

CAROCP Market Watch

(A Monthly Trends & Forecasting Report)
April 2006

FIVE PATHS TO SANITY *(All Sectors)*

Anyone who toils in the modern global economy has to figure out a way to survive the outcome of two forces. The first force, the reengineering movement, transferred the problem of efficiency from the organization to the worker, who is now asked to work both harder and smarter. Researchers from the University of California, Irvine found that businesspeople were interrupted once every 11 minutes and that it often took 25 minutes to return to their original task. The second force is simply the amount of communication coming at you. Imagine coming to the office one day and finding a stack of 160 “While You Were Out” slips. If e-mail were translated into 1980s terms, that’s what it would look like. These simple rules can help you manage your time and your sanity:

- **Keep your meetings to a minimum.** Surveys show that most people find meetings a major time waster. Use them sparingly, keep to an agenda, start and end on time.
- **Show your technology who’s boss.** Most of today’s devices and software actually can be set to be less intrusive. Switch off the ping that heralds the arrival of an e-mail. Reply to e-mail at self-designated times, not as it arrives.
- **Give yourself a time-out.** Devote an hour to uninterrupted thinking and planning every day. First thing in the morning is safest. No calls, no e-mail, no chitchat. Use this time to think strategically about your work.
- **Say no.** “Sorry” isn’t the hardest word – “no” is. Focus first on meeting your stated objectives. Also, consider family and personal time when filling your calendar; work-centric employees are more likely to report feeling overloaded than those who plan for their personal lives.
- **Delete.** Surveys show we waste 20% of our day on nonproductive activities. Cut out or delete anything on your to-do list that doesn’t have long-term consequences for your work. Fortune, March 20, 2006

IN SEARCH OF SMALL GIANTS *(Marketing, Sales, and Service)*

Author Bo Burlingham has written a new book called Small Giants. The term “Small Giants” refers to a recent phenomenon of companies that turn down growth opportunities because they have higher ambitions. Some characteristics and practices that allow someone to create a “Small Giant” include:

- **Know yourself and what you want from your business.** The Small Giants’ owners and leaders are remarkable; first and foremost, for the clarity they have about their goals in business. They can decide not to go for maximum growth because they know what else they are looking for and why.
- **Love your business.** The Small Giants’ leaders are unusual for the passion they bring to their companies. They absolutely love whatever it is that the company does, and they care deeply about doing it as well as it can be done.

- **Be rooted in a community.** A Small Giant has a close connection with the local city, town, or county in which it does business – a relationship that goes beyond the usual concept of “giving back.”
- **Cultivate relationships with employees, customers, and suppliers.** With customers and suppliers, the Small Giants emphasize personal contact, one-on-one interaction, and mutual commitment to delivering on promises. The effect is to create a sense of community and common purpose. The companies treat their employees in the way the owners think people ought to be treated – with respect, dignity, integrity, fairness, kindness and generosity.
- **Stay private and closely held.** The owners are keenly aware of the need to keep ownership inside the company. If they have outside investors, they are both legally and morally obligated to try to give them what they want in exchange for their investments. [Inc.](#), February 2006

PATIENTS TO GET PRIVATE ROOMS (*Health Science and Medical Technology*)

The private patient room, once a luxury for the privileged few, is about to become the standard for the nation’s hospitals, as evidence mounts that shared rooms lead to higher infection rates, more medical errors, privacy violations and harmful stress. New guidelines for hospital design, due out next month, will for the first time call for single-patient rooms as a minimum requirement for most new hospital construction.

With growing concern about infection risk and pandemic disease outbreaks, the guidelines will also include other new safety recommendations, including more areas in hospitals that can be quickly isolated during an infectious-disease outbreak, and better ventilation systems to thwart the spread of bacteria. [The Wall Street Journal](#), March 22, 2006

CAR MAKERS STRIVE FOR A QUIETER RIDE (*Transportation and Engineering and Design*)

