



Proactive Technologies News

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Best wishes for a bright and prosperous 2018!



Maximizing Worker Capacity Maximizes Shareholder Value...If Done Right

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.



To many, "maximizing shareholder value" has become synonymous with layoffs and short-term cuts that will typically have harmful affects on long-term operational capacity. An often overlooked, but more productive, goal is "**maximizing worker capacity**" and should be a priority for every organization - publicly traded or not. Leaders of an organization are quick to say, "our workers are our greatest asset." Yet, efforts to maximize returns on this asset are often hard to recognize or understand.

Maximizing a worker's capacity maximizes worker value. Collectively, maximizing each worker's capacity maximizes an organization's value, and that of the shareholders. It is as simple as that.

Publicly traded companies, and even some privately held companies getting ready to go public, seem preoccupied with increasing quarterly earnings per share above all else. A consistently high level of earnings per share over the long-run no longer seems adequate for some. If the market is slack, an organization might carve costs out of the company from even a lean operation rather than disappoint investors. When labor is viewed as a "cost" rather than an asset, the temptation might be to cut benefits and wages. This may prop-up numbers for the short-term, but a demoralized workforce might not produce the same levels of output and quality yield as before. Sadly, a decision might be made in following quarters to cut benefits and wages even more, followed by workers if needed to make the magic number. All the while, worker and operational capacity, along with enthusiasm and loyalty, are eroding.

How does this erosion happen? When workers are cut, the work they used to perform gets transferred to the remaining workers. If there isn't a mechanism to quickly "transfer expertise" to the worker expected to take on the new responsibilities, capacity drops until the trainee comes up to speed. For as long as the transfer takes, one well-paid subject matter expert trainer is being paid and so is the trainee, yet productivity may be negligible. And further complicating the process, perhaps no one thought about capturing the exiting workers expertise before they left the building, so some "reinventing the wheel has to occur." Multiply this across all affected workers and the labor and opportunity costs may wipe out any anticipated gains by cutting worker payroll.

Proactive Technologies Report has presented many articles about the [value of workers](#), [how structured on-the-job training increases the worker's capacity](#) to perform more tasks to a level of mastery, the [high cost of worker turnover](#), and more. It is a concept we feel strongly about. Yet we are

Proactive Technologies, Inc.

has been building and supporting job specific, task-based worker development programs and metric-based solutions for employers since 1986

Proactive Technologies' Publications Archive

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Free - Live Online Presentation Schedule

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[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):
[PTIpromo - A Preview of an Upcoming Presentation](#)
(13 minutes)

FOR FORMER EMPLOYER CLIENTS:
[PTI1001 - MA, OH, PA and SC Former](#)

continuously surprised how this topic is avoided by company's accounting departments and upper management when they feel inclined to trim costs here and there, avoiding cultivating the enormous wealth before them - waiting to be harvested. **What would be the value of just a 10% increase in worker capacity, operational capacity, quality and quantity of work, and worker compliance (safety, ISO/TS/AS, etc.) to any operation?**

Not to diminish the important role of investors, but there has been a lot written about whether maximizing shareholder value is a destructive rule that needs to be changed. Critic **Steve Denning** wrote in an article in Forbes published in 2011 entitled "[The Dumbest Idea In The World: Maximizing Shareholder Value](#)," "Imagine an NFL coach," writes **Roger Martin**, Dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, in his important new book, *Fixing the Game-What Capitalism Can Learn from the NFL*, "holding a press conference on Wednesday to announce that he predicts a win by 9 points on Sunday, and that bettors should recognize that the current spread of 6 points is too low. Or picture the team's quarterback standing up in the post-game press conference and apologizing for having only won by 3 points when the final betting spread was 9 points in his team's favor. While it's laughable to imagine coaches or quarterbacks doing so, CEOs are expected to do both of these things." Denning continues, "Suppose also that in order to manage the expectations implicit in the point spread, the coach had to spend most of his time talking with analysts and sports writers about the prospects of the coming games and "managing" the point spread, instead of actually coaching the team. It would hardly be a surprise that the most esteemed coach in this world would be a coach who met or beat the point spread in forty-six of forty-eight games-a 96 percent hit rate. Looking at these forty-eight games, one would be tempted to conclude: "Surely those scores are being 'managed'?" [Read More](#)

Training Issue or Attitude Issue? Understanding the Difference

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



If you spend some time in the Human Resources Department office, you often witness a supervisor or manager trying to explain why the new-hire isn't working out. "Why do you believe that?" asks the HR Manager. The supervisor thinks a moment and says, "He just doesn't act like he wants to learn." The issue seems to be attitudinal. The HR Manager doesn't bother to ask for any empirical evidence since it usually doesn't exist, so the decision is made to terminate the new-hire and start all over...again.

Some, more forward thinking, human resources departments concluded that [assessing job prospects](#) might reduce the amount of hiring turnover. It certainly does help do that if the job classification was properly analyzed and the assessment instruments were aligned to the data for "job relevance." However, even with the best screening potentially good employees might be lost. Knowing how to recognize the difference between attitude and training-related issues may save good employees from being lost due to misdiagnosis.

Whether a challenge to learning or performance is attitudinal is not easy to determine. Attitudes fluctuate from day to day, throughout the day. They can be affected by personal issues such as health of the individual, health of a family member, financial issues, relationship difficulties at home and the work culture (e.g. relationship with coworkers, supervisor and company management). Rather than hastily concluding any issue of worker development is attitudinal, I find it easier to eliminate the obvious and more common influence on worker learning and development; whether proper training has been conducted. After all, employee insecurity caused by feeling expendable while a 90-day probationary period clock is ticking can, in itself, affect anyone's attitude and personality. If proper training is not available or worker development is conducted in an unstructured, haphazard and inconsistent manner, this is a major contributor to worker attitudes toward the company, themselves and others in the workplace.

Assuming that the offered wage and benefits are competitive, there are four

[Client Employers - Restart Your Organization's PROTECH® Training Infrastructure](#)
(45 minutes)

FOR ANY EMPLOYER:
[PTI1002 - Building an Effective Worker Training/Apprenticeship System - Registered or Not](#)
(45 minutes)

[PTI1004 - If You Can't Find Skilled Workers, Develop Your Own](#)
(45 minutes)

[PTI1007 - Structured On-the-Job Training Supports ISO/AS/TS Process Training Requirement Compliance](#)
(45 minutes)

[PTI1008 - Preparing your Workers for Growth: Using Lulls Before Growth to Increase Your Worker's Capacity](#)
(45 minutes)

FOR EDUCATION, WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

[PTI1003 - Adding Employer-Specific Structured OJT to Your Training Support Strategy\(45 minutes\)](#)

[PTI1005 - Adding Structured On-the-Job Training to Your Apprenticeships](#)
(45 minutes)

[PTI1006 - 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, **and a representative will be in your area**, in the month of:

January, 2018

Colorado (Eastern Slope)

Indiana (I70 Corridor)

Kansas (Kansas City, Topeka and I70 Corridor)

Kentucky (North and Eastern)

essential considerations to the hiring and keeping the best workers; [Read More](#)

Grow Your Own Multi-Craft Maintenance Technicians - Using a "Systems Approach" to Training

by Dr. Dave Just, former Dean of Corporate and Continuing Education at Community Colleges in MA, OH, PA, SC. Currently President of K&D Consulting



Since partnering with Proactive Technologies, Inc. in 1994, together we have advocated the use of a "systems approach" to training that includes a combination of related technical instruction and structured on-the-job training to develop multi-craft maintenance technicians. This approach works equally as well with other job classifications within a organization. This is a viable option to paying tens of thousands of dollars per year to employment recruiters to locate these technicians on a nationwide basis...who still need to be trained once hired. Plus, once the investment is made to setup the infrastructure, you can train as many workers as you need - with a dedining cost per trainee.

The systems approach to training, if built correctly for your company, forms the infrastructure of a highly effective, low cost apprenticeship (registered or not) model. This model can quickly and cost-effectively produce the multi-craft maintenance technicians you need, who will be qualified to perform the tasks required at your facility. Based on detailed job/task analysis data - collected by Proactive Technologies' experts using your internal subject matter experts who have the final review - worker development materials are generated by Proactive Technologies' **PROTECH® software system** for immediate use. **Most importantly, technical support to the project includes project implementation management, so you can focus on running your business.**

The "**Systems Approach to Worker Development**" is effective. To establish the foundation. [Read More](#)

Finding the Balance Between Wages, Entry-Level Skills and Opportunities for Advancement

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

During the path toward recovery after the Crash of 2008, many employers that had to lay-off skilled workers tried to find some of those workers (in whom a great investment was made) and bring them back for rehire. Some were not needed, some could not be found, some moved on to what they thought were safer career tracks and some inexplicably "dropped out" of the labor force.

Concurrently, employers continued a push to drive wages down. Some of it was rationalized by the swollen labor pool, some of it was to take advantage of the economics of desperation due to job loss and some, it was said, to position the company competitively. Some was because everyone else was doing it, and some of it was because the investors demanded it.

The result is a world in which economic theory no longer supports reality. For example, unemployment is reported at a celebrated low 4.1 percent through December, 2017. [Yet wages continue to decline](#) in many areas. Most credible economic theories state that when the supply of labor becomes scarcer, wages tend to increase to reflect that scarcity. This is simply a supply and demand issue.

So, there must be other than economic reasons for this. It brings into question how employment is defined; what is considered a job, full-time employment, part-time versus seasonal employment, contract versus temporary employment. On the one hand we are told that skilled workers cannot be easily found, often citing the shortage of workers as suggested by the low unemployment number. Yet, reports state that [youth unemployment](#) is at a seriously high level of 9.6 - 10 % (some say higher) and older workers are postponing retirement, or returning from retirement, as they find financing a retirement with rising prices (but reportedly low inflation) and fixed incomes (sliding backward in real dollars) increasingly

Missouri (Kansas City, St. Louis)

North Carolina (Asheville and Western Area, Charlotte, I77 Corridor)

Ohio (North-Central, Northeast and Southeast Area)

Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Western Area)

South Carolina (UpState, Columbia and Charleston Area)

Tennessee (Eastern)

West Virginia (North-Central, South Central)

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



Classes alone will not close the "skills gap," but structured on-the-job training can...every time!

Under-capacity of workers is an enormous source of untapped value and unrealized return on worker investment. In addition, standardizing expert task performance - between workers and shifts - can add to worker ROI through lower scrap and rework.

Experience the power of the **PROTECH© system of *managed* human resource development!**



- Accelerated Transfer of Expertise™;
- Increased worker capacity, productivity, work

harder to endure. So, it seems the number of unemployed, underemployed and retirement-aged workers are there to fill the available jobs but, but employers say they cannot find the skilled ones.

"Having a workforce that can adapt to, and take advantage of, business opportunities doesn't happen by chance, it is the result of the efforts to create and maintain it."

When you hear of an unemployed Engineer, previously making \$100,000/year, who now has 3 jobs and makes \$40,000/year, that may be considered employment, but each job can also be considered underemployment. Maybe if the trained engineer was able to find one engineering job that paid enough to allow them to support themselves and their family, that would free up two jobs for others still looking.

The nature of the employment is important to understanding its effect on the worker. We hear employers report on the "skill gap," saying "we just can't find the skilled workers we need." You have seen, heard and read that for years. But what does that mean? [Read More](#)

Having trouble finding, selecting, training and keeping the skilled workers you need? Are your employee turnover costs a concern?

How would you rate your firm's efforts to train the skilled workers you need?

- Classes alone will not train workers to perform your tasks...
- Quality Control policies and Process Documents are not a substitute for task training...
- Wishing and hoping won't develop the skilled workers you need...

The cost of one worker malperformance or one worker's under-capacity or under-performance - due to lack of proper training - can more than justify the investment to train all your workers properly!

Ask your [Proactive Technologies, Inc. representative](#) about the [PROTECH© system of managed human resource development](#)

Industry News

DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DATA

Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders

US Census Bureau

New orders for manufactured goods in October decreased \$0.3 billion or 0.1 percent to \$479.6 billion.

October 2017: -0.1% change, September 2017 (r): +1.7% change. [Read Report A](#)



ArcelorMittal: Steel's Surprising Comeback Is Far From Over

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

After years of bleak news from U.S. and European steelmakers, the industry is finally thriving again.

ArcelorMittal, the largest producer, says it's more than just a blip.



