



Proactive Technologies News

The *Proactive Technologies Report* newsletter is a Free Service of Proactive Technologies Inc. Important Stories You Might Have Missed Share With a Colleague

Have a Happy, Safe and Prosperous New Year!



Appreciating the Value of Labor

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.



For expanding and improving businesses that have the capital for the investment in new equipment or processes, attempting to become or remain competitive, the level of investment is not as important as the return on that investment. This consistent practice of determining where to best place capital for the highest return should apply to labor. What is "paid" for labor is not as relevant as the value it adds to the operation and, ultimately, profit; the return on worker investment.

The lack of appreciation for the [difference between a "training cost" and a "raining investment"](#) is understandable because it is rarely contrasted. The college textbook entitled Financial Accounting: An Introduction to Concepts, Methods and Uses, defines "direct labor cost" as the "Cost of labor (material) applied and assigned directly to a product; contrast this with indirect labor cost." Indirect labor cost" is defined as, "An indirect cost of labor (material) such as supervisors (supplies)." There is no mention of an expected return on investment. Generations of cost accountants have been taught that there is no good that comes for higher labor costs, which to them is determined by the level of staffing and wage levels. There is no differentiation between strategic labor costs and uncontrolled labor costs.

The profit from, and value of, most worker's labor comes from task-based work, so all inputs that drive workers to high-performance, high-capacity output are investments.

As discussed in many articles in past issues of the [Proactive Technologies Report](#), although labor costs are considered direct costs from an accounting standpoint, they should be more importantly considered as an investment in the operation's overall level of competitiveness. Operations may vary as to the level of return on investment from labor, but each worker's cumulative expertise gained while employed becomes an asset to the operation akin to intellectual property and, therefore, wages and compensation paid to develop a worker are an investment.

As many operation managers have found out, drastic moves like reducing the wage rates by 20%, 30% or more, while expecting to maintain the same output quantity and quality, chases off the workers with the gained technical expertise...because they can leave. The investment is lost and so are any returns. Furthermore, it is difficult to find new candidates who are willing and able to "hit the ground running" for an unreasonably low wage rate. And if a good candidate for employment is found and selected, bringing their productive capacity up may be delayed or hindered by the fact that the remaining "subject matter experts" are not as capable of transferring expertise as the technical experts that were driven away.

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Proactive Technologies' Publications Archive

To download a .pdf version of this issue, find the link at the bottom of this month's post on our web site's [News and Publications](#) page or click [Proactive Technologies Report - January, 2020 Issue](#). While at our web site, check out past newsletters, articles and more.

Helping employers to unlock worker value since 1986!



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Free - Live Online Presentation Schedule

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.**

Scores of competitively run global corporations in the past few decades have withered away chasing short-term numbers to appease shareholders and activist investors, which in the longer run undermined their capacity, purpose, level of service and brand.

Unlike equipment and processes for which empirical data is routinely available to make smart investment decisions, the concepts of "level of investment in workers" and the corresponding "return on worker investment" remains illusive and foreign to most employers. While data-driven capital investment in facilities or equipment decisions are straightforward and specific, adjustments to labor are usually general; a layoff or addition of 10%, 20% of staffing. Some significant outcomes from undervaluing or overvaluing labor are: [Read More](#)

Increasing Worker Capacity - An Alternative to Cutting Workers for Short-term Cost Savings

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



In business, if you encounter market "softness" and believe that the business level that you were previously operating at is now unattainable for a limited period, you might first find cost cuts that do not erode the business capacity once held in case your, or the pundit's, forecast was wrong or the recovery is swifter than anticipated. Sometimes investments are made in machinery and technology during the lulls to get ready for the economic up-turn, but too rarely is any effort made to determine the level of each worker's current capacity (i.e. what percent of the tasks they were hired to "expertly" perform) relative to the job they are currently in and what could be done to increase it to handle not only existing technology and processes, but the new technology and processes as well. One might even think about cross-training workers to build "reserve capacity."

Too often, in this age where every quarterly report has to be as good or better than the one before - actually earnings per share - even if the economy currently doesn't allow it, well-run businesses are pressured to cut into the bone; driving down wages, cutting benefits and ultimately eliminating workers. Investment in new technology isn't permitted. It doesn't take an accounting genius to make sweeping, ill-informed cuts, but it does take a pretty savvy leader to pick up the pieces after these mistakes have been made.

"That is the one point missed in all of the cuts to wages, benefits and staff; the first wave affects those who have no choice, the second wave affects the company as those with choice exercise it."

When the economy recovers and the company stumbles in regaining its capacity, heads roll, more cuts are made and finally the investors pull out - leaving the previously well-run company impaired or near collapse. No good has come from this, and why it is allowed to continue makes no sense - except that it takes little thought to order, gives Wall Street the appearance of something good happening and something to report. That is why stocks rise when layoffs are announced - even in the face of predictable long-term effects of what the cost cutting means. That and the media's cheering section that naively extols a short-term bump that may turn into a long-term fumble.

Worker capacity will be needed once the economy resumes, and the prudent businessman would not want to miss the recovery while spending too much time rebuilding the organizational capacity, part of which is finding "talent" to replace the ones encouraged to leave and part trying to encourage the ones currently employed to stay. Additionally overlooked, employee and management morale suffers during wholesale cuts and irrational cost-cutting acts. The workers needed to sustain a recovery and regain market share are affected by what they see happening around them, and those most talented keep one eye on the door because they have the skills other employers might appreciate and always have the option to leave. That is the one point missed in all of the cuts to wages, benefits and staff; the first wave affects those who have no choice, the second wave affects the company as those with choice exercise it.

