

CAROCP MARKET WATCH

(A Monthly Trends & Forecasting Report)
October, 2004

MANAGING THE MEDIOCRE

How do you manage employees that are just okay—not incompetent, but not the people you wish you had? In a perfect world, everyone would be a superstar and manage themselves. But the real world is peopled by the satisfactory and barely satisfactory.

Try polishing your nonstars so they shine at least a little. Let them know that you are concerned about their performance. Express confidence in their potential. Help them set very specific goals—even daily goals. Remember employees cannot exceed expectations if they don't know what those expectations are. Communicate your goals by publicly recognizing those who meet them. Cross-fertilize best practices and create a culture where brilliant ideas can happen. INC. Magazine, October, 2004

DIGIT-SIZING YOUR COMPUTER DATA

Thumb drives (aka USB flash drives, jump drives or keychain drives), have been the techie “it” gadget for two years, but lately they’ve been getting a mainstream makeover. Instead of nondescript plastic casings, the tiny hard drives are being shoehorned into watches, pens, and even rubber ducks.

Industry experts say that consumer products firms are embracing the thumb drive because they expect it to replace the recordable CD-ROM. Regardless of what they look like, all thumb drives work the same way. Plug the drive into the USB port on your PC and an icon appears on your desktop. Drag and drop files onto the icon, unplug the gadget, insert it in another computer, and your files reappear immediately.

Whether one needs a pen or a watch to transfer files is questionable since the stand-alone versions are getting so cheap that they are becoming giveaways at corporate events. Wall Street Journal, September 17, 2004

JOB MARKET UPDATE

- The latest car-repair problem is finding a mechanic. Fixing cars is becoming an increasingly specialized business with computerization, diagnostic tools and parts varying widely from vehicle to vehicle. Skilled auto technicians are in short supply as some older mechanics are changing careers rather than re-training. Meanwhile, parents and teachers are less inclined to encourage students to go into the industry. Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2004

- The recent stock market scandals spawned a new employment category. The hottest jobs in financial services today are auditors. Other high demand jobs are financial analysts, tax accountants, and specialists familiar with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act passed to prevent future stock manipulation. [Wall Street Journal](#), September 21, 2004
- The rise in temporary workers shows many new jobs may be unstable and may reflect growth in corporate outsourcing. Demand for temporary staffing will increase by 9% in the fourth quarter of 2004. The demand is particularly strong in accounting, construction, manufacturing, health-care, and government. Jobs previously thought of as career jobs such as human resources, clerical support and maintenance are increasingly pushed outside the “core” work force and are outsourced to temp agencies, outside companies, or sent abroad. [Orange County Register](#), September 9, 2004
- IT job growth is expected to decline through the end of the year. The current job total reflects a slight recovery from the low during the 2001 recession. Managers are remaining cautious by hiring part-time and temporary workers until there are more signs of a full recovery. Outsourcing continues to be a contentious issue in the industry. [Wall Street Journal](#), September 8, 2004

JOHNNY CAN'T WRITE

A majority of U.S. employers say about one-third of workers do not meet the writing requirements of their position. With e-mail and PowerPoint displays often supplanting phone calls and oral presentations in the workplace, writing skills are in demand. In a fast-paced workplace, precision and brevity are essential. Accuracy, clarity, spelling, punctuation, grammar and conciseness ranked among the most sought after skills for e-mails, reports and presentations. [Orange County Register](#), September 15, 2004

RECYCLING E-WASTE

E-waste, the new species of garbage made up of defunct computers, cell phones and television sets, is the world's fastest-growing and potentially most dangerous waste problem. The world's biggest processor of corporate e-waste, Citiraya Industries in Singapore with 70% of the corporate market, is one of the few companies in the world that handles electronic trash in a high-tech fashion and complies with super strict environmental codes. In the US, no comprehensive federal law regulates e-waste, but the Environmental Protection Agency is drafting legislation to regulate the recycling of cathode-ray tubes in computers and televisions which contain toxic ingredients. Last year, California passed the Electronic Waste Recycling Act, the first law of its kind in the US which bans the export of e-waste to foreign countries that don't meet certain international environmental standards. The law calls for collecting a surcharge from consumers at the point of purchase to fund e-waste recycling. [Wall Street Journal](#), September 23, 2004

CREDIT SCORE AFFECTS MORE THAN LOANS

Credit reports have long been used to determine whether consumers can get credit cards and mortgages, and the rate they'll have to pay on them. But these reports are increasingly being applied to other things, from setting the price on auto insurance to screening job applicants.