"When things structurally improve they last longer than months," CFO Aditya Mittal said in an interview in Paris. "It should be a multiyear phenomena."

Steel prices and producers' shares are being buoyed by a rare combination of good news. Global demand is strong - ArcelorMittal sees usage rising 3% this year - and China, which has long been the cause of too much

quantity, work quality and compliance (specifications, ISO/AS/TS programs and safety mandates);

- Decreased internal costs of training;
- **Higher return on worker investment!**

You would be surprised how small of an investment is needed to unlock enormous returns.

If budgets are tight, **Proactive Technologies can be your surrogate training department**, or an extension to the training department you have, with our technical implementation support - **included with every project!**

There's nothing to lose by [contacting us](#) to learn more

www.proactivetechnologiesinc.com

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supply, is shutting plants to cut pollution. Nations have also strengthened trade defenses after China's so-called steel dumping became a political flashpoint. [Read Article](#)

GE Struggles To Show It Still Has Magic Touch

NPR Weekend Edition - Brian Mann

When General Electric's new CEO John Flannery spoke to investors and analysts last month, he acknowledged things are bad.



"I was forced to confront a lot of sort of deeper questions about this company," he said. "Why do we exist? How do we impact the world for the next 100 years the same way we have for the last 100 years?"

General Electric is one of the most storied corporations in American history, co-founded by Thomas Edison and re-defined by legendary CEO Jack Welch.

For more than a century, GE's products - from dishwashers to MRI machines - changed the way Americans live. But now the company is in deep trouble. Its stock price plummeted over the last year, losing more than 40 percent of its value while the market as a whole soared. [Hear Podcast and Read Article](#)

US Manufacturers Are Really Optimistic Says NAM

IndustryWeek - IW Staff

Manufacturers' optimism has risen to unprecedented heights amid the legislative progress made on tax reform, according to the results of the Manufacturers' Outlook Survey for the fourth quarter of 2017.



The study, conducted by The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), found that 94.6% of respondents say they are positive about their own company's outlook.

This quarter's optimism level is the highest in the survey's 20-year history. [Read Article](#)

Companies in US Plan to Slow Their Investment, Hiring in 2018

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

U.S. companies expect their investment and hiring to grow at a slower pace in 2018, and only a small share say proposed tax legislation is driving their capital-spending decisions, according to

The Institute for Supply Management. The group's semi-annual forecast showed factory purchasing managers see capital spending rising 2.7% in 2018, slower than the 8.7% gain reported for this year.

Their counterparts at service providers project investment growth of 3.8%, also weaker than this year's 7% advance.



Less than half of respondents in both manufacturing and services said they'd raised wages to attract workers. [Read Article](#)

Lockheed Says F-35 Production Rate, Costs on Target

IndustryWeek - Robert Brooks

Lockheed Martin reported it has fulfilled the 2017 delivery target for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, having delivered the 66th jet for this year on Friday, December 15, meeting the goal set jointly by the U.S. Defense Department and the F-35 program's industrial suppliers.



The F-35 is a single-engine, Stealth-enabled aircraft designed for deployment for ground attack and combat, available in three variants: F-35A, for conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL); F-35B, for short take-off and vertical-landing (STOVL); and the F-35C carrier-based variant for Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery (CATOBAR) variant. [Read Article](#)



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Blockchain Points Way to 'Massive Change' for Commodity Supply Chain

Material Handling & Logistics - Bloomberg

In most food-supply chains it might take weeks to figure out where it went from source to destination, and in some cases, the source may not be known, but on a blockchain, it takes just seconds.



Blockchain is upending the world's financial markets with the rise of bitcoin, and now the digital-ledger system is poised to do the same next year for raw materials like food and energy.

Companies including BP Plc, ABN Amro Group NV and Mercuria Energy Group Ltd. said last month they will adapt blockchain to streamline physical energy transactions. In October, four banks joined a venture started by UBS Group AG and International

Business Machines Corp. to use the technology in a platform for the global goods trade. Natixis SA and Trafigura Group Ltd. announced in March they will employ the system to finance buying and selling oil. [Read Article](#)

Boom in Food M&A Deals Just Getting Started as Kraft Looms

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

The U.S. food industry has announced \$42 billion in deals this year, but it could just be a taste of the next wave of consolidation coming in 2018.



Companies from Kraft Heinz to Conagra are seen as possible suitors next year as food giants struggle to generate growth. They face an array of challenges: shifting eating tastes, a resurgent Wal-Mart playing tough with suppliers and Amazon's expansion into the grocery business. [Read Article](#)

It's Official: Brand America Is Tanking

Forbes - Andrew Levine, Contributor

About 100 days into the Trump presidency, I wrote a Forbes.com article titled "Is Brand America Tanking?" There were early warning signs that perceptions of the United States around the world were slipping following the change in administration. One branding consultant I spoke with at the time cautioned: "We need to wait for more robust data before drawing any definitive conclusions."



Enter "more robust data" from two, completely different sources.

The first source is the Anholt-GfK "Nation Brands Index." For the past thirteen years, this global survey measures perception of 50 nations in six key dimensions: Governance, Exports, Tourism, Investment & Immigration, Culture & Heritage, and People. [Read Article](#)

US Production of Critical Minerals Gets Boost

Material Handling & Logistics - Bloomberg

President Donald Trump signed an executive order to reduce dependency of critical minerals used in everything from batteries to phones.



"The comprehensive order aims to identify new sources of critical minerals, ensure miners and producers have access to the best data, and streamline the leasing and permitting process to expedite production, reprocessing and recycling of minerals at all levels of the supply chain," according to a statement on Dec. 20 from the White House.

The U.S. in 2016 was reliant on imports for 23 minerals including cobalt, lithium, graphite and rare-earth elements, according to a report released this week by the Department of the Interior. [Read Article](#)

Manufacturers React to Congressional Passage of the Tax Bill

IndustryWeek - Matt LaWell, Adrienne Selko

Manufacturers will save about \$261 billion over the next decade thanks to the new Tax Cuts and Jobs





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MEMORABLE QUOTES

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."

B. F. Skinner

"Retention is best when the learner is involved."