An alternative to knee-jerk cuts to workers is to assess each worker's capacity (i.e. what percentage of the tasks of the job they have had a chance to learn and master), then use business "lulls" to raise it to full job mastery. [Read More](#)

Your "Resident Expert" May Not Be an Expert

[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 - Former 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

Trainer, But Easily Could Be

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

Just because a worker is informally recognized as a "star performer," it doesn't necessarily follow that they can be an effective trainer. Employers like to think it is as easy as that, but seldom does it turn out to be the case. However, with a little structure, some tools and a little guidance these resident experts can, and often do, become expert trainers.

If one thinks about how an expert is measured and recognized, it is usually by subjective, mostly anecdotal measures. The worker performs job-related tasks quickly, consistently and completely. This implies few mistakes, performance that is mostly within specifications and standards of performance, and no one can remember anything rejected or returned as scrap or rework.

Thinking it through a little further, one might struggle to explain how the expert performer developed these traits. Someone showed them how to perform a task, and repetitive performance developed new, retained skills. They are now operating as a "robot" while performing a task, seldom thinking about the subtleties and nuances of each task (filed in memory long ago), which makes them fast, consistent workers - something the employer can notice and appreciate.

But if we ask "who trained this expert," "how was he or she trained," or "what specifications and standards were emphasized," we come up empty. By just playing the role of a trainee, and allowing one of these experts to train you on a task, will reveal a lot as to what the new-hire or cross-trainee can expect.

If we compare this expert's task performance to other peer experts, we probably will notice slight differences in performance between them, which means workers that each trained may be trained differently on the same task. Sometimes these differences can be subtle and of no consequence, sometimes they become a point of contention, lead to confusion and/or unsafe and incorrect task performance. [Read More](#)

Apprenticeships That Make Money? Not As Impossible as it Seems -

Part 1 of 2: The European Difference

Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

A few years ago, I had dinner with a friend of many years, Günther Hauser, in his hometown of Neckarsulm Germany. I met Günther several years ago when Proactive Technologies, Inc. ("PTI") was working on a project in South Carolina that required PTI staff to travel to the LÄPPLER manufacturing plant in Heilbronn, Germany where Günther was the manager of the apprenticeship program. During that dinner, our conversation naturally drifted to an area of shared interest; worker training and apprenticeships and the differences in the United States and European systems of workforce development.

LÄPPLER is a worldwide supplier of press parts, autobody shell components, standard parts and rotary tables as well as automation solutions. They employ over 2000 people and provide exclusive, sophisticated solutions in forming and car body technology as well as the engineering and design of automation systems, machines and tools. Some of their customers include many of the automobile manufacturing companies such as Audi, BMW and Volkswagen.

While working on the Heilbronn project, PTI staff performed job/task analysis on several job classifications that were being duplicated at a new joint venture in Union, South Carolina including Press Operator, Press Technician, Maintenance, Quality Control, Assembly Operator and Assembly Technician. Günther was kind enough to take me on a tour of the apprenticeship center at the plant. The center had around 100 apprentices at any one time at various stages of progression. Modeled after the manufacturing plant where it was established, the group of young workers were processing in each of their disciplines of choice; CAD-CAM Engineering, Tool & Die, Quality Control, Machining. It was like a mini-manufacturing facility with the LÄPPLER factory.

Those apprentices in their final 2 years of study, I was told, were treated like a part of a Tool & Die Manufacturing center. When an order came in for a die, either from LÄPPLER or one of its customers or suppliers, the process started with designing the die, machining the die components, assembling the die, inspecting the assembly and shipping the die to the customer. Instead of making "key chains and donkey carts" like apprentices are often

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Kentucky (North and Eastern)

Indiana

Missouri (Kansas City, St. Louis)

Minnesota

Nevada (Reno, Las Vegas)

New Mexico (Albuquerque, Santa Fe)

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

North Dakota

Ohio

Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Western Area)

South Carolina (UpState, Columbia and Charleston Area)

Tennessee (Eastern)

Utah

West Virginia (North-Central, South Central)

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asked to make in the US as their "hands on" training, these apprentices were producing an actual product that was sometimes priced as high as USD1 million!

Of course, these apprentices were paid while in their program. Much of the wage came from the government, while the company paid for the facility, equipment, instructors. But LÄPPLÉ, like many European apprenticeship hosts, learned how to leverage the work produced by apprentices in honing their skills for paying for the costs to host the program. And when an apprentice completes the program, LÄPPLÉ gets first pick of the class. The other apprentices have proved their skills enough to be immediately hired by one of many manufacturing facilities in the area aware of the program and its high standards of apprenticeship. [Read More](#)

Although This Proactive Technologies' [Fall Discount Offer](#) Expired December 20th, 2019...

It is worth your time to check out the **PROTECH™ system of managed human resource development for the accelerated transfer of expertise™!**

We help the client find grants to offset the investment to set-up and implement each program. We provide the technical support to allow your firm to focus on business.

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- Lower turnover rates;
- Lower your firm's internal costs of training!

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State training grant funds may be available to cover most, if not



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- Decreased internal costs of training;
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If budgets are tight, **Proactive Technologies can be an extension to your training department**, with our technical implementation support - **included with every project!**

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all, of the initial investment to set-up and implement the structured on-the-job training infrastructure!

Contact a [Proactive Technologies representative](#) to set up a 10 minute phone call that might convince you to learn more about the [accelerated transfer of expertise™](#).

Industry News

DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DATA

Gross Domestic Product - 3rd quarter 2019 (third estimate); Corporate Profits, 3rd quarter 2019 (revised estimate)



US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 2.1 percent in the third quarter of 2019, according to the "third" estimate released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the second quarter, real GDP increased 2.0 percent.

Profits from current production (corporate profits with inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments) decreased \$4.7 billion in the third quarter, in contrast to an increase of \$75.8 billion in the second quarter.

[Read Report](#)

Personal Income, Outlