



**Proactive Technologies News**

**Proactive Technologies Announces Significant Discount Program - March 10th to April 31st, 2017!**

**Free "No-Risk" Consultation Session - Witness Approach for One of Your Specific Job Classifications Before You Decide**

*by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff*

Due to the success of our last discount offer, and many requests from companies that could not act before the end of the last discount offer in 2016, Proactive Technologies Inc. is once again extending a **generous discount offer of up to 50% to employers from March 10th to April 31st, 2017!**

This [accelerated transfer of expertise™](#) approach is a tremendous offer without the discount, but with it can **help any employer quickly and completely train the skilled workers they need AND realize an increase in worker capacity, work quantity/quality and compliance (ISO/TS/AS, engineering specifications and safety) while reducing the internal costs of training.** New-hires and incumbent workers are driven to **full job mastery** and higher levels of return on worker investment (ROWI). The task-based, structured on-the-job training infrastructure is perfect for the apprenticeships; instead of marking the calendar for "time-in-job," job-relevant tasks are mastered and documented.

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***"For companies eligible for a worker training grant or not, this discount program can significantly stretch a training budget in a impactful way. This approach makes a worker's mastery of the job the focus and incorporates, building structure around, loosely arranged worker development activities."***

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In the event that anyone needs one more way (i.e. in addition to live online presentations, onsite presentations) to gather enough information to decide whether to move forward with structured on-the-job training to boost their training strategy, we thought of an idea that might help them decide. [Read Details](#)

**Proactive Technologies' Publications Archive**

View pdf version, past newsletter articles and more in our website's [Proactive Technologies Inc. News & Publications](#).



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**In This Issue**

[Proactive Technologies'](#)

**Apprenticeships - An Alternative to the "400 Hours For Drill Press" On-the-Job Training Model**

*by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc*



**"Time-in-Job" Does Not Equal "Tasks Mastered."** It does not reveal much about the level, quality, relevancy and transferability of the "on-the-job experience." It is akin to students tests being graded on how long they sat in the classroom. But yet this approach endures. Don' get me wrong, it is better than no on-the-job training effort. However, I think we all agree that it leaves a lot of opportunity on the table.

An unfortunate hold-over from the traditional U.S. apprenticeship is the

[Workforce Development News](#)

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[Education and Workforce Development News](#)

[Training and Organizational Development News](#)

[Quality News](#)

[Cyber Security and IT News](#)

[Human Resource Management News](#)

[Environmental, Health & Safety News](#)

### **Live Online Presentation Schedule - Free**

If interested in attending one of the presentations below, click on the title, then select a date/time and press "Send." An online presentation invitation and link will be sent to you. On the date and time of the event, just click on link in email invitation and it will connect you to the presentation. **No special equipment required.**

[Click here](#) for descriptions of all of the available presentations. Click on a specific title for that specific description and schedule or to schedule a date and time that works for you.

**APPLIES TO ANY ORGANIZATION (Recorded - Available Any Time):**  
[PT1promo - A Preview of an Upcoming Presentation](#)  
(13 minutes)

**FOR FORMER EMPLOYER CLIENTS:**  
[PT11001 - MA, OH, PA and SC Former Client Employers - Restart Your Organization's PROTECH® Training Infrastructure](#)  
(45 minutes)

**FOR ANY EMPLOYER:**  
[PT11002 - Building an Effective Worker Training/Apprenticeship System - Registered or Not](#)  
(45 minutes)

[PT11004 - If You Can't Find Skilled Workers, Develop Your Own](#)  
(45 minutes)

standard practice of defining the on-the-job training requirement in terms of "number of hours." General work areas that are thought of as representative of the job are selected, a number of total hours for each area totaling the on-the-job training requirement are prescribed, and this - with the required related technical instruction - are registered.

We all know that we have worked, or are now working, next to co-workers who have been in the job classification for many years but for one reason or another seemed to not be able to perform all of the required tasks of the job. Some are called "area specialists," but may have specialized in only the tasks they like to perform. Some might not have had an opportunity to learn and master certain tasks. When they are asked to train the next worker, their scope is limited to the tasks for which they specialized, and the pattern continues when that new person becomes a trainer later on. When Proactive Technologies sets-up a structured, task-based on-the-job training program and assesses incumbent workers to discover any gaps that might exist so the structured training can close them. It is common to find some long-time workers in the job classification that may have only mastered 20 or 30% of the total tasks that make up the job classification.

So what does the number of hours spent in a job area tell a person about the skills attained by the apprentice? How is this seemingly subjective metric measured and how is it tracked? Does it matter? [Read More](#)

### **Challenges Presented by the Widening Skill Gap**

*by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S., Proactive Technologies, Inc.*



There are at least five growing, major challenges to maintaining a skilled national labor force. These forces are causing those organizations who could help to, instead, spend tremendous sums of money on "whack-a-mole" type efforts. Sure, this approach sustains all of the profit and non-profit organizations that sprung up to take advantage of the chaos, but if we are serious about solving this issue that has undermined economic recoveries and stifled economic growth for over 30 years, we need to get serious.

It starts by critically evaluating the challenges that have plagued the U.S. labor force and have been barriers to an employer's commitment to American labor. Like nearly all challenges, one can choose to target the underlying cause, treat the symptoms, mask the symptoms, define an alternative - but not necessarily relevant - cause and focus on that, or ignore symptoms and cause and hope for divine intervention.

