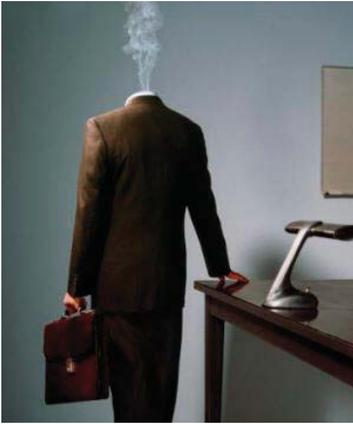


Stress



More flexibility means less stress, fewer spats

In a study of hotel workers, Penn State researchers found a link between their stress levels, the number of arguments they had, and the workplace flexibility they enjoyed.

Their study discovered that hourly workers with little workplace flexibility had more work-related stress in general, and more arguments with coworkers and managers in particular – twice as many as workers with more flexibility. The findings, says the report, suggest that increasing workplace flexibility could actually protect people from the stressors that are inevitable in daily life and would affect how they react. And flexibility could also serve as a “protective factor” for family members, lessening the effect of daily stresses. When workers without much flexibility were exposed to stressful incidents, they had more dramatic

reactions, becoming more emotional and more physically reactive. They also experienced negative physical health symptoms on the same day. And when mothers had less flexibility, their work tensions came home with them and had a negative affect on their children. The report ends by saying it’s unfortunate that often those who need flexible work arrangements the most – women, minority workers, and less educated, low-income and hourly workers – are the least likely to have access. The research was supported by the **National Institutes of Health** and the **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**.

25901 PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, 12-1-10



Money, work are top U.S. sources of stress

For the third year in a row, money, work and the economy top Americans’ list of stressors, says a survey of 2000+ U.S. adults and children.

Half of those surveyed by **Harris Interactive** in the *Stress in America* poll were experiencing job stress, up from 44% last year. And a November survey by the **American Psychological Association** found a troublesome trend; families, they say, are underestimating the effects stress is having on children. While 69% of parents say their stress has little or no impact on their children, 91% of kids ages 8 to 17 report that they can tell when their parents are stressed. The Harris poll found money was still the

top stressor for adults (76% cited it as significant) but work stress was close behind at 70%, and the economy was a significant source of stress for 65%. Gen Xers were the most stressed and those over 65 were the least. Nearly 30% of obese adults experienced high levels of stress vs. 20% of normal weight adults. A third of the children polled were overweight, and they were more likely to report that their parents were stressed. They were also more likely to experience health problems, trouble falling asleep and issues with eating or anger, including getting into fights.

25902 FOX NEWS, 11-9-10



Telecommuting

Telework contributes to employee happiness

A University of Wisconsin study has found the stress levels of those who worked from home even just a few days a week were lower than their counterparts who were office-bound.

One of the consistent positive themes cited by study participants was the fact that any flexible work arrangement resulted in decreased work-life conflict. In addition to having more flexibility, said Kathryn Fonner, assistant professor of communication and the study’s co-author, remote workers didn’t have to deal with typical distractions found in any office, including office politics

and interruptions from colleagues stopping by for a quick chat. Interestingly, the study found missing out on workplace communication was not a big issue. While remote workers didn't interact as much as office-based workers, each group said they always got "timely" access to any critical work-related information.

25903 FIERCE TELECOM, 12-3-10



Obama signs federal telework bill into law

In a long-awaited move, President Obama officially made it a law to allow federal employees to telework. Agencies must now establish policies to enable employees to work remotely.

Says OPM director John Berry, the Telework Enhancement Act will have these key objectives: to improve continuity of operations during inclement weather or other emergencies; to promote management effectiveness by cutting employee turnover and absenteeism; to reduce real estate and transit costs and improve environmental impact; and to enhance work-life balance. The Act had been up for consideration since March, 2009 and was finally passed by both House and Senate in November. Rather than chart new territory, the bill solidifies the increased support for teleworking that the Obama administration has

already demonstrated. Federal employees have been encouraged to work from home on occasion over the past year. Now their agencies have 180 days to come up with policies around teleworking and decide which of their employees will be eligible to do so. The bill requires agencies to designate a managing officer with direct access to a top agency official to oversee telework programs. They also must notify employees about their telework eligibility, set up training programs for teleworkers and managers to ensure the process goes smoothly, and factor telework into business continuity strategies. In the past, agencies were asked to track and report the number of employee participants in telework. Now they'll be required to set goals for participation and assess the impact of telework on areas like emergency readiness, energy use, recruitment and retention, performance, productivity and employee attitudes and opinions regarding telework. OPM expects that giving employees more freedom to telework will save the government money on both resources and employee retention.

25905 INFORMATION WEEK, 12-10-10



Health

How much will it cost to shape people up?

The new health care law explicitly grants permission to employers to offer rewards of at least 30% of the total cost of health insurance to employees who try to shape up.

Over the last decade or so, many companies have made sporadic efforts to adopt workplace wellness programs, some

of which had incentives of various kinds attached. Their hope was that the cost of rewarding good behavior would be dwarfed by the cost savings that come from lower medical costs and higher productivity later on. While most employers are delighted with the new law (it's about time, says one, "that health insurance had a good driver" discount) they are wondering just how much they'll have to pay to change the behavior of the sedentary, the overweight and the fried-chicken addicted. This article suggests first deciding what behavior it is you want to incentivize. **UnitedHealth** suggests rewarding people for having a variety of vital signs tested and then giving them more points for hitting goals for things like blood pressure, body mass index and cholesterol. You might give more points for undergoing various screenings, including breast, colorectal and prostate. People with chronic conditions could earn even more points for further testing and completing disease management programs. Some companies tack on their own extras. **Jones Lang LaSalle** added a reward for participating in a back health program, since chronic back conditions are one of that company's biggest sources of insurance claims. Then, companies need to decide what – and how much – to give away in exchange for the points that employees earn. **Pitney Bowes** will give \$350 each to employees and covered spouses or domestic partners who hit all their marks this year. That company plans to distribute the money in a lump sum via paychecks at the end of the year. This article suggests that the image of the boss walking around the office handing out stacks of hundred-dollar bills might increase participation even further.

25918 NEW YORK TIMES, 12-31-10

Diversity



Catalyst says women still not scaling ladder

In the past year, women's representation has not grown significantly in corporate boardrooms, executive office suites, or the ranks of companies' top earners, says Catalyst.

Their 2010 census found that men with mentors are promoted more and compensated at a higher rate, while women with mentors are far less likely to be promoted or paid more as a result of being mentored. "Corporate America needs to get 'unstuck' when it comes to advancing women to leadership," said Ilene Lang, **Catalyst** CEO. "This is our fifth report where the annual change in female leadership remained flat." Some of the findings: Women held 15.7% of board seats in 2010 – only a half a percentage point gain over the 15.2% they held in 2009. In both 2009 and 2010, more than 50% of companies did have at least two women board directors but more than 10% had no women serving on their boards. The percentage of companies with three or more women board directors also stayed flat. Executive officer positions weren't any better. Last year women held slightly more than 14%, up just 1% from 2009. And women execs held just 7.6% of the top earner posi-

tions, compared with 6.3% in 2009. That year more than two-thirds of companies had at least one woman executive officer, but that number didn't change in 2010, nor did the number of companies with no women executive officers. Men got more promotions than women, and their promotions came with greater salary increases – 21% more in compensation per promotion vs. only 2% per promotion for women. Said Lang, "If this trend line represented a patient's pulse – she'd be dead."

25911 Press release, CATALYST, 12-1-10



Women in high level jobs had better be good

Research from Yale University finds that when a person has a high level job traditionally held by the opposite gender, they're judged more harshly.

That's true for both men and women, says Victoria Brescoll, psychological scientist and first author of the study. Brescoll's researchers asked 200 volunteers to read different job-related scenarios in which the high level executive – police chief, college president, judge – made a mistake. The results? Those in a job thought of as normally held by their own gender were judged less harshly, while a woman in a "man's" job (or vice versa) was seen as less competent and deserving of less status. Brescoll calls it the "glass cliff," and while it affects both sexes, she implies that the big impact is on women. "You don't really know," she says, "when you're a woman in a high-status leadership role, how long you're going to hang onto it. You might just fall off at any point."

25910 CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 12-8-10

Little progress in hiring people with disabilities

Even though companies recognize the importance of hiring those with disabilities, they're still not hiring enough of them; little progress has been made since the ADA was enacted in 1990.

Just 21% of people with disabilities reported having a job, either full- or part-time, compared with 59% of people without disabilities, says a survey conducted by **Harris Interactive** of both individuals and companies. It asked those with disabilities about employment, income, education, healthcare, access to transportation, life satisfaction, etc., and companies about their programs. Although 70% of corporations polled have diversity policies or programs in place, only two-thirds of those programs include disability as a component. And just 18% of companies polled offer an education program to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace. The low figures, said the report, "are particularly notable given that a majority of employers perceive the costs of hiring a person with a disability to be the same as hiring a person without a disability (62%). Among other findings: only one in five companies has a specific person or department that oversees the hiring of people with disabilities compared to 1995, when 40% of companies hired someone specifically for this reason. And just 7% of companies with disability programs offer a disability affinity group. In sharp contrast, this year's **DiversityInc Top 10 Companies for People With Disabilities** all have at least one resource group for employees with disabilities, and all feature images and/or videos of people with disabilities on their corporate websites.

25907 DIVERSITYINC, 10-18-10

The Workforce



Seem overqualified? Hire them anyway

Turning down candidates because they're overqualified? A study by Dr. Anthony Nyberg, University of South Carolina, finds that may be a mistake.

Job applicants who may be thought of as too smart for the job actually stay longer and perform better than applicants whose scores supposedly make them a better fit. Many fear overqualified job applicants will be too easily bored or more likely to quit. That kind of thinking, says Nyberg, “has no doubt tossed more than a few layoff victims into the ranks of the long-term unemployed, a group that now constitutes nearly half of all U.S. jobless.” His study of 5,000 workers over a 25-year period found that, contrary to what many believe, employees with higher cognitive ability were less likely than others to voluntarily leave. He suggests hiring managers take the time to check out someone’s rationale for wanting the job; it could be one of many reasons – lifestyle, health, or just the need for a paycheck. But “a manager trying to fill a job that demands less-than-top-level smarts should never reject a candidate out of hand just because the applicant’s score on the company’s intel-

ligence tests labels him or her as smarter than the job requires,” said Nyberg, an expert in strategic human resources.

25915 Press release, UNIV. OF SO. CAROLINA, 12-10-10



Workplace Culture

Company culture is a critical driver of success

Two-thirds of working adults believe that company culture is very important for the success of their organizations; more than a third say it has the greatest impact on employee morale.

Nearly a fourth of younger workers believe culture plays the biggest role in building job satisfaction, and they think it’s in trouble. The **Randstad Work Watch** survey found 59% saying recent economic events have had a negative impact on their company’s culture. With layoffs, reduced benefits and no increase in wages, morale has suffered, and many workers are feeling disengaged from their employers. Two-thirds said effective management is key to a satisfying culture. Other elements they believe are important: strong trust relationships (57%), customer focus (55%), high accountability standards (50%), commitment to training and development (47%), and compensation and reward programs (45%). More than 40% cited support for innovation and new ideas, useful resources, technology and tools, and an emphasis on recruiting and retaining outstanding employees. The keys to a better culture, says this report, begin with benchmarking current culture. How is it defined? What does it mean to employees, and what would the organization like it to be? Said a Randstad spokeswoman, “Companies looking to shift their culture should focus on a

few key areas – building employee morale through incentive and training programs, clearly defining values through mission and vision statements, putting strong leaders in place that set the tone and empower others and, finally, encouraging better relationships with both employees and customers.”

25914 WORLD AT WORK, 10-1-10



Compensation

Study: minimum wage hikes don't cost jobs

Increasing the minimum wage does not lead to the loss of low-paying jobs, either short- or long-term, says a new study by UC Berkeley economics professor Michael Reich.

The study focused on restaurant workers, but Reich and colleagues say evidence shows their findings apply to workers in other low-wage industries as well. The study, called “one of the best and most convincing minimum wage papers in recent years,” by **Harvard** economics professor Lawrence Katz, should put to rest the commonly-held fears that raising the minimum wage would force many employers to reduce job offerings to meet a more expensive payroll, or that a “tipping point,” where the minimum wage becomes too high, has already been reached. The federal minimum wage, now \$7.25 an hour, provides a full-time worker an annual salary of approximately \$14,500 a year. More than 32 states and D.C. now have minimum wages higher than that, with Washington state currently the highest at \$8.67 per hour. (San Francisco’s citywide hourly minimum wage just went up to \$9.92.)

25913 UC BERKELEY NEWS, 12-1-10