

# CAROCP Market Watch

California Association of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs

(A Monthly Trends & Forecasting Report)  
September 2006

## **GENERATION Xers STUCK IN A SILO** *(All Sectors)*

Increasingly, Generation X employees are finding that no matter how many hours they put in or how much their bosses rave about their work, they're just plain stuck. A generation of younger workers can't get ahead because the boomers above them won't budge. In today's leaner companies, executive jobs are fewer and boomers who have hung onto them are in no hurry to let go. Generation X is in danger of turning into the Prince Charles of the American workforce: perpetual heirs apparent awaiting the keys to the kingdom.

Title inflation, Xers say, is a strange new outgrowth of this era. More than half polled have been given a fancier title in the past two years. Yet almost half of those say they're doing the same job. The addition of the word "special" or "specialist" to a title is particularly in vogue. Gen Xers, whose career expectations were shaped during the '90s boom, are not, however, a patient bunch. That's why more and more employers are adopting "unsiloing" as their newest HR buzzword. Following the lead of GE, UPS, Exxon Mobil, and others, more companies are rotating young talent throughout the organization. Shuffling potential leaders around to give them broad experience has reduced the turnover of Gen Xers and will be a long-term benefit to the companies.

### Five Ways to Jump-Start Your Career (Whether You're a Gen Xer or Not)

- Look for Growth – If you want a bigger job, think about jumping to an industry that's creating lots of them.
- Go Abroad – Familiarity with foreign markets is a must now for anyone who wants to move up.
- Downsize – Sometimes to move up you need to move down to a smaller company. They tend to have less rigid hierarchies than big firms do and to care less about seniority.
- Get a Mentor – Finding someone who's willing to coach you on the political subtleties can be an indispensable ally.
- Find a Mess to Fix – Be willing to tackle the thorniest problem – preferably one that is keeping your boss up at night.

Fortune, August 21, 2006

## **AND NOW FOR THE BABY BOOMERS' STRUGGLE** *(All Sectors)*

Recent studies have found that about three-quarters of workers age 50-plus want to work beyond age 65 – and their motivation to work tends to increase with age. Yet older employees say that all too often their efforts go unrewarded. The majority of workers age 50 and over who were surveyed in focus groups feel under appreciated and lack the respect they used to enjoy. Employment specialists are taking a strong interest in the disconnect between older workers' motivation and their declining sense of usefulness. It is advised that workers need to take the initiative to get what they want from their job. Here are a few steps that can help:

- **Speak Up** – Your boss could be making some big assumptions about you and your plans for the future. He or she might think you're getting ready to retire. If that's not the case, speak up. Tell your supervisor that you have no plans to retire soon or that you would like to work, say another eight to 10 years.
- **Toot Your Horn** – You have to keep giving examples of your contributions. Drop an e-mail or mention to your boss each time you have completed a project, reached a goal, solved a major problem or had some other kind of success.
- **Become More Valuable** – Aim to gain importance in other areas of your company in a way that only a mature worker can. For example, become a mentor for younger workers or assist in your company's recruiting effort.
- **Stay Connected** – Relate to younger colleagues as peers, whether that means inquiring about their work, going to lunch together occasionally or asking for their expertise on a project.

The Wall Street Journal, August 21, 2006

### **SOCIETY SWITCHES FOCUS AWAY FROM CHILDREN** *(Education, Child Development, and Family Services)*

The USA is becoming a much more adult-focused society after being child-centered for decades, a report suggests. Longer life expectancy, delayed marriage and childbearing, and childlessness add up to a longer life without kids, says the analysis, released by the non-partisan National Marriage Project at Rutgers University. Raising children, which used to become the common lot of most adults, now has become more of a niche in your life rather than one of the main features of adult life.

In 1970, for example, 73.6% of women ages 25-29 had at least one minor child at home; 30 years later, 48.7% did. Also, today, more women in their 40s are childless. One in 10 were childless in 1976; in 2004, it was about one in five. The report doesn't show that Americans are "anti-child," however; it does suggest that a society indifferent to parenting will further aggravate current attitudes and account for what's being called "the cultural devaluation of child-rearing."

Workplace policies are also reflecting the greater attention to adults. The so-called family-friendly programs that emerged in the '80s and '90s are being replaced with work-life programs. The terminology is changing to be more generic.

USA Today, July 12, 2006

### **LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK** *(All Sectors)*

A willingness to laugh, plus a sense of lightheartedness, equals a fun and productive workplace according to Ann Fry, author of Laughing Matter. "If your employees are happy, they will bring greater energy and enthusiasm to their jobs – and your company will function at peak performance." Research from publications like the Journal of Behavioral Medicine and the American Journal of Medical Science support humor's reputed health benefits: reduced stress, less sensitivity to pain and a more efficient immune system. It's the more abstract, hard-to-quantify benefits that make employers sit up and take notice: greater creativity, less resistance to change, improved morale, more positive attitudes, less anger and reduced absenteeism and turnover.

Websites to tweak your company's funny bone:

[laughandlearn.org](http://laughandlearn.org)

[humormatters.com](http://humormatters.com)

[humoruniversity.com](http://humoruniversity.com)

[AATH.org](http://AATH.org)

[humorforyourhealth.com](http://humorforyourhealth.com) (empowers health through humor)

[OCMETRO](#), July 20, 2006

### **LOCKDOWN: MORE SECURE ONLINE BANKING SERVICES** *(Finance and Business)*

Quick: What's the name of your high school mascot? If you didn't get the answer right, you may get locked out of your online bank account. In a new security feature, more banks are having customers pick personal questions to be asked when they log in for online banking services. Driving the banks' security moves are escalating consumer worries over online fraud – a major barrier for banks seeking to push customers to do more of their banking online. More than 5% of Internet users say they have stopped banking online because of security concerns.