Choice of action matters. Take, for example, the choice to take a prescribed "cholesterol lowering" statins that inhibit the body's production of lipids-fats and fatty substances, producing a cholesterol number within an acceptable range but at a cost of blocking or impairing other vital body functions and often producing "side-effects." Your doctor may have good news about your cholesterol level during this visit but soon he might be discussing other, more serious issues with you such as, according to the Mayo Clinic, your [muscle pain and damage, liver damage, increased blood sugar and type 2 diabetes, neurological side effects,...](#). Choosing to treat a symptom without determining why your body is producing excess lipids in the first place may leave the underlying cause unaffected.

Similarly, focusing resources on symptoms and ignoring the underlying cause of a non-systems approach to worker development may lead (and one could say may have already lead) to depleted resources and lost opportunity. Continuing to turn out graduates, some with outdated or non-essential skills which are bolstered by marginally relevant credentials, may lead to a feeling of action but yet the skill gap widens. Unless each of the following five major challenges are addressed, it is unlikely that the skill gap will move towards closing, and any effort to bring back the generations of lost workers into meaningful employment prohibitively difficult. [Read More](#)

[PT11007 - Structured On-the-Job Training Supports ISO/AS/TS Process Training Requirement Compliance](#)  
(45 minutes)

[PT11008 - Preparing your Workers for Growth: Using Lulls Before Growth to Increase Your Worker's Capacity](#)  
(45 minutes)

**FOR EDUCATION, WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

[PT11003 - Adding Employer-Specific Structured OJT to Your Training Support Strategy\(45 minutes\)](#)

[PT11005 - Adding Structured On-the-Job Training to Your Apprenticeships](#)  
(45 minutes)

[PT11006 - Building a Regional Workforce Development Infrastructure: Employer-Specific for Maximum Effectiveness and Lowest Investment](#)  
(45 minutes)

If you would like more information or would like to discuss these presentations or anything else, click [here](#) and fill in the "Contact Us" with your request including information specifying an alternative date/time you prefer and how many will be attending. An invitation and link will be sent to you.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Onsite and group presentations

are being scheduled for the following states in the month of:

**March, 2017**

**Colorado (Eastern Slope)**

**Florida**

**North Carolina (Ashland and Western Area, Charlotte)**

**Ohio (North-Central, Northeast and Southeast Area)**

**Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Western Area)**

**South Carolina (UpState and Charleston Area)**

**Tennessee**

**Texas**

## Developing the Multi-Craft and Specialty Maintenance Technicians You Need; To Specification, With Minimal Investment

*Dr. Dave Just, MPACT Maintenance and Reliability Solutions*



In the March, 2016 Proactive Technologies Report article, "[Grow Your Own Multi-Craft Maintenance Technicians - Using a "Systems Approach"™ to Training](#)" I described how **Proactive Technologies, Inc.** and **Mpact Maintenance and Reliability Solutions** has joined forces to setup and implement the hybrid model of worker development for maintenance and technical support positions for their clients. The "systems approach" to worker development, as described, is simple in its structure but, also, includes the quality control points to ensure the worker development outcomes are reached. Although this approach can be used for any job classification in any setting, together we have applied this approach effectively for maintenance and technical support positions for many manufacturers over the last 2 decades.

We listened to our manufacturing clients. We heard the frustration they expressed in looking for highly qualified new-hire maintenance candidates when too few technical colleges offer a solid maintenance or maintenance technician program. The ones that either do not have content that is relevant enough or if they do, cannot graduate enough students to meet the demand. Employers realize they are, by necessity, a major part of the solution.

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***"The effects of ineffective training for 1 person can cost your firm more than the training budget for 10 employees for 10 years. Why take the chance with speculative training approaches that may not deliver anything more than cost and disappointment?"***

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The secret to success is in the "turn-key" approach. We understand that most small and medium-sized manufacturers have a very limited human resources staff, not to mention a non-existing training department. But they do have the subject matter experts who have mastered the training content, just lacking the training technique, materials and support. By applying the Proactive Technologies and Mpact expertise to set-up, implement, support, keep records and report training activity, the time the subject matter expert needs to make available for training new-hires and incumbents is minimized and the effects maximized. The investment needed is low, but the impact and return on worker investment is substantial. [Read More](#)

## Education-Employer Partnerships That Work

*By Frank Gibson, Special Projects Coordinator for The Ohio State University - Alber Enterprise Center*



I have always been committed to helping employers improve their business processes and strategies. One challenge that remains front and center is making sure a steady supply of workers with the necessary core skills to learn the tasks of the job are available in the community, and that employers have the tools to address any skill gaps and ensure any employee can be trained to completely and competently perform the work for which they were hired. That is why I came out of retirement to continue my work in helping employers meet both challenges directly and successfully.

A lot is being said these days about "employer-responsive" worker training programs. I think all educational institutions want to believe they have all the answers to all of the challenges employers face. Although I have found that we have many of the answers for many disciplines, it is important to realize our limitations and either find other resources to fill the gap or be truthful with the client so that they might look elsewhere for those answers and solutions.



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South Central)

Virginia (South-Eastern)

[Contact Us](#) to express your interest in an onsite or group presentation.

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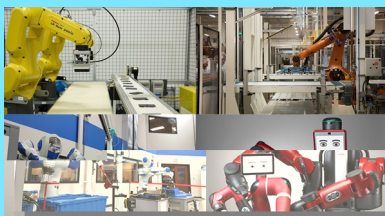


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[www.proactivetechnologiesinc.com](http://www.proactivetechnologiesinc.com)

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The [Ohio State University - Alber Enterprise Center](#) has been around since 1996 and was founded on the premise that we provide educational and technical consulting services to business enterprises throughout our region to help them grow and prosper. Whether to help them train their workers to the latest in technical skills or train their management on the latest management theories and best practices, the Alber Center has assembled an extensive network of institutional and private training providers to meet their needs and have continued to expand our network to help our employer-clients maintain their competitive best. [Read Article](#)

## NOTICE - Website Issues

*Staff*

The Proactive Technologies, Inc. website was down between March 1 - 5, 2017 due to issues with the hosting server. During this time our website and email were intermittent. If you sent any email to us during that period, it is a good idea to resend it just in case it was not received by us.

We apologize for the inconvenience. Please visit [our website](#) any time.

## Industry News

### The Ups and Downs of Made in the USA

*IndustryWeek - Laura Putre*

Manufacturers talk about why they decided to locate their production here, what worked and what didn't-and whether the rewards were worth the travails.



For many companies, the 2008-09 recession was a time to scale back. But for Michael Araten, CEO and president of the toy company K'Nex Industries, it was a time to rethink and regroup. K'Nex, which makes Tinkertoys and Lincoln Logs as well as its eponymous brightly colored building sets, followed the trend of offshoring in the late 1990s, and by the early 2000s had outsourced most of its toymaking to China. [Read Article](#)

### What Should Trump's Manufacturing Strategy Look Like?

*Christian Science Monitor - Robert D. Atkinson, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation*

To improve US industries' ability to compete abroad, the Trump administration will have to do more than promote low-wage domestic manufacturing jobs.



From his involvement in the deal to keep Carrier from moving some of its jobs to Mexico to the warnings he has issued to other companies that are thinking about moving jobs abroad, President Trump has signaled that he is serious about shoring up US manufacturing. His early moves have elicited a range of responses from analysts and commentators, running the gamut from, in effect, "this is totally trivial" to "we shouldn't care so much about manufacturing, anyway." But absent from the responses has been practical advice for how the new administration should craft an effective US manufacturing strategy. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation recently published 10 principles to guide the administration. Here are six that are particularly important: [Read Article](#)

### US Auto Supplier Jobs Are on the Rise

*IndustryWeek - Staff*

The auto parts industry has gained 137,000 jobs since 2012, says a new MEMA study.

Automotive components manufacturing jobs have risen nearly 19% in the United States since 2012, according to a study released today by the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA).



More than 871,000 Americans are directly employed by the automotive parts manufacturing industry. This number, which is up from 734,000

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- Skill, Knowledge and Behavioral

in 2012, represents 2.9% of total U.S. jobs and 2.4% of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). [Read Article](#)

### Small Firms Are Better Partners than Holding Companies

*IndustryWeek - Paul Ericksen, Executive Level Consultant*



If you want to work with a supplier who will work with you as a partner so both parties can benefit, you have a better chance of this with smaller, family-owned businesses than large holding companies.

U.S. Department of Labor studies consistently show that small, privately-held manufacturers are the employment backbone of our industrial economy. Many such companies are family-owned and run. In my mind there are several intrinsic traits that differentiate these types of firms, including: [Read Article](#)

### What Type of Boss Are You?

*IndustryWeek - Adrienne Seiko*

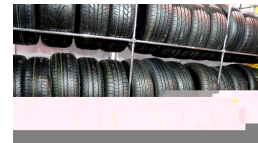
There are 12 types of bosses, each with a different management style, says business journalist Geoffrey James, author of *Business Without the Bullsh\*t: 49 Secrets and Shortcuts You Need to Know*. [Read Article](#)



### Goodyear Reaches \$1.75 Million Settlement After Four Worker Deaths

*EHS Today - Stefanie Valentic*

Akron, Ohio-based Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has agreed to pay \$1.75 million in penalties and overhaul its health and safety program after four fatalities occurred at its Danville, Va. plant over the course of a year.



Jeanie Strader, Kevin Waid Edmond, Charles "Greg" Cooper and William Scheier were killed at the facility between August 2015 and August 2016. Eleven subsequent investigations discovered numerous violations at the plant, which manufactures aviation and specialty tires. [Read Article](#)

### Boeing Machinists Vote Down Union in South Carolina

*Agence France-Presse*

Boeing workers in South Carolina voted down union representation Wednesday, handing a victory to the aerospace giant in a region historically hostile to organized labor.



Boeing said in a news release that 74% of the 2,828 votes cast supported the company and rejected the overtures of representation by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. [Read Article](#)

### Steven Mnuchin Confirmed As Treasury Secretary

*NPR - Yuki Noguchi*

The Senate voted to confirm Steven Mnuchin as President Trump's Treasury secretary in a 53-47 vote Monday.