Edward Scannell,
University Conference Bureau,
Arizona

Recent Proactive Technologies News Article Quicklinks

December:

[Worker Capacity; Malperformance Cause-Effect](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Challenges Presented by the Widening Skills Gap](#)

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

[Tips for Workforce Developers - Partnerships That Matter...and Last!](#)

by Frank Gibson, Special Projects Coordinator -The Ohio State University - Alber Enterprise Center

[10 Reasons Structured On-The-Job Training is a Vital and Necessary System for Any Organization](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

November:

[Understanding the Resistance to Training: Part 2, Meeting the Challenge](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[The High Cost of Employee Turnover](#)

Act. On paper, this should lead to new investments - in equipment, in workforce and beyond.

Steve Staub was headed west on Interstate 70 on Wednesday afternoon, back to his factory in Dayton after a meeting in Columbus with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association, when he turned on the radio and heard the news that Congress had passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Bill. Around the same time, over in Washington, D.C., President Donald Trump walked from the Oval Office to the White House lawn Wednesday to share his comments on his first major legislation. [Read Article](#)

Caterpillar's Rail Unit to Pay Criminal Fine for Cheating Customers

Material Handling & Logistics - Staff

Employees of United Industries were encouraged to cause damage to the trucks in an effort to increase revenue for additional repairs.



United Industries, a wholly owned subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc. will pay a \$5 million criminal fine and \$20 million in restitution for intentionally cheating its customers with unnecessary repairs and dumping rail car parts into the ocean to cover up its actions. [Read Article](#)

Financial News

Larry Summers is Right and Has a Duty to Continue to Speak Out: The Treasury Department is Compromising its Integrity, Credibility and Authority

Better Markets

As anyone with passing familiarity of Better Markets knows, we have had our disagreements with Larry Summers. While he is indisputably intelligent and thought provoking, we have also found him to be dead wrong on a number of the most consequential economic issues facing our country. Worst of all, we remain disappointed in his ongoing failure to fully, deeply and publicly reflect on and account for the key role he played in some of the critical financial policy mistakes of the last 20-plus years. In our view, anyone aspiring to be a financial statesman or stateswoman owes that to the country.



However, we also believe that we should commend those we criticize when they are right and Mr. Summers is right in his recent, very important criticism of the Treasury Department. Those disparaging him for breaking the "unwritten rule" that Treasury Secretaries are not supposed to criticize their successors miss the point entirely: the rule (however questionable) is aimed at not undermining the credibility, integrity and authority of the Treasury Department. The rule is not meant to protect any particular individual from criticism, particularly one that is in fact undermining the Department and its mission.

When someone at Treasury is breaking the norms by a wide, if not historic margin and damaging the Treasury Department (particularly for short term political gain), then predecessors have, we would argue, a duty to speak up and speak out. That duty is not only to the Department, but also to the country. [Read Article](#)

U.S. Department of Labor Extends Transition Period For Fiduciary Rule Exemptions

US Department of Labor

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Labor has announced an 18-month extension from Jan. 1, 2018, to July 1, 2019, of the special Transition Period for the Fiduciary Rule's Best Interest Contract Exemption and the Principal Transactions Exemption, and of the applicability of certain amendments to Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 (PTEs). This follows public comment on a proposed extension that was published in August.



The extension gives the Department the time necessary to consider public comments submitted pursuant to the Department's July Request for Information, and the criteria set forth in the Presidential Memorandum of Feb. 3, 2017, including whether possible changes and alternatives to exemptions would be appropriate in light of the current comment record and

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

[The Employers Have the Most Advanced Equipment Available for Training](#)

by Frank Gibson, Special Projects
Coordinator -The Ohio State University -
Alber Enterprise Center

[Quality Policies and Process Sheets Do Not Equal Training](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

October:

[Understanding the Resistance to Training: Part 1, The Challenge](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Put Yourself in a Trainee's Shoes](#)

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

[Some Community Colleges Moving Back Toward 70's Approach to Vocational Programs; Why Did it Take So Long?](#)

Dr. Dave Just, formally Dean of
Corporate and Continuing Education at
Community Colleges in MA, OH, PA, SC.
Currently President of K&D Consulting

[Appreciating the Value of Labor](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

September:

[Confusion Over What Constitutes "Training" Stumbling Block to Effective Strategies](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Cross-Training Workers After Lean Efforts Builds Capacity Using Existing Staff](#)

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

[The Right Assessment is a Good Predictor if Candidate is Able to Learn and Master The Job Classification - Job Relevance is Critical to Legal Compliance and Success - Part 2](#)

by Jim Poole, President of Lifetime
Learning, LLC

[Replicating Your Best Performers](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Worker "Prior Learning Assessment" - Documenting Cumulative Work Skills and Knowledge Acquisition](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of
Proactive Technologies, Inc.

August:

[Supervisors and First Line Management Need Structured On-](#)

potential input from, and action by the Securities and Exchange
Commission, state insurance commissioners and other regulators. The
President directed the Department to prepare an updated analysis of the
likely impact of the Fiduciary Rule on access to retirement information and
financial advice.

During the extended Transition Period, fiduciary advisers have an
obligation to give advice that adheres to "impartial conduct standards."
These fiduciary standards require advisers to adhere to a best interest
standard when making investment recommendations, charge no more
than reasonable compensation for their services, and refrain from making
misleading statements. [Read Release](#)

Unhappy 10th Anniversary, Great Recession. You Still Hurt Us

NPR.org - Marilyn Geewax

Ten years ago this month, you may not have
noticed the cracking and crumbling under you.



At the time, you may have had a job, a home and
rising retirement savings. Sure, the housing market was hurting a lot, but
stock prices were still holding up and Federal Reserve policymakers were
offering reasons for calm, saying they expected strong consumer spending.

But the Fed was wrong: In December 2007, an economic earthquake
already was convulsing the country. It marked the beginning of the Great
Recession, which lasted 18 months, becoming the longest recession of the
post-World War II period.

"There was a lot we didn't see then," said Kevin Logan, chief economist for
HSBC. "We didn't see the borrowing that was piled on top of borrowing,
and how it had contaminated the financial system." [Read Article](#)

Beneath the U.S. Job Numbers: Tech's BROOKINGS Influence on the Workforce Continues to Hollow Out the Labor Market

AreaDevelopment - Brookings, Mark Muro and Jacob Whiton

Like dockwork, the start of each month brings the latest update on U.S. job
numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Vital to assembling a momentary look at the job market's latest trends, the
report will support a pulse of urgent and useful news stories with its mixed
and sometimes blurry data points on such topics as job growth and
unemployment.

And yet, for all that, the jobs report remains in many ways a distraction
from the most important longer-term trend lines and macro forces. [Read
Article](#)

PBGC to Pay Pension Benefits for Salaried Employees and Retirees of Avaya



Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

WASHINGTON - The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will pay
retirement benefits for nearly 8,000 current and future retirees who
participated in the Avaya, Inc. Pension Plan for Salaried Employees.
Avaya filed for Chapter 11 protection last January and is emerging from
bankruptcy. The company asked the bankruptcy court to allow it to end its
salaried plan. That motion was granted, and termination of the pension
plan went into effect on November 30, 2017, the date proposed by Avaya in
notices sent to participants.

The Avaya salaried plan is 63% funded, with plan assets of \$1.6 billion and
liabilities for future benefits of \$2.5 billion, and thus is underfunded by
\$938 million. Benefit accruals under the plan have been frozen since 2003.

PBGC will pay pension benefits earned by retirees of Avaya's salaried
plan, up to the legal limits. [Read Release](#)

[The-Job Training, Too](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Realistic Job Previews Can be a Useful Tool for Measuring a Prospective Employee's Transferable Task-based Skills](#)

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[Developing the Maintenance and Other Technically Skilled Workers That You Need; To Specification, With Minimal Investment](#)

by Dr. Dave Just, former Dean of Corporate and Continuing Education at Community Colleges in MA, OH, PA, SC. Currently President of K&D Consulting

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

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

Tax Bill Favors Adding Robots Over Workers, Critics Say

NPR All Things Considered - Chris Arnold
Republicans call their tax bill the Tax Cut and Jobs Act. But critics say maybe it should have been named the Tax Cut and Robots Act.



That's because it doesn't create new tax incentives that specifically encourage companies to hire workers and create jobs, some employers and economists say. But it does expand incentives for companies to buy robots and machines that replace workers.

Republicans say that lowering taxes will boost the economy and spur job creation. But critics say that the tax legislation would create an imbalance favoring machines over workers.

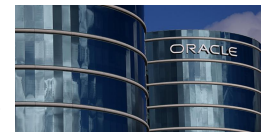
"I think they really need to re-look at the name [of the bill] and add the missing component of the worker," says Carl Pasciuto, president of Custom Group, a high tech manufacturing company in Woburn, Mass.

[Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

Cloud Sales Fall Short for Some

Industry - Bloomberg

Oracle Corp. fell the most in three months after reporting cloud-computing sales that missed some analysts' estimates, a setback in the company's effort to remake itself around internet-based products.

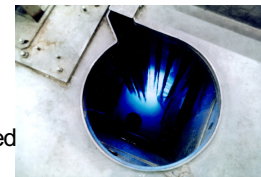


Cloud revenue in the period ended Nov. 30 gained 44% to \$1.52 billion, Oracle said Thursday in a statement. John DiFucci, an analyst at Jefferies, was among those who projected stronger growth in Oracle's cloud sales, with his estimate of \$1.55 billion. The company also gave a disappointing forecast for profit and cloud growth in the current period. Shares fell up to 6.36% to \$47 Friday in New York, the biggest intraday drop since Sept. 15. [Read Article](#)

International News

Clues In That Mysterious Radioactive Cloud Point Toward Russia

NPR Weekend Edition Sunday - Geoff Brumfiel
Some scientists suspect the institute's work on medical isotopes might explain radioactivity detected over Europe.



The tiny nation of Denmark has just three stations for monitoring atmospheric radiation. Each week, scientists change out air filters in the detectors and take the used ones to a technical university near Copenhagen.

There, Sven Poul Nielsen and other researchers analyze the filters. They often snag small amounts of naturally occurring radioactivity, radon for example.

Then about a month ago, Nielsen was startled to find something far stranger: a radioactive isotope known as ruthenium-106. [Read Article](#)

Jamaica's Bauxite Industry on Growth Path

Carribbean360

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Friday November 17, 2017 - Minister of Transport and Mining Mike Henry, says Jamaica's bauxite and alumina industry is on a growth path, driven by the reopening of the Alpart plant in St Elizabeth, by Jiuquan Iron and Steel Company (JISCO) Limited.



The company has proposed to invest some US\$3 billion over a three-year period in the upgrading of the 1.65-million-tonnes-per-annum plant, which opened in June.

This will expand production capacity to two million tonnes per annum by the end of 2020, the Minister said. [Read Article](#)

[Classes Alone Will Not Close the "Skills Gap." But Structured On-the-Job Training Can... Every Time!](#)

by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff

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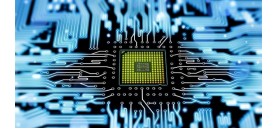
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Singapore Chip Assembler Global A&T Files for Bankruptcy in New York

IndustryWeek -Bloomberg

Global A&T Electronics, a Singapore-based chip assembler that took on hefty debt a decade ago through a buyout by TPG Capital and Affinity Equity Partners, filed for bankruptcy as a 2013 debt exchange came back to haunt it.



The chip-assembler listed debt of more than \$1 billion and assets of over \$500 million in Chapter 11 papers filed Sunday in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in New York. [Read Article](#)

Venezuela Expels Top Brazil and Canada Diplomats

BBC

Delcy Rodriguez said Canada has repeatedly meddled in Venezuela's internal matters.



Venezuela has expelled the Brazilian ambassador to Caracas, Ruy Pereira, and Canadian charge d'affaires Craib Kowalik.

The move was announced by the head of Venezuela's powerful Constituent Assembly, Delcy Rodriguez.

Ms Rodriguez accused Canada of interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs and Brazil of violating the rule of law.

Canada imposed sanctions on senior Venezuelan officials a few months ago. [Read Article](#)

US Ambassador to Netherlands Pete Hoekstra Caught Peddling 'Fake News' Lie

DeutscheWelle

The new US ambassador to the Netherlands has blatantly lied about his own anti-Islamic rhetoric, and then lied about lying. His cries of "fake news" left a Dutch interviewer scratching his head.



The newly inaugurated US ambassador to the Netherlands was caught out blatantly lying about "fake news" on Friday.

Television reporter Wouter Zwart asked Ambassador Pete Hoekstra about comments on Islamic extremism in the Netherlands that he had made in 2015 in which he insisted there were "no-go zones" in the country and that politicians were being burned.

"That is an incorrect statement. We would call it fake news, I never said that," Hoekstra responded. But Zwart was armed with footage clearly showing Hoekstra talking about "chaos in the Netherlands" with "cars being burned," "politicians that are being burned" and that "yes, there are no-go zones in the Netherlands." [Read Article](#)

Ceasefire Extended in Eastern Ukraine as US Sends Military Equipment to Kyiv

DeutscheWelle

Ukraine's president and Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed the decision to recommit to a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine first agreed in 2015. But the US is reported to be sending lethal weapons to Kyiv.



Chancellor Angela Merkel and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Friday welcomed a decision by pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces to recommit to a ceasefire agreement signed in 2015.

The pair said it should lead to a longer-term improvement of the security situation.

Despite the ceasefire, casualties in eastern Ukraine have been reported on a regular basis.

Poroshenko told the chancellor that he would work for an exchange of prisoners held by both sides in the conflict, a spokesman for Merkel said on

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Friday. They both regarded it as "an important step toward implementation of the Minsk agreements," Merkel's deputy spokesman Georg Streiter said. [Read Article](#)

International Trade News

INTERNATIONAL TRADE DATA

U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, October 2017

US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis



The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, through the Department of Commerce, announced today that the goods and services deficit was \$48.7 billion in October, up \$3.8 billion from \$44.9 billion in September, revised. October exports were \$195.9 billion, down less than \$0.1 billion from September exports. October imports were \$244.6 billion, \$3.8 billion more than September imports.

The October increase in the goods and services deficit reflected an increase in the goods deficit of \$3.8 billion to \$69.1 billion and a decrease in the services surplus of less than \$0.1 billion to \$20.3 billion. Year-to-date, the goods and services deficit increased \$49.1 billion, or 11.9 percent, from the same period in 2016. Exports increased \$97.5 billion or 5.3 percent. Imports increased \$146.6 billion or 6.5 percent. [Read Report](#)

Monthly Wholesale Trade

US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis



Sales: October 2017 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$484.6 billion, up 0.7 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the revised September level and were up 8.4 percent (± 0.9 percent) from the October 2016 level. The August 2017 to September 2017 percent change was revised from the preliminary estimate of up 1.3 percent (± 0.4 percent) to up 1.4 percent (± 0.4 percent).

Inventories: Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$605.3 billion at the end of October, down 0.5 percent (± 0.4 percent) from the revised September level. Total inventories were up 3.9 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the revised October 2016 level. The September 2017 to October 2017 percent change was revised from the advance estimate of down 0.4 percent (± 0.4 percent)* to down 0.5 percent (± 0.4 percent).

Inventories/Sales Ratio The October inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.25. The October 2016 ratio was 1.30. [Read Report](#)

Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales

US Census Bureau

U.S. total business end-of-month inventories for October 2017 were \$1,885.7 billion, down 0.1 percent (± 0.1 percent)* from last month. U.S. total business sales were \$1,400.8 billion, up 0.6 percent (± 0.2 percent) from last month. October 2017: -0.1* % change in Inventories, September 2017 (r): 0.0* % change in Inventories [Read Report](#)



Trump Pushes Japan to Buy Military Equipment, Hits Out on Trade

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

President Donald Trump urged Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to purchase U.S. military equipment to create jobs in America after telling business leaders that Japan had an unfair advantage on trade.



In a joint press briefing with Abe in Tokyo on Monday, Trump hailed the U.S.-Japan alliance even as he called for a reduction in the trade gap between the countries. Trump reeled off several possibilities, including missile-defense systems, missiles and F-35 fighter jets.

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"One of the things I think is very important is the prime minister is going to be purchasing massive amounts of military equipment, as he should," Trump said. "It's a lot of jobs for us and a lot of safety for Japan." [Read Article](#)

WTO Agriculture Negotiators Weigh New Proposals as Buenos Aires Meet Approaches

 International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

A slate of new negotiating proposals on farm subsidies and cotton reflect different views on how to balance ambitious demands with realism in the run-up to the WTO's eleventh ministerial conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this December, trade sources have said.

[Read More](#)

EU and Chile Launch Negotiations for a Modernised Association Agreement

European Commission

The EU and Chile formally launched today in Brussels the negotiations to modernise the existing EU-Chile Association Agreement.



The modernisation of the Association Agreement is an expression of both Chile and EU's willingness to deepen the already excellent bilateral relations and expand to new areas of collaboration. Both parties share values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and gender equality and are engaged in multilateral fora and work together to promote them as well as sustainable development, the fight against climate change and the promotion of innovation as transversal elements of their modernised Agreement.

We will remain ambitious and forward looking in ensuring we equip ourselves with a progressive and resourceful modernised Association Agreement. Cooperation in areas such as space, research social issues, including decent employment, education, training and opportunities for the youth, ocean governance, digital policy, and disaster preparedness, among many others, shall be further reinforced in the modernised Agreement and will enable us to break new ground. [Read Release](#)

Global Finance and E-trade Giants Threat to African Players

Tralec

Experts are warning that global financial and e-commerce giants will take over the African market if the continent's players do not innovate and come up with models that address the real needs of the people.



Although there is some level of digitisation on the African landscape through companies like Jumia, there is still a big gap in well-segmented customer data, which has left millions of people unserved or underserved.

This is something e-commerce giants like Alibaba and Amazon can exploit in Africa, said the programme manager of financial inclusion at Mastercard Foundation Olga Morawczynski. [Read Article](#)

China's Ambitions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Efforts to Rebalance Bilateral Relations Still Needed

Tralec

Almost twenty years after the launch of the first Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China-Africa relations remain unbalanced. Bilateral trade has leaped over the past ten years (a total of \$123 billion in 2016), driven, up to 2014, by exports, which have fallen by 51% since the peak. The region now has a trade deficit with China.



While exports remain mainly concentrated on natural resources (90% of exports to China), imports are more diversified and include manufactured goods, transport equipment, and machinery (51% of the total) before minerals and precious metals. This trade

imbalance also reinforces the risk of "Dutch disease" which, in economics, links the decline of the local manufacturing sector to the economic development of raw materials. [Read Article](#)

Trump Starts Probe Into Aluminum That China Calls Protectionist

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

The Trump administration, invoking powers the U.S. hasn't used in more than a quarter century, began a probe into Chinese aluminum imports that could lead to tariffs.



The Commerce Department is taking the unusual step of initiating the case itself, rather than going through the regular route of starting an investigation based on petitions filed by U.S. companies. Shares in Alcoa Corp. and Century Aluminum Co. jumped on Tuesday.

The investigation covers imports in common alloy sheet, which totaled more than \$600 million last year, and was initiated using authority granted by the Tariff Act of 1930, the Commerce Department said Tuesday in a statement. China responded Wednesday by saying the move was "rare in the history of international trade." [Read Article](#)

NAFTA's Ugly Reality: U.S.-Mexico Wage Gap Is Actually Widening

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

What's the opposite of a growth miracle? Whatever the term, it applies in spades to Mexico in the NAFTA era.



Poor countries are expected to grow faster than rich ones, and they need to. Trade agreements are supposed to help. Yet by almost any benchmark – certainly the ones trumpeted by the deal's architects a quarter-century ago – the Mexican economy's performance has been dismal.

Growth of 2.5% a year since 1994 is less than half the developing-world average. It's pretty much the same as the U.S. and Canada. But even that's misleading. Because Mexico's population expands much faster, the economic pie has to be divided among more and more people. So the average Mexican earns less today, relative to U.S. and Canadian peers, than before NAFTA. [Read Article](#)

Record Imports Stretch US Trade Deficit

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

The U.S. trade deficit widened in October to a nine-month high on record imports that reflect steady domestic demand, Commerce Department data showed Tuesday.



The gap increased 8.6% to \$48.7 billion (above the estimated \$47.5 billion) from a revised \$44.9 billion in prior month that was wider than previously reported. Imports climbed 1.6% to \$244.6 billion, boosted by mobile phones, apparel, household goods and service-related purchases. Exports, meanwhile, were unchanged at \$195.9 billion as more shipments of petroleum were offset by declines of capital equipment and consumer goods. [Read Article](#)

How Strategic are Trade Strategies? Trends for Effective Development

International Trade Centre

While more than 40% of existing trade strategies identify trade integration and regionalism as crucial policy areas, less than 3% of the strategies are regional. Nor do they fully build on diversification opportunities in services and manufacturing. This is one of many trends in trade strategies, which are key policy instruments to build competitiveness in regional and global markets. [Read Full Paper](#)



Three Things CEOs Should Do Now to Prepare for the New NAFTA

AreaDevelopment - Boston Consulting Group, Marc Gilbert, Daniel Alanis, Dustin Burke, Claudio Knizek, and Michael McAdoo

The corporate community in the US, Canada, and Mexico is finally waking

up from a long period of denial over the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the fall of 2016, when politicians talked of renegotiating NAFTA, most business leaders dismissed it as campaign rhetoric. Six months ago, the common response was, "They're just going to tweak it and move on." Three months ago, the refrain was, "Let's just wait and see what happens, and then we'll adjust." More recently, the line has been, "If NAFTA goes, we'll just fall back on the World Trade Organization's low tariff levels-we'll be fine."

But now, reality, and anxiety, are sinking in. Major changes in the 23-year-old agreement that governs more than \$1 trillion in North American trade appear imminent. As the three countries move through their last two rounds of 2017 talks in Mexico City and Washington, DC, the differences in negotiating positions remain wide. [Read Article](#)

Education and Workforce Development News

Ron DeSantis Renews Call to Reform Higher Education Accreditation

Community College Daily News - Sunshine State News



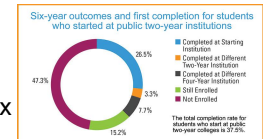
A conservative congressman from Florida who is a possible gubernatorial candidate has brought back his proposal to get higher education accreditation out of the hands of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and give that power to the states.

Last week, U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis, R-Fla., brought back his "Higher Education Reform and Opportunity (HERO)" Act in the House. DeSantis first introduced the bill back in early 2015 as U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, championed it in the Senate. [Read Article](#)

Completion After Six Years at 38%

Community College Daily News - Staff

Almost 38 percent of students who began at a public two-year institution completed a degree in six years, according to a new study by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center that tracked a cohort of students at public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities from 2011 to 2017.



Students who started at private four-year nonprofit institutions had the highest completion rates (76 percent), followed by students at public four-years (64.7 percent), public two-years (37.5 percent) and private four-year for-profits (35.3 percent).

Of public two-year college students who completed, about 70 percent did so at their starting institution, while approximately 30 percent completed at a different institution, according to the study.

[Read Article](#)

Training and Organizational Development News

Jobs Everywhere, and No People to Fill Them

IndustryWeek - Buckley Brinkman

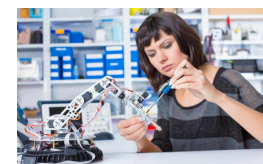
I keep reading about how we need to create more jobs in order to boost our economy. These stories miss the point that jobs are not the issue - workers are. We are missing 20 million people in the current workforce and will need every available worker - and more - to keep the economy growing. Filling this Body Gap means finding workers in non-traditional places. Any organization looking to grow in the future will need to engage these new sources.



The number of available jobs is no longer the issue holding back growth. Workers are. We've done a good job addressing the Skills Gap - continuing to align resources to train and engage available people. [Read Article](#)

Retrain Or Retreat: The Next Battlefield For U.S. Manufacturing

AreaDevelopment - Forbes, Harold L. (Hal) Sirkin, Contributor; Guest post written by Justin Rose



The concept of "lifelong learning" has gained

widespread popularity in recent decades as a way to keep senior citizens intellectually engaged.

But how about lifelong learning as a way to keep people employed, especially those in manufacturing? Think of it as learning for the sake of economic survival.

More than one expert is predicting that robots and artificial intelligence will make work all but obsolete in the future. "Some entrepreneurs such as Tesla Inc. founder Elon Musk predict so little human work will be left that a universal social safety net will be needed to maintain economic order," the Wall Street Journal's Vanessa Fuhrmans reported last month. [Read Article](#)

Quality News

The Missing Piece of Metrics: Accountability

IndustryWeek - Larry Fast

As a follow-up to the five-part series on metrics I wrote a few months ago, I feel the need to put a cap on it with this article. Plant after plant, year after year, I continue to see metrics being missed, over a period of time, without aggressive counter measures being taken to right the ship. It's another failure of leadership. The too often missing piece of metrics management is this: failure to hold ourselves and our people accountable.

By this time, I hope you've installed the proper metrics, i.e., metrics that tell the truth about factory performance; reports that are as close to real time as possible; and report formats that are actionable on all five critical measurements: safety, quality, delivery, productivity and inventory. If those are not yet in place, return to Go and do not collect \$200 dollars. [Read Article](#)

Poka-Yoke It

IndustryWeek - George Taninecz

While buying a pair of dress slacks recently, I was surprised to see the department manager using a mistake-proofing device to mark the pant length for tailoring. He placed an upside-down, Y-shaped tool on the floor and against the back of my pant leg. At the top of the device, he marked a line on the trousers, which established the distance to the ground. Based on that line and the amount of break I wanted in the trousers, the tailor would know where to hem. Poka-yoke for pants.



Shigeo Shingo came up with the term "poka-yoke" ("mistake-proofing" or "inadvertent error prevention" in Japanese) in the 1960s when designing Toyota production processes that would not allow a human error to occur: "A poka-yoke device is an improvement in the form of a jig or fixture that helps achieve 100-percent acceptable product by preventing the occurrence of defects." [Read Article](#)

Cyber Security and IT News

Trading Privacy for Convenience Is a Bad Deal - How Much Do You Want Your Delivery Company to Know About You?

Material Handling & Logistics - Adrienne Selko

While there are a lot of people I would be happy to have in my living room, I don't think an Amazon delivery person would be on that list. While they are probably lovely people, I just don't see the need for them to walk into my house while I'm not there, looking for that perfect spot to place my package of shoes.



Introduced in October, Amazon Key is the latest program whose purpose seems to be to move a company ever closer to our private space. The service uses a smart lock which is fitted to your door and linked to a security camera (sold by Amazon; now there's a surprise). The camera will record the movements of the delivery service. [Read Article](#)

A Cybersecurity Expert Explains What the Future Holds for IoT in 2018

IndustryWeek - Sandy Smith

A fire or spill at your facility can shut down your



operations, but so can malware and ransomware. If you are a large or important target or you have a large customer database that includes financial information, your facility or company could be targeted by hackers. No company wants to be the next Equifax.

Paul Myer, CEO, Veracity Industrial Networks, shares his thoughts on IoT in 2018.

There will be a nation-state cyber-attack on our critical infrastructure in 2018. [Read Article](#)

Human Resource Management News

5 Ways the U.S. Workforce Has Changed, a Decade Since the Great Recession

Area Development - Pew Research, Drew DeSilver

Ten years ago, as Americans prepared for the winter holidays, few suspected that the U.S. economy was about to enter one of its steepest downturns in living memory. The Great Recession, as it came to be known, began in December 2007 and worsened considerably with the 2008 global financial crisis. Although people's perceptions of their local job market have improved considerably in recent years, in many ways the U.S. labor force looks very different than it did at the beginning of the recession.

Here are five ways in which the U.S. workforce has changed since the onset of the Great Recession. (It's worth noting that, in many cases, the slump intensified or accelerated longer-term trends that already were underway. Also, in order to highlight changes, in most cases we compare the most recent available economic data points with those in December 2007, when the economy started its big slowdown.)

1. A smaller share of Americans are in the labor force. [Read Report](#)

3 Emerging Trends in Labor and Employment Law for 2018

IndustryWeek - Bob Robenalt

Laws affecting inquiries into the criminal histories of job applicants and workplace drug testing are among the issues manufacturers will grapple with in 2018.



As we prepare to ring in the New Year, it's time for manufacturers to begin planning for the next wave of labor and employment law trends forecast to emerge over the coming year. Not surprisingly, we will continue to see deregulation at the federal level and an uptick in state-level protections. Looking ahead to 2018, manufacturers should have these 3 game-changing developments on their radar:

1. A Growing Ban-the-Box Movement

Many states have adopted ban-the-box laws that restrict inquiries into an applicant's criminal history in a job application. [Read Article](#)

Bye-Bye Financial Burden

HRO Today - Michael Fenlon

Organizations that help workers eliminate student loan debt earn a greater payoff: increased productivity, loyalty, and retention.



With outstanding student loan debt at a national high of over \$1.3 trillion, more than 44.2 million Americans are burdened with student loan debt. Along with increased stress, debt is having secondary impacts on many professionals and affecting when they are starting families, buying homes, and how they're saving for retirement.

These obstacles have a negative impact on overall workplace wellness by decreasing productivity, leading to disengagement, and even undermining physical health. [Read Article](#)

Environmental, Health & Safety News

Top 10 Safety Violations of 2017

Material Handling & Logistics - David Sparkman, Dave Blanchard

OSHA's list of safety violations is a good starting point for companies that need to review safety practices and policies.

OSHA has announced its Top 10 violations of safety regulations found at the workplaces it inspected during 2016.



"Although many of the rankings remain the same, all of these violations have something else in common as well - they all are preventable if you are a conscientious employer," says attorney John Ho of the law firm of Cozen O'Connor. [Read Article and See Slideshow](#)

Opioids Hiding in Plain Sight on the Factory Floor

IndustryWeek - Karen Field

Eric Rose is an incredibly busy man these days. As the managing director of the Midwest Region at Pinkerton, a corporate security and risk management firm, his team is working hard to meet the unprecedented demand for investigations involving opioids in the workplace.



Rose told me Pinkerton has seen a steady rise in demand for opioid-related investigations over the past five years, nearly doubling in number in just the past 18 months. In fact, they now outnumber any other type of investigation, including theft (although theft is often involved in opioid-related cases). [Read Article](#)

Consider Non-Routine Safety Risks before Plant Shutdown Maintenance

EHSToday - Karen Hamel

Routine plant shutdowns commonly are used throughout industry to allow time for preventative maintenance projects, in-depth housekeeping, changeovers, upgrades and other time-consuming tasks that aren't part of a facility's daily operating schedule.



Shutdown events sometimes are scheduled months or even years in advance, and the list of things that need to be accomplished can be quite lengthy.

When facility employees are utilized to check off each item on that list, it sometimes is easy to overlook safety needs during shutdowns because the employees work at the plant every day and are familiar with the hazards that are present during operations. [Read Article](#)

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