Car makers are getting serious about making quieter cars and coming up with design enhancements that are meant to dial down the sound of an engine roaring to as close to a whisper as possible. They’re putting sound-absorption materials all over gaps in the vehicle’s structure where potential noise might emerge, and installing laminated glass and even undetectable white-noise systems to cancel out unwanted noise. All of these efforts are meant to add to the concept of a luxurious ride – cushy seats, sophisticated climate control systems and now, quiet time in the car. [The Wall Street Journal](#), March 23, 2006

ON-THE-JOB VIDEO GAMING (*Information Technology*)

The military has used video games as a training tool since the 1980s. Now the practice is catching on with companies too, ranging from Cold Stone to Canon Inc. Corporate trainers are betting that games’ interactivity and fun will hook young, media-savvy employees. Video games teach resource management, collaboration, critical thinking, and tolerance for failure.

Cold Stone’s training game is available on their corporate website. It teaches portion control and customer service in a cartoon-like simulation. More than 8,000 employees,

or about 30% of the total, voluntarily downloaded the game in its first week. Games are especially well-suited to training technicians. In one used by Canon, repairmen must drag and drop parts into the right spot on a copier. Workers who played the game showed a 5% to 8% improvement in their training scores compared with older training techniques such as manuals.

The market for corporate training games is small but it's growing fast. It is estimated that the serious-games market will more than double over the next five years to more than \$100 million, with trainers accounting for nearly a third of the total. Companies like video games because they are cost effective. Why pay for someone to fly to a central training campus when they can just plunk down in front of a computer? Even better, employees often play the games at home on their own time. [BusinessWeek](#), March 27, 2006

IT'S THE LATEST THING - REALLY (*Fashion and Interior Design*)

H&M (Hennes & Mauritz) has become one of the hottest fashion companies around because of its ability to spot shifts in demand and respond with lightning speed. While traditional clothing retailers design their wares at least six months ahead of time, H&M can rush items into stores in as little as three weeks. One of the secrets to their speed is decisiveness. The people in charge of each collection can dream up and produce new fashions on their own authority. Only huge orders require approval from higher-ups. [BusinessWeek](#), March 27, 2006

SCREEN TEST FOR JOBS (*All Sectors*)

At least 30% of employers – from governments to hospitals, restaurants to law firms, Wal-Mart to DuPont – use some version of a personality test in hiring. Even CEOs get tested, which makes sense given their salaries. Carly Fiorina reportedly took a 900-question test before landing the top job at Hewlett-Packard. The tests claim to predict a worker's fit with the job and the corporate culture.

Although these tests have been around for more than a century, employers have increasingly glommed on to them for one main purpose: retention. Companies yearn to nip turnover, which averages about 15% across the workforce and costs at least a quarter of a departing worker's salary. Poorly performing employees are costly to the tune of \$100 billion a year in the U.S.

There are several different types of personality tests. "Screen-out" tests like the Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory are used to detect the proclivity toward substance abuse and psychopathology. Sixty percent of police departments in the U.S. use this test. The California Psychological Inventory, a popular, "screen-in" test, can help determine the right person for the job by attempting to predict how someone will behave. The Myers-Briggs is frequently used by employers on existing employees to measure leadership and teamwork skills. Other tests gauge dependability, stress management and motivation. [Time](#), April 3, 2006

THE ANTI-HUMMER *(Transportation and Engineering and Design)*

Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed two-passenger, fuel efficient vehicles that bunch together like shopping carts. The idea is to situate rows of City Cars at subways or bus stops in dense urban areas. You keep the car as long as you want, then return it to another stack elsewhere in the city to recharge for the next commuter.

The City Car has no engine in the conventional sense. Instead, each wheel has an electric motor, brakes, and a suspension system that provides power steering. Wheel robots can rotate on their axis in a complete circle – when it comes time to parallel park, the driver can simply turn the tires 90 degrees and slide in sideways. [Fast Company](#), April 2006



GOT ABS? PERSONALITY? HEALTH INSURANCE? *(Health Science and Medical Technology)*

Health insurance is expensive, complex and bureaucratic. These days, it's also sexy. Right up there with washboard abs, a steady job and a fun-loving personality, health coverage is emerging as a hot selling point among online daters. It's especially the case among suitors of a certain age that need, and prize, good benefits the most. [The Wall Street Journal](#), March 19, 2006

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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 | |

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