Mnuchin's approval came over the objections of some Democratic senators who pointed to Mnuchin's business record running a bank that hastily foreclosed on homeowners. It also drew fire from those who say that with the appointment of Mnuchin and other former bankers to key roles close to the White House, the administration is going back on its promise to get tough on Wall Street. [Read Article](#)

## Assessments

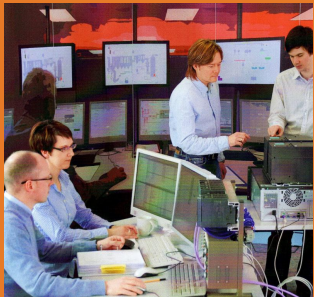
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## GE Invests \$4.3 Billion To Build Next-Gen Jet Engines, Open New Factories In The US

*GE Reports - Tomas Kellner*

The GE9X jet engine that GE Aviation is developing for Boeing's next-generation wide-body passenger jet, the 777X, is wider than the body of a Boeing 737 and more powerful than America's first manned space rocket. It's also a big deal for the company's business. Although the world's largest engine isn't scheduled to enter service until around 2020, the company already has recorded some 700 orders and commitments valued at \$28 billion at list price. For the first time, the engine will include a variety of 3D-printed parts and the latest composite materials, including the light and heat-resistant space-age materials called ceramic-matrix composites (CMCs). [Read Article](#)



## Financial News

### Raising the Minimum Wage Makes Economic Sense

*CFO.com - Holly Sklar - Founder and CEO, Business for a Fair Minimum Wage*

When minimum wage is too low, it not only mires workers in poverty, it undermines the consumer demand at the heart of our economy.

# CFO

Businesses depend on customers who can afford to buy what they are selling. When millions of workers can't make ends meet because their wages haven't kept up with the cost of living, it hurts business and it hurts the economy.

The minimum wage sets the floor under worker paychecks. Stuck at \$7.25 an hour since 2009, the federal minimum wage comes to just \$15,080 a year for full-time work. When the minimum wage is too low, it not only mires workers in poverty, it undermines the consumer demand at the heart of our economy. [Read Article](#)

### Can Companies Bar Workers from Filing Class-Action Claims?

*CFO.com US - David McCann*

The Supreme Court's mid-January decision to take on a trio of cases related to class actions may serve to decide a hotly contested issue that's of great economic consequence to many companies.

# CFO

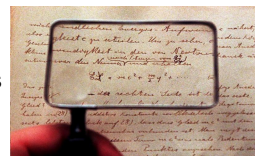
The issue is around arbitration agreements, in which a company's customers or employees agree to use arbitration, rather than courts, to settle any legal claims against the company.

In both 2011 and 2015, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that companies have the right to block consumers from banding together in class actions against businesses, as granted by the Federal Arbitration Act of 1925. The 2015 ruling dismissed a class-action lawsuit over early-termination fees against satellite provider DirecTV. [Read Article](#)

### Why Not Make Economics a Science?

*BloombergView*

Economists have come to rival even journalists and politicians in lack of public esteem. That might be partly because so many economists seem as interested in journalism and politics as in advancing their science. But there's also a deeper problem: Far from advancing, the science of economics has been going backwards.



Economists tend to be either practitioners or theorists. Practitioners on Wall Street, in central banks, and in government aim to say where the economy is headed and offer advice on how to improve its trajectory. Academics in universities and business schools spin the theories that guide the practitioners.

The trouble is, too many theorists – especially in the mainstream of the discipline – have drifted far from the real world. [Read More](#)



## Recent Proactive Technologies News Article Quicklinks

### February:

[Tips for Establishing Your Company's Training Strategy - Practical, Measurable, Extremely Economical and Scalable](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[The High Cost of Employee Turnover](#)

by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S., Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Do U.S. Productivity Measures Measure Productivity?](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[The Key To Effective Maintenance Training: The Right Blend of Structured On-The-Job Training and Related Technical Instruction](#)

Dr. Dave Just, MPACT Maintenance and Reliability Solutions

### January:

[Economic Development Opportunities An Important Incentive in Attracting Companies to Your Region](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Thinking Past the Assessment: Unfinished Goals and Unrealized Expectations](#)

by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S., Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[An Anniversary That You Won't Want to Celebrate: 30 Years Later and The Skill Gap Grows - Is it Finally Time to Rethink The Nation's Approach?](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Changes in ISO 9001: 2015 and Any Effects on Worker Training](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

### December:

["Understanding the Important Difference Between Classroom, Online and On-The-Job Training: Knowing the Difference Can Save Your Organization Time, Money and Disappointment"](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

["Retiring Workers and the Tragic Loss of Intellectual Property and Value"](#)

by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager -

## Court Blocks Another Healthcare Megamerger

*CFO.com - Matthew Heller*

A federal judge has ruled that Anthem's proposed \$54 billion takeover of Cigna would be anticompetitive - the second time in three weeks that a court has blocked a healthcare industry megamerger.

Judge Amy Berman Jackson of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said the Justice Department, which brought an antitrust suit against the Anthem-Cigna deal in July, had shown that "the proposed combination is likely to have a substantial effect on competition in what is already a highly concentrated market." [Read Article](#)

# CFO

## International News

### China's Investment in Africa: The New Colonialism?

*Harvard Political Review - Elizabeth Manero*

Africa is no stranger to exploitation. After decades of colonial rule under major Western

powers, the continent was left with a legacy of harsh, imperialist rule that set it back years in modernization. As a result, it has become the focus of mountains of developmental assistance from countries hoping to foster social, institutional, and infrastructural change, totaling over 300 billion USD since 1970 alone. This assistance was often conditional, with aid dependent on a country's human rights track record. The West however, has ceased to be Africa's only option when it comes to aid and development. Recently, a number of African countries have become increasingly drawn to China's "no-strings attached" development assistance and promises of growth. While these policies certainly create economic gains for Africa, the vestiges of colonialism evident in this relationship raise questions about the true cost of realizing these benefits. [Read Article](#)



### China's Military Progress Challenges Western Dominance, Says IISS

*Deutsche Welle*

Chinese military technology is reaching "near-parity" with the West, a new report from the London-based think tank IISS has found. Western dominance in advanced military systems can no longer be taken for granted.



