resources professionals and risk managers will defend the policies and liability surrounding these situations as necessary in these unpredictable times. I have to wonder however, if some of these policies and practices are not responsible for the very paranoia they are designed to prevent. Yes, there have been isolated instances of vandalism or wrongdoing committed out of anger and emotion, but can anyone really quantify the actual impact of these anomalous incidents? Meanwhile, these practices send a horrible message to everyone witnessing these events and exponentially to everyone these witnesses tell.

Many of us lament the respect and collegiality that has been lost in so many workplaces over time. Most young people treat jobs in a contractual manner these days based in part on the cold and calculating ways they have seen many organizations treat their people. Why should they invest any emotional energy into the firm when little, if any of it, will be reciprocated? Escorting unsuspecting contributors out the door using armed guards just reinforces these perceptions.

More on Gentistics

In their Internet & American Life Project, PEW Research concluded that among the 35% of adult internet users who have created an online social networking profile:

- 75% are 18-24 years old
- 57% are 25-34
- 30% are 35-44
- 19% are 45-54
- 10% are 55-64
- 7% are 65 and older

Upcoming Center audiences include:

Grand Junction Parks and Recreation
Institute of Management Accountants
Private Christian School Association
CO Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency
Nat'l Assoc. of Oil Heating Service Mgrs.
American Heating Oil

"GenTistics"

A little more than 35% of adult Internet users have created a profile on an online social network.

-PEW Internet & American Life Project

Check out [Bob's blog](#).



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May I Borrow Your Downloads?

College students are using iPods in order to better retain their material and increase their performance on tests. Launched two years ago, Apple's iTunes University is an application that enables colleges to make their lectures available for students to download onto their iPods and iPhones.

To determine the effectiveness of podcasts as a learning tool, Dani McKinney, a psychologist at the State University of New York in Fredonia, conducted a study. He measured the retention rates of students who listened to podcasts of a lecture and compared them against students who attended the lecture. Both groups were provided with corresponding handouts and slides.

The results reinforced the theory that podcasts helped to increase retention rates. Those who attended the class averaged a D while those who only listened to the podcasts and did not attend the lecture averaged a C, one grade higher than the control group.

More important than the technology itself was how the participants used it. The students who scored the highest in the iPod group (77 out of 100) were the podcast users who listened to the recordings multiple times and took notes. There was little difference among those in either group that did not take notes.

Although the study consisted of a small sample group for one lecture, the implication is that if used correctly, technology can reinforce learning and increase retention.

Case Study Corner

Last month, I discussed some of the considerations around hiring over-qualified individuals during an economic slowdown. To read the original case study and what I had to say, [click here](#). This month, I'll provide a few pointers for selecting these individuals should you choose to do so.

Begin by carefully considering how an overqualified person might fit into the opening you are filling. How over-qualified? Overqualified in what context? Experience? Skills? Both? How might this person fit in with current employees? Might they embrace this person's arrival? Might they resist it? Might they perceive it as a threat? Might they see it as an opportunity to learn?

Secondly, list all the concerns you might have about bringing an overqualified person on board. Length of tenure? Potential clash of approaches? At the same time, consider the opportunities hiring this person might present. What might this individual be able to teach you and others? What connections and resources might he or she bring to the table? Make as comprehensive a list as possible, and balance opportunities with concerns. Remember that there will never be a perfect match.

Third, consider the selection process itself. Just because the person's résumé indicates overqualification, doesn't mean it's so. Verify all claims. Some people succumb to the temptation to exaggerate, especially during tough times. Treat a candidate of this nature the way you treat all others. Don't allow yourself to get sucked in by the person's qualifications or charisma. Once you've established that the person can do the job, then take the opportunity to discuss how he or she would fit in. Be careful not to allow this person to leapfrog the normal process with comments that suggest that your selection efforts are unnecessary.

A good candidate will treat you and your process with respect.

Finally, consider the opportunities and options you might be able to offer in return for that person throwing him- or herself into the job. After all, this can have a very positive outcome. Be careful that you do not end up selling this person the job based on your perceptions of what he or she brings to the table. This has to be a balanced relationship, reinforced by a clear understanding of what this person's responsibilities will be. Regardless of the person's background, he or she is still working for you.

The keys to embarking on this type of relationship is to clearly consider all the possibilities and to be up front at all times with concerns and questions during the selection process as well as throughout the employment relationship.

Way-Kewl Translation That's Not Poppycock!

"Urban" and other dictionaries have been used for some time to help those in older generations translate Millennial-speak. Now that those in the Millennial generation are fully engaged in and contributing to the workplace, how are they to understand "Gran Slang" – the street jargon of those three generations preceding them?

Home & Capital advisors have developed an online tool tied to their website called the "Grand Slang" dictionary. This will help young people understand the casual vernacular of their elders. Words such as "hullabaloo", "poppycock" and "tomfoolery" are translated to the young person's lexicon.