Employers claim that credit reports enable them to identify the existence of negative credit. A negative credit payment history may impact a job offer where the history identifies issues significant to the position involved. [Orange County Register](#), September 3, 2004

CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER

Lessons on Goals from Bill Rancic, winner of *The Apprentice* and author of [You're Hired - How to Succeed in Business and Life](#):

- Start where you want to finish – Visualize yourself on top of whatever mountain you are hoping to scale. It helps you focus and brings clarity to your journey.
- Dress the part – Smart climbers know that you should dress for the job you want, not the job you have.
- Break the journey into smaller achievable milestones – We get where we're going one step at a time, one mile at a time, one initiative at a time.
- Don't be afraid to take the next step – Keep your options open, and remember where there is no risk, there is no reward.
- Plan for the unexpected – The successful climber is never surprised. Anticipate every outcome; consider every possibility and you'll be in a better position to handle whatever comes next.
- Reaching the top – If it all goes well, pat yourself on the back. If you are in a leadership role, reward your team. Rancic, Bill, [You're Hired, 2004; Orange County Register](#), September 27, 2004

HOW TO GET THE TIME BACK

Seven techniques to help ensure your next meeting is spent building value:

- Deal with operations separately from strategy.
- Focus on decisions, not on discussions.
- Measure the real value of every item on the agenda.
- Get issues off the agenda as quickly as possible.
- Put real choices on the table.
- Adopt common decision-making processes and standards.
- Make decisions stick.

[Harvard Business Review](#), September, 2004

SELECTING A MAJOR IS NO MINOR QUESTION

Positions once filled by college graduates with yesterday's hot majors are disappearing or being shipped overseas. Basing a decision about your major solely based on the expected hot jobs of the future is not necessarily wise. Students should consider their competencies, interests and values. If they focus on what they're good at, what they like to do, and what's important to them, there's an excellent chance that they will end up in a job that makes them happy.

Tips for choosing a major:

- Choose a major you are passionate about.
- Don't let annual job-market numbers dictate your choice of a major.
- Talk to college advisers and career counselors.

Orange County Register, September 16, 2004

HOW THE TECH INDUSTRY IS CHANGING

The rapid growth of sales in developing countries is having a profound impact on the tech industry. Companies must re-imagine how they design products and do business.

- Design: Products have to be simpler and more durable. An Indian printer maker is producing an all-in-one computer, cash register and inventory management system that can tolerate heat and dust and be operated with icons because many clerks are illiterate.
- Innovation: Companies have to innovate for the peculiarities of emerging markets. Electricity often is unavailable or unreliable. Hewlett-Packard is designing a small solar panel to charge digital printers in India and working with a solar fabric that is cheaper and less fragile in South Africa.
- Competition: Cisco, Dell, and Microsoft dominate in the developed world, but a host of new challengers are using intimate knowledge of local markets to give the giants trouble.

Business Week, September 27, 2004

“EXTREME RESUME MAKEOVER”

It sounds like the popular television show, but the reality is that it's something everyone—not just job seekers—should do.

- One makeover is to eliminate vague statements from your objective. Start with an objective that is focused, clear and to the point.
- Rework your job history/experience to include what you have done and relevant accomplishments that apply to the job you want.
- Easier to do than a face lift, massage other information eliminating personal interests and including leadership positions and volunteer work.
- Manicure your resume by making sure the format is easy to read and will transmit electronically.

An extreme resume makeover is not really that extreme, but means taking a really hard look at your resume, continually updating it if you are a job seeker, or doing so once a year if you're a job holder. Orange County Register, September 26, 2004

INTERVIEW YOUR NEXT BOSS

A key element of getting and keeping the job you want is working with a manager you can respect. And the way to find out if the potential boss is the right one for you is to ask a lot of questions during the job interview. You'll be able to pick up important insights into the character of the boss and the organization and you'll also end up being a more impressive job candidate. More job offers are extended when you get interviewers to share about themselves and the company than when they spend their time listening to you talk about yourself. Ask the interviewer: How do you develop people? How do you recognize or reward good work? How do you build teamwork? Look for a potential boss who provides feedback, shares the values of the organization, inspires others and is a mentor and a coach. [Orange County Register](#), September 20, 2004

MOVING BUSINESS CARDS FROM DESK TO DESKTOP

Despite modern technology, handing out business cards remains an unchanged tradition. The trouble is that many have moved to computer-based address books and keying in information from cards is time-consuming and leaves room for error. Although business card scanners have been around since 1994, the latest versions are smaller, faster and more accurate. CardScan connects to a Windows computer via the USB port, takes up little desk space, and comes with software that organizes data in your PC. CardScan Executive (\$250) is faster than CardScan Personal (\$150) and scans 20 color or 40 monochrome cards per minute. [Wall Street Journal](#), September 29, 2004

JACK IS THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

Fast casual restaurants have raised the bar for traditional fast food chains by showing that consumers are willing to pay a little bit more money for higher-quality, better-tasting food served in a nice, more comfortable atmosphere. Jack in the Box announced last week that in the next five years it may convert as much as 15% of its fast-food restaurants to a fast-casual concept called JBX.

At JBX, customers can wash down a \$5.95 chicken-avocado club sandwich with a \$2.55 vanilla bean shake and coat their fries in any of six dipping sauces from wasabi to sweet and tangy barbeque. Food is delivered to customers by servers in a more upscale environment.

This small but growing segment of the restaurant industry has been expanding by about 11% annually in recent years. It is clear that the consumer has said they want a more upscale experience than what was traditionally known as fast food. [Los Angeles Times](#), September 20, 2004

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