China accounted for a third of Asia's military spending in 2016 and was looking to sell more arms abroad, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said in a report on Tuesday. [Read Article](#)

### Pulse of Europe - A Wake-up Call for the Continent

*Deutsche Welle*

After Brexit and Trump's victory, many Europeans are feeling defeated. A grassroots initiative from Germany aims to change that. The Frankfurt-based group wants EU supporters to make their voice heard.



The high point came at the very end. Europe's pulse was racing when Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" rang out in Frankfurt's Goethe Square during the emotional finale of the pro-European protest march. The participating europhiles held hands and silently formed a human chain with almost awestruck devotion. It's the symbolic ritual at the end of every one of these rallies: hold on tight for Europe. [Read Article](#)

### EU Economy Improving Amid 'Exceptional Risks'

*Deutsche Welle*

The EU Commission has raised its outlook for the bloc's economic growth, saying Europe's recovery remains on track but is vulnerable to the "exceptional risks" of Brexit and the new US administration.



["Cannot Find The Right Workers? Why Not Train Workers To Your Own To Specification?"](#)

Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

Click here for the Proactive Technologies Website "[News and Publications](#)" for Past Newsletters and Archived Articles

The European Commission published its winter economic forecast on Monday, slightly revising up its predictions for growth in both the euro currency area and the wider 28-nation EU.

Even though Europe was still navigating "choppy waters," Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said the European economy had proven "resilient to the numerous shocks it has experienced over the past year." [Read Article](#)

### German Region Struggles to Fill Jobs Amid Labour Shortage

*France24*

As the jobless rate in Germany's southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg falls below 4 percent, the dearth of qualified workers means businesses are struggling to fill vacant positions. To attract new recruits, the region has begun holding job fairs where companies offer training as an incentive for young locals, as well as refugees. An increasing number of businesses are now betting on the recent influx of refugees from countries like Syria to find workers. [See Video](#)

### Why Killer Viruses Are On The Rise

*NPR - Alyson Hurt*

And right there, sitting on a leaf, is the strangest bug we've ever seen. "Check out the size of it," says virus hunter Kevin Olival as he picks up a ginormous roly-poly. "It's the size of a ping-pong ball!"



We're in the middle of Malaysia's Borneo rain forest. Olival has brought us here because this is the type of place where pandemics are born. HIV came from a rain forest. So did Ebola. Yellow fever. And Zika. What Causes Pandemics? We Do

The next troubling outbreak could come from a rain forest like this. And a big reason why: all the crazy animals that live here. [Read Article](#)

### US Aerospace Industry: Flying High, Soaring Higher?

*Oxford Economics - Jeremy Leonard*

The trade surplus in aerospace products reached \$80 billion in 2015 on exports of \$140 billion, both record highs.



With so much focus on worries about American products being uncompetitive with those produced elsewhere in the world and the associated impact on jobs and domestic economic activity, it is easy to forget that there are a number of manufacturing sectors for which American dominance has persisted for decades and shows very few signs of ebbing.

Perhaps the best example is the aerospace sector. [Read Article](#)

## International Trade News

### U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services



*US Department of Commerce - Economics Institute*

Economics & Statistics Administration sent this bulletin at 02/07/2017 12:41 PM EST

The December 2016 international trade deficit decreased 3.2 percent from November, to \$44.3 billion. Exports increased 2.7 percent, to \$190.7 billion, and imports rose 1.5 percent, to \$235 billion.

For the full year 2016, the trade deficit increased 0.4 percent to \$502.3 billion. Exports declined 2.3 percent, to \$2.2 trillion, and imports fell 1.8 percent, to \$2.7 trillion. [Read Report](#)

### Top 10 Site Selection and Economic Development Trends Impacting Location Decisions in 2017

*LinkedIn - King White*

The U.S. economy is potentially entering into a





historic expansionary period beginning in 2017, which could create significant challenges for corporate site selection, economic development agencies and workforce development departments. This could be the perfect storm of heavy corporate investment and job creation; however, companies should be prepared for the short and long-term implications of their site selection decisions if they want to strategically take advantage of this opportunity. To help develop the right location strategy, Site Selection Group's team of experts identified the following 10 trends that will have the greatest impact on corporate location decisions, economic development policies and workforce development strategies in 2017. [Read Article](#)

### **Walmart Goes Head-to-Head with GE over Imports and Taxes**

*Material Handling & Logistics - Bloomberg*

The tax battle is opening up a fault line in corporate America, with net importers mostly on one side and exporters on the other. The proposed overhaul would reward companies that sell products outside the U.S. while punishing ones that rely on low-cost overseas suppliers.



General Electric Co. and Boeing Co. are girding for a showdown with corporate giants including retail giant Wal-Mart Stores Inc. over a proposed U.S. tax on imports, setting up a battle across industries that could be one of the most fractious in recent corporate history. [Read Article](#)

### **Mexico Starts 90-Day Countdown to Opening NAFTA Renegotiations**

*IndustryWeek - Bloomberg*

Mexico's government began a formal 90-day consultation process with the nation's business community that's needed before the start of talks to revise NAFTA and must be prepared for all scenarios, the country's top diplomat said.



Foreign Relations Minister Luis Videgaray on Wednesday said his visit to Washington last week was to lay the groundwork for collaboration with President Donald Trump's government and not to negotiate details of trade for any specific industries. Talks will begin in May, and Mexico also will work to diversify its relationships, seeking to reach free-trade agreements with partners from the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement who aren't already covered by bilateral deals, including Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, Videgaray said. [Read Article](#)

### **China Breaks Promise of Cuts to Steel Capacities**

*DeutscheWelle*

A study commissioned by Greenpeace has found out that China massively expanded its steelmaking capacities last year, despite pledging to cut output amid a steel glut that has led to a global crisis in the industry.



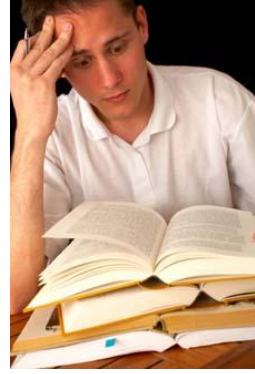
Environmental organization Greenpeace released a study on Monday claiming that China increased its net operating steelmaking capacity by 36.5 million tons in 2016 - more than twice the annual output of Britain's steel industry. [Read Article](#)

**Education and Workforce Development News**

### **Not ready for College-Level Work**

*Community College Daily - By Sarah Butrymowicz/The Hechinger Report*

This article comes from The Hechinger Report, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education. It is reprinted with permission.



The vast majority of public two- and four-year colleges report enrolling students - more than half a million of them - who are not ready for college-level work, a Hechinger Report investigation of 44 states has found.

The numbers reveal a glaring gap in the nation's education system: A high school diploma, no matter how recently earned, doesn't guarantee that students are prepared for college courses. Higher education institutions across the country are forced to spend time, money and energy to solve this disconnect. They must determine who's not ready for college and attempt to get those students up to speed as quickly as possible, or risk losing them altogether. [Read Article](#)

### **Struggling With Finances**

*Community College Daily News - Staff*

Nearly half of community college students say that a lack of financial resources could prompt them to withdraw, according to a new report.



More than one-third of community college students report that they receive Pell grants, which indicates a high level of financial need, according to the study by the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin. Of those students, 61 percent live below the poverty line for a family of four. [Read Article](#)

### **Kasich Wants Ohio Teachers to Complete Business Externships**

*Community College Daily - Associated Press*

Ohio Gov. John Kasich rolls out policy proposals in the FY 2018-19 state budget.



A provision in Gov. John Kasich's budget proposal would require Ohio teachers to complete externships with a local business as part of the license renewal process that generally occurs every five years.

Kasich believes that too many high school graduates are pursuing expensive college degrees that don't prepare them for realistic jobs, and that the externships would help involve businesses more in education.

"Are our schools preparing our students in a real way?" the Republican said at a recent event honoring innovative schools. "Never let the education get in the way of learning." [Read Article](#)

### **Teaching Without Textbooks**

*Community College Daily News - Janet Ekis*

Elizabeth Johnston teaches English at New York's Monroe Community College (MCC); Tori Matthews teaches biology. While the courses they teach are very different, Johnston and Matthews are passionate about the same subject: textbook cost.



College textbooks are expensive. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, textbook prices have risen more than 1,000 percent - over three times the rate of inflation - in the last 40 years. Recent initiatives within the State University of New York system and across the country are aimed at eliminating this financial weight by developing free replacements for textbooks. [Read Article](#)

### **Community Colleges: Is Drug Testing Part of Job Training?**

*Andalusia Start News - Kendra Majors*

Drug testing of students in the community college system was among the potential policies discussed at a budget hearing before legislators earlier this week.

Acting Alabama Community College President Jimmy Baker said at the hearing that the community college system is exploring drug testing for students who are enrolled in certificate programs in order to train them on appropriate workplace behavior, since a positive drug test could cost an employee his or her job. [Read Article](#)

### DeVos to Head ED

*Associated Press - Maria Danilova*

The Senate on Tuesday confirmed school choice advocate Betsy DeVos as education secretary by the narrowest of margins, with Vice President Mike Pence breaking a 50-50 tie in a historic vote.



Two Republicans joined Democrats in the unsuccessful effort to derail the nomination of the wealthy Republican donor. The Senate historian said Pence's vote was the first by a vice president to break a tie on a Cabinet nomination.

Democrats cited her lack of public school experience and financial interests in organizations pushing charter schools. DeVos has said she would divest herself from those organizations. [Read Article](#)

## Training and Organizational Development News

### Factory Skills Gap Could Spell Trouble for Trump's Jobs Plan

*Bloomberg*

According to HR consultancy first Randstad Sourceright, four-fifths of more than 400 U.S. executives surveyed said that a shortage of sufficiently skilled workers will affect their companies in the next 12 months.



Now that Donald Trump has added president to his resume, he's eyeing another title: job creator-in-chief.

His goal is 25 million new positions, boosted by the factories he plans to bring back to U.S. shores. Yet he'll be working against a powerful headwind, because company leaders are already struggling to find Americans to fill manufacturing openings. [Read Article](#)

### Why Apprenticeships Are Taking Off

*The Atlantic CITYLAB - Lisa Rabasca Roepe*

Employers need skilled workers; young people want a path to a good job without accruing lots of debt. This article is the first in a three-part series on apprenticeship in the United States.

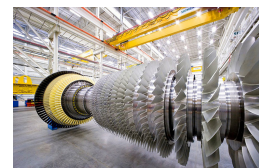


Twenty years ago, a manufacturing worker might have operated a machine on a factory floor. Today, that worker would need to understand not only how to operate the machine, but also how to program and maintain it. Similarly, many health care workers, such as medical coders and health information managers, now need to know IT as well as the basics of medicine. [Read Article](#)

### Wanted: Factory Workers, Degree Required

*New York Times - Jeffrey J. Selingo*

Siemens Energy struggled to find qualified workers when it opened a gas turbine production plant in Charlotte, N.C. Credit Siemens Energy Inc.



When the German engineering company Siemens Energy opened a gas turbine production plant in Charlotte, N.C., some 10,000 people showed up at a job fair for 800 positions. But fewer than 15 percent of the applicants were able to pass a reading, writing and math screening test geared toward a ninth-grade education.



"In our factories, there's a computer about every 20 or 30 feet," said Eric Spiegel, who recently retired as president and chief executive of Siemens U.S.A. "People on the plant floor need to be much more skilled than they were in the past. There are no jobs for high school graduates at Siemens today." [Read Article](#)

### **Acosta is New Choice for Labor Secretary**

*Community College Daily News-Associated Press*

President Donald Trump on Thursday announced law school dean R. Alexander Acosta as his new labor secretary nominee, one day after his original pick abruptly withdrew from consideration.



Trump said Acosta, who did not appear with the president, "has had a tremendous career." He noted that, unlike Andrew Puzder, Acosta has been confirmed by the Senate three times and "did very, very well." [Read Article](#)

## **Quality News**

### **Why a Price Sourcing Strategy Will Doom Your Lean Efforts**

*IndustryWeek - by John Dyer, President, JD&A - Process Innovation Co.*

A sourcing strategy that focuses on price reductions can disrupt the supply chain and derail a lean and Six Sigma initiative.



From Dr. W. Edwards Deming's 14 Points: End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag. Instead, minimize total cost. Move toward a single supplier for any one item, on a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust.

In one of the classes I teach on lean and Six Sigma, as part of a business simulation, I separate a few of the class members into another room. They are asked to use markers to copy a design onto a paper product that the rest of the class is producing. [Read Article](#)

### **Dr. Deming: 'Management Today Does Not Know What Its Job Is' (Part 1)**

*IndustryWeek - Tim Stevens*

In his last interview, Dr. W. Edwards Deming shared his thoughts on quality, management, innovation, and more.



Perhaps no one worked harder or enjoyed his job more than Dr. W. Edwards Deming. Less than two weeks before his death late last month at age 93, he was conducting one of his four-day seminars in Los Angeles. Always learning, Dr. Deming continued to integrate new ideas into his inspiring presentations. On a sunny Saturday morning last Oct. 23, sandwiched between his seminars in Detroit and Richmond, we had a chance to meet for a few hours at his home in Washington. Seated at a small circular table in his modest kitchen, we chatted over his breakfast of Quaker Oats granola with milk and cream, toast, and tea. [Read Article](#)

## **Cyber Security and IT News**

### **The Corporatization of Cyber Crime**

*CFO Magazine - David M. Katz*

Cyber crime groups are increasingly operating like traditional businesses. Will this new professionalism lead to more attacks on companies?



"It's beautiful, it's elegant, it's convincing," Markus Jakobsson gushes, describing the fake email used to hack into the personal Gmail account of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign chairman.

Sent on March 19, 2016, to the chairman, John Podesta, the email landed in the spam folder of his account. That should have signaled

"heightened danger" to the recipient, says Jakobsson, chief scientist at Agari, a Silicon Valley computer security firm that works with Google on email authentication. Spam implies a clear message, he adds: "Don't touch!" [Read More](#)

### **Addressing Privacy and Security Issues in the Connected Car**

*IndustryWeek - Pavan K. Agarwal and Chanley T. Howell*



A pair of intellectual property lawyers share their four top cybersecurity tips for automotive suppliers and OEMs.

The modern-day car is not just a computer on wheels-it's several computers on wheels. New cars can have 50 or more electrical control units (ECUs) networked together, and each network is analogous to a separate computer.

By 2020, an estimated 250 million connected cars will be on roads worldwide. Each car will have 200 or more sensors collecting information about road conditions, the car itself and driver behaviors and preferences. [Read Article](#)

### **Verizon's Wake-up Call: Cyber Diligence in M&A**

*CFO.com - Craig A. Newman*

Cyber crime groups are increasingly operating like traditional businesses. Will this new professionalism lead to more attacks on companies?



Over the past few years, we've seen cybercrime affect just about every segment of our economy - from massive data breaches at Fortune 100 companies to intellectual property theft at innovative start-ups. The latest poster child for a headline-grabbing hack is Yahoo! Inc. The internet company disclosed late last year that it suffered the largest reported data breach in U.S. history, with 1 billion user accounts compromised. [Read Article](#)

### **Cyber Risks Threaten Physical Security, Industrial Controls**

*CFO.com - Kevin Ingram*

"What are we doing to protect ourselves from cyberattacks?" It's a question every CFO eventually asks their team.



Although the question suggests IT-specific concerns like malware, firewalls, and virus scans, CFOs need to pause and broaden their perspective, examine cyber-related business risk in the areas of physical security and in industrial controls as well. [Read Article](#)

## **Human Resource Management News**

### **Exposure to Wage-and-Hour Class Actions Heightens**

*CFO.com US - David McCann*

For plaintiffs' lawyers, it's growing easier to get wage-and-hour cases certified and to win settlements from employers.



The dollar volume of settlements of class-action litigation against U.S. companies over employee-compensation practices soared in 2016 for a second year in a row, and 2017 is likely to bring more of the same, according to national law firm Seyfarth Shaw.

The value of settlements in so-called "wage-and-hour" cases last year was more than three times the 2014 level (see chart at the bottom of this article). By comparison, settlements for the other three major types of workplace lawsuits - employment discrimination, ERISA, and government-enforcement cases - all went down in 2016 after reaching all-time highs in 2014 and 2015. [Read Article](#)

### **How to Rein In the Soaring Costs of Specialty Drugs**

*CFO.com US - David McCann*

The 420-employer National Business Group on



Health recommends public-policy changes relating to the proliferating category of specialty drugs.

The National Business Group on Health (NBGH), a nonprofit association of 420 large U.S. employers, on Monday released a policy issue brief offering recommendations designed to help stem the skyrocketing costs of "specialty" drugs.

The rate of increase in the cost of employer-provided health benefits has moderated significantly in recent years. However, costs for specialty drugs - designed to fight various severe chronic conditions - are rising several times as fast as overall medical costs.

[Read Article](#)

## Employers Can Use FBI Database for Background Checks

*PBS Newshour*

Employers enrolled in federal and state "Rap Back" programs receive ongoing, real-time updates about their employees even after they are hired. They can keep tabs on things like encounters with law enforcement, even if those actions do not result in arrests, according to a report by The Intercept by Ava Kofman. Kofman joins Hari Sreenivasan with more details. [See video](#)

## H-1B visas: The Top 5 Myths

*TechRepublic - Hope Reese*

The Trump administration's immigration changes have employers scrambling to determine their impact on businesses and employees. Here's how to separate fact from fiction when it comes to H-1B.



To "protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals admitted to the United States," President Donald Trump recently signed an executive order that freezes travel for 90 days for citizens from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. Additionally, the US Refugee Admissions Program was suspended for 120 days, and Syrian refugees have been indefinitely suspended from entry into the US. The order originally applied to all non-US residents from these countries, although the Trump administration later eased the restriction on green card holders. [Read Article](#)

## Environmental, Health & Safety News

### CDC Study Says One in Four U.S. Adults have Hearing Damage

*EHS Today*

In a recent study, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers found that many U.S. adults have damage from noise exposure despite reporting good hearing.



Even if a person doesn't have job-related noise exposure, he/she still could experience hearing damage or loss at home or in the community.

A survey released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) discovered one in four U.S. adults, as young as their early 20s, have hearing damage caused by loud noises encountered in everyday activities outside of the workplace. [Read Article](#)

### Six Ways to Leverage Chemical Labeling To Increase Safety and Supply Chain Efficiencies

*EHS Today - Greg Wimble*

How can you leverage innovations in enterprise barcode labeling to help your chemical company succeed in a highly regulated, highly competitive global marketplace?



Labeling is complex; today's chemical manufacturers are faced with a range of evolving requirements that complicate the process, and many companies accept this process as the cost of doing business. But it doesn't have to be.



Labeling can make a huge difference, enabling IT and supply chain decision makers to not just overcome challenges, but also provide their company with a distinct competitive advantage. There are just six questions you have to ask yourself to find out. [Read Article](#)

### **Fall Prevention Training for General Industry Employees**

*EHSToday - By Karen Hamel, CSP, WACH*  
OSHA's efforts to revise and update the existing walking-working surfaces standard for general industry have been ongoing since 1973. A focus of the update is employee training. Here's what you need to know.



In 2016, OSHA passed a final rule expanding the scope of the existing walking and working surface standard for general industry and adding a fall protection standard for general industry; acknowledging that many general industry workers face similar types of fall hazards as those in construction. More than 25 years in the making, the new rule requires general industry employers to identify fall hazards in their workplace and establish plans and procedures to ensure that slip and fall hazards on floors, roofs, stairs, ramps, dockboards, scaffolds, elevated platforms and other walking-working surfaces are guarded. The rule also establishes specific requirements for workplaces that use personal fall protection systems as a means of protecting employees from fall hazards to ensure that the components, devices and equipment that will be used are adequately rated and that employees are properly trained to use them. [Read Article](#)

### **Die Safety Blocks: Why They're Needed and How To Use Them**

*EHSToday - Carrie Halle*

While die safety blocks appear to be simple devices, there are many factors to consider in choosing what type of blocks to use, as well as how many to use or where to put them.



Die safety blocks are called by many names: safety blocks, ram blocks, die blocks or prop blocks. Regardless of the term, die safety blocks all have the same purpose: provide protection to employees working in the die area from a free-falling upper die/slide.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data indicate that approximately three-fifths of all work-related amputations involved a worker's finger or arm getting caught or compressed by a piece of machinery such as a press or conveyor. Injury statistics compiled by OSHA indicated that 49 percent of the injuries from mechanical power presses resulted in an amputation. [Read Article](#)

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