Additionally, adding urgency to the effort is a looming deadline for new security guidelines from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, a group of government agencies that sets standards for financial institutions. The FFIEC last year called for banks to add online security measures beyond just a user name and password and set a December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Failure to meet the deadline could result in fines or other legal action. [The Wall Street Journal](#), August 23, 2006

### **LABS ON A CHIP** *(Health Science and Medical Technology)*

Soon, mothers will routinely test their children at home for the flu. Doctors will screen patients for cancer and begin discussing treatment based on the immediate results. Farmers will scrutinize the health of animals, and soldiers and environmental inspectors will test the safety of air and water, without time-consuming trips to the lab.

Dow Corning and Genencor International are making a portable biosensor that will be easy to use, flexible and capable of performing multiple diagnostic tests. The device consists of a compact, handheld reader and a quarter-sized disposable biochip. A tiny drop of blood or water goes in a hole on the chip, where it comes into contact with a silicon wafer containing a series of minuscule test wells. Molecules in the blood or water interact with receptor molecules in the test material just as they would in the body. The molecular reaction reduces the flow of electricity in the test wells, and the reader translates that change in current into data: what's in your blood or in the air, and equally important, the quantity.

The first device, aimed at veterinarians, will be available in 2008. Sensors for human use and food inspection could take several years. The promise though, is real: life-saving data without the wait. [Fast Company](#), July/August 2006

### **WHO NEEDS RECORD COMPANIES?** *(Arts, Media, and Entertainment Technology)*

The rules of the music business are changing fast in the Internet Age. Record companies have served as the gatekeepers between the artists and the audience. If you wanted your video played on MTV, you needed a major label. If you wanted your CD displayed at Tower Records, you had to have a big record company. Sure, the company paid you a big advance. Then it would bill you for production, distribution, and marketing costs.

The record companies are no longer as powerful because artists have more ways to get their music to fans. Garth Brooks sells his music exclusively at Wal-Mart stores and on the retailer's website. Radiohead's lead singer released a solo CD on an independent label. It was promoted on the homepage of Apple's iTunes Music Store and became No. 2 on the Billboard 200. Who needs a major label when you can do that? [Fortune](#), August 21, 2006

### **THE MYTH ABOUT HOMEWORK** *(Education, Child Development, and Family Services)*

According to a national survey conducted by the University of Michigan, the amount of time that American children spend on homework is up 51% from 1981. Most of that increase reflects bigger loads for little kids. And that's before No Child Left Behind kicked in. The onslaught comes despite the fact that an exhaustive review by the nation's top homework scholar at Duke University concluded that homework does not measurably improve academic achievement for kids in grade school. Studies found that kids who do some homework in middle and high school score somewhat better on standardized tests, but doing more than 60 to 90 minutes a night in middle school and more than two hours per night in high school is associated with lower scores.

Success on standardized tests is, of course, only one measure of learning – and only one purported goal of homework. Educators tend to defend homework by saying it builds study habits, self-discipline and time-management skills. But there's also evidence that homework sours kids' attitudes toward school. [Time](#), September 4, 2006

### **ECONOMY ON TARGET?** *(Finance and Business)*

For a snapshot of where the economy is heading, keep an eye on Target. Target is considered a key barometer of the underlying health of U.S. consumers, as its sales of low-cost, high-cachet merchandise are thought to be mostly immune from far-off tensions in the Middle East. In July, Target said the pace of sales had slowed. If that keeps up, markets may start to believe talk of a coming recession. [Fortune](#), August 21, 2006

### **CAN YOUR BANNER AD DO THIS?** *(Marketing, Sales, and Service)*

Online advertising is growing 30% a year – but there's more innovative stuff happening in the physical world where the message isn't confined by the dimensions of a browser screen. The future of advertising will be about creating unexpected connections to memorable, real-world experiences in ways that bring brands to life.

So how about electrical outlets in airport terminals? A new campaign for Chase Commercial Banking put ads just above 90 outlets at Indianapolis International Airport. Travelers plug in their laptop to see the ad. Or take your typical urinal. Clients such as

Viacom's Country Music Television and Molson Beer are spreading the word via the WizMark, which fits inside a urinal and delivers sound and images when it senses a new customer. And the next time you step out of your car, you may find your parking space talking to you. ParkingStripe Advertising has placed vinyl-strip ads in lots on behalf of Ford Motor Co., Qwest, and others with recorded pitch versions. Some 80% of consumers say they remember the messages. Try that with a banner ad. [Fast Company](#), July/August 2006

*Trends & Economic Forecasting Committee –September 2006*

*Carol Hume*  
*Coastline ROP*  
*chume@coastlinerop.k12.ca.us*

*Kim Thomason*  
*Capistrano-Laguna Beach ROP*  
*kthomason@capolagrop.k12.ca.us*

California State Standards for Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Industry Sectors

- |                                                     |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture and Natural Resources                | 9. Health Science and Medical Technology  |
| 2. Arts, Media, and Entertainment Technology        | 10. Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation   |
| 3. Building Trades and Construction                 | 11. Information Technology                |
| 4. Education, Child Development and Family Services | 12. Manufacturing and Product Development |
| 5. Energy and Utilities                             | 13. Marketing, Sales, and Service         |
| 6. Engineering and Design                           | 14. Public Services                       |
| 7. Fashion and Interior Design                      | 15. Transportation                        |
| 8. Finance and Business                             |                                           |

***CAROCP is Mission Driven – Market Smart!***

A publication from the California Association of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs