

Stress



In stress test for the U.S., Detroit is loser

An analysis of the nation's 50 largest metropolitan areas shows Detroit is the most stressful place to live and work, with L.A. a close second and Salt Lake City the least stressful.

Nearly half of U.S. adults (48%) believe the stress in their lives has escalated during the past half-decade, says the **American Psychological Association**. Rounding out the list of America's 10 most stressful markets are Cleveland, California's Riverside metro, St. Louis, New York City, New Orleans, Chicago, Birmingham, and Miami-Fort Lauderdale. Second on the low-stress list is Virginia Beach-Norfolk, with the strongest pace of income growth and the lowest robbery rate. Other low-stress cities: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Raleigh, Austin, Oklahoma City, Denver, San Antonio, Kansas City, and Phoenix. A July survey by **WorldatWork** shows 66% of employers have implemented at least four programs intended to reduce stress; 22% have at

least eight programs and only 7% had no stress-reduction strategies in place.

25801 PORTFOLIO.COM, 9-07-10

WORLDATEWORK NEWSLINE, 7-09-10



Family Planning

Number of newborns dropping "like a stone"

Jamie Hammell always assumed she would just wake up one day and want kids. But at 30, the HR manager for a retail chain loves to travel and isn't even in a committed relationship.

She's thinking maybe she doesn't want children, and she's not alone. **University of Minnesota** sociologist Ross Macmillan, who studies global fertility trends, says the number of children born is dropping "like a stone in pretty much every country we can find." The U.S. has seen a 50-year rise in the number of childless women. In Minnesota's Twin Cities, Aleja Santos, 44, a medical ethics researcher, started the local **Childfree by Choice** group a year ago. The group now has 73 members and gains about one new member a week (Santos greets them at the door with "Welcome fellow non-breeders.") Across the nation other groups are cropping up with names like No Kidding and Not a Mom. High-powered careers, ambitious travel plans or lifestyles that just aren't very kid-friendly have something to do with the trend. And with the economy in the tank, it's hard to imagine spending

what studies say it costs to raise a child to 17 – about \$250,000. Maybe women can have it all, says one woman quoted here. But the price is steep.

25802 MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE, 9-27-10



Telecommuting

Want to save \$10,000 a year per employee?

The Telework Research Network's latest study of telework and its benefits concludes that allowing 100 employees to work half their time from home could save a company \$1,000,000.

The study examined more than 250 case studies, research papers and other documents on telework, and interviewed companies, researchers and more to figure out how telecommuting benefits employers, employees, the environment and communities. Their conclusion: letting one employee work half-time out of the office would save a company about \$10,000 per year and the employee up to \$6,800 per year. About half of the \$1.1 million that a company would save with 100 workers telecommuting halftime would come from increased productivity from fewer interruptions, better time management and employees putting in more hours by working when they would have been commuting. Companies would also save \$304,000 a year in electricity, real estate and related costs from parking lot leases, furniture, supplies, maintenance

and space consolidation. About \$113,000 would come from fewer unscheduled absences, less sick time and from employees working while sick or waiting for personal appointments (cable installation, delivery, etc.) that would normally result in a full day off of work. And \$76,000 would be saved due to lower employee turnover. Employee savings would come from using less gas, and avoiding parking, food, clothing and other costs. Gas savings would total about \$360 per year, collectively adding up to \$15 billion across the U.S. and result in greenhouse gas emission reductions of 53 million metric tons.

25803 GREENBIZ.COM, 7-06-10

More federal workers will be phoning it in

The U.S. Senate has approved new legislation that makes all federal workers eligible to telecommute, and says teleworking must be part of an agency's contingency emergency planning.

The bill is similar to one passed by the House in July, and it now returns to the House for that body's approval. The Senate version would require agencies to develop policies allowing all employees to work remotely unless their positions are specifically excluded. Supporters said it would improve the lives of federal workers, help agencies attract and retain top talent and keep critical government functions running in the event of snowstorms or other emergencies. The bill also included training for managers, said to be responsible for the fact that fewer than 10% of federal employees who were eligible to telecommute actually did so in 2008.

25804 THE WASHINGTON POST, 9-30-10

Engagement

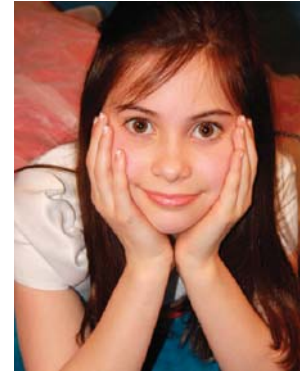
Steady decline shown in global engagement

A Hewitt analysis finds the percent of organizations with falling engagement scores has tripled in the past two years, with the biggest drops this year.

While the economy is recovering, workplace engagement and morale are not, says this study. Almost half of organizations around the world saw a significant drop in employee engagement levels at the end of the June 2010 quarter – the largest decline Hewitt has observed since it began conducting employee engagement research 15 years ago. This highlights the growing tension between employers, many of which are struggling to stabilize their financial situation, and employees, who are showing fatigue in response to the lengthy period of stress, uncertainty and confusion brought about by the recession and their company's actions. This article suggests those companies with improved engagement levels focus on the long term and implement measurable actions – with buy-in from leadership. They involve all stakeholders, understanding that not all employees are necessarily equal and focusing on key segments and critical talent. And finally, they utilize a broader array of information and analytics. The analysis shows that 34% of organizations help employees through the on-boarding process to minimize the dip in engagement most organizations see in the first year of employment. And nearly three-fourths of companies conduct exit surveys to understand why employees are leaving and proactively identify potential hot spots.

25805 BUSINESS WIRE, 7-29-10

Childcare



Economy may be down, but childcare cost isn't

The annual cost of childcare now exceeds the cost of sending a child to college in several states; last year in Minnesota, families spent an average of \$13,650 to care for one infant.

Despite the recession, childcare costs continue to climb, says the latest report by the **National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies**. The Arlington, Va.-based group found that the average price of full-time care for a child under age four ranges from \$4,056 to \$15,895 per year, depending on the location. In 39 states and Washington, D.C., the average annual daycare cost for an infant was more than the cost of a year's tuition and fees at a four year public college. The average cost for center-based childcare for an infant exceeds the average annual amount that families spend on food in every region of the U.S. Since 2000, the cost of childcare has increased twice as fast as the median income of families with children, and in 25 states, the increase in the cost of infant care in a center far exceeded the rate of inflation.

25806 NACCRRRA, 8-03-10



No harm to babies to have a working mom

A groundbreaking study has found that mothers who return to work just months after giving birth do not put their baby's wellbeing at risk.

The findings by **Columbia University** researchers are in stark contrast to previous research that suggested that mothers who return to work put their children at risk of a barrage of ill effects. These academics assessed the total impact of a mother going back to work on a child's mental and social development and found that the positive consequences cancelled out the negatives. Though babies suffered some ill effects when their mothers returned to work within a year – such as spending less time interacting with a parent – the researchers found that the net effect on their cognitive and social development over time was neutral. Children whose mothers worked under 30 hours a week fared the best – benefiting from the increased household income, better childcare and a happier homelife, without losing out on parental interaction. Babies suffered some ill effects when their mothers returned to work within a year, but researchers found that the net effect on their cognitive and social development over time was neu-

tral. Working mothers had better mental health, were able to build healthier relationships within the family, and boosted the household income – all of which aided the child's development. Children whose mothers worked were also likely to benefit from higher-quality childcare outside the home, because their parents could afford to shop around for the best nannies and nursery places.

25807 TELEGRAPH.CO.UK, 8-01-10



Recruiting

Skilled labor shortage frustrates employers

There were about five unemployed workers for every job opening this summer – except in manufacturing, where thousands of jobs are going unfilled.

Jamie Fillingham offers a quick tour of her family's manufacturing facility, proudly showing off employees making the metal parts that go into some of America's biggest machines. What's holding her machine shop back isn't a shortage of work, she points out. Instead, it's a shortage of workers. Fillingham says they could use 30 to 40 more, and she's willing to pay \$13 to \$18 an hour. She's not alone. The average manufacturing worker is now over 50, and the government says there are 227,000 open manufacturing jobs, more than double the number a year ago; 183,000 have been created since December, the strongest seven-month streak in a decade. Fillingham said it's hard to fill these jobs because they require people who are good at math, good with their hands and willing to work on a factory floor. By 2012 it's estimated the

U.S. will be three million skilled workers short, and not just in the manufacturing sector. A recent survey found 22 percent of American businesses say they are ready to hire if they can find the right people. Fillingham hopes to convince a new generation that manufacturing jobs aren't a part of the past but instead the foundation of the future.

25808 CBS EVENING NEWS, 8-11-10



Health Care

Health plan won't fuel big spending, says government study

The new health care law will have negligible effects on total national health spending in the next 10 years, says a government study, neither slowing nor fueling the explosive growth of costs.

About 32.5 million people will gain coverage, and health spending will grow slightly faster than before (at an annual rate of 6.3% rather than 6.1%). The report, by the office of the chief Medicare actuary, undermines both the claims of the law's fiercest critics and some of its biggest champions. Cuts in Medicare spending, which start in the next few months, and a tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health plans, which takes effect in 2018, will largely offset the cost of expanding Medicaid and subsidizing private insurance for low-income people, said the report. The report predicts that some workers will have to pay more out of pocket as many employers scale back coverage in 2018 to avoid the tax on high-cost plans.

25809 THE NEW YORK TIMES, 9-09-10

Recruiting

High-performers make HR a strategic partner

A global study by Boston Consulting Group finds the best performers take a radically different approach to HR. They don't just put more resources into it – "they reboot the function."

Work-life balance rated much lower than it did in 2008. This year, top emerging concerns were enhancing employee engagement and improving workforce performance and rewards. Leaders in top performing companies "go deeper on human resources issues than their competitors," says a BCG executive, and are more willing and able to use HR as a strategic partner. But many companies are failing to make HR a priority or adopt workforce best practices. Highest performers actually focus their efforts on fewer, carefully chosen HR projects, but they keep refining and experimenting in these areas to make them stronger. They manage to recruit half their top executives from internal talent pools (low-performing companies source only 13% of their senior leaders internally). High-performers also take a radically different approach to HR, putting much more effort into measuring workforce performance, transforming HR into a strategic partner of senior management and branding themselves as good employers (those three priorities of top performers ranked dramatically lower at low-performing companies). Companies are failing to draw on the broadest possible array of talent; in 44% of companies surveyed, women constitute 10% or less of the talent pool. The biggest talent gap is expected in IT, but this report predicts significant gaps in

key industries, functions and geographies, as companies fail to groom new talent to replace current leaders. The gaps will become more acute over time, with many reaching critical levels in the decade between 2020 and 2030. Middle managers are key, concludes the report, but they must be empowered, trained, and involved in strategic decisions. The report is based on a global online survey and interviews with 5,561 HR and business-unit executives from 109 countries in multiple industries.

25810 CCH, WOLTERS KLUWER, 9-30-10



Gender Issues

New model policy now ready for employers

The Center for WorkLife Law at UC Hastings College of Law has created a new model policy to help employers prevent discrimination against workers with family responsibilities.

Stereotyping, says the model, is a key feature in most discrimination cases. It means employers have made outdated and incorrect assumptions about how a parent or other caregiver will act or should act, and then made personnel decisions based on those stereotypes. This model policy offers two possible approaches: either add to your organization's existing anti-discrimination policy or create a new stand-alone policy to deal specifically with discrimination based on family responsibilities. It provides instructions and examples for each option and ends with two pages of FAQs. (Center director Joan Williams' new book is called *Reshaping the Work-Family Debate: Why Men and Class Matter*.)

25811 WORKLIFE LAW, 10-01-10

Recruiting



UK's Gen Y is mostly disillusioned at work

When asked if they believe what their employer tells them, 32% of the UK's 16 – 24 year olds say they refuse to believe either 'most' or 'any' of it.

The numbers of non-trusters are going up; last year at this time only 18% were disbelievers. A fourth of Gen Y workers only believe parts of what their employers say and only 11% think they're totally trustworthy. Those in the legal profession were particularly skeptical, with 37% of employees across all age ranges saying they don't believe either most or any of what their employers tell them about business performance. "Younger employees have specific expectations of their employers," says the report, so to increase trust levels, encourage more two-way conversations about the business and performance. This research predicts loyalty is going to be increasingly hard to find, and retaining talent will be a serious problem. The recession has not only had a detrimental impact on job losses and pay freezes, but has also had a serious effect on the relationship between employer and employee. "Now is the time to start repairing this relationship," says the report, "being more honest and open with employees about business performance."

25812 HR MAGAZINE.CO.UK, 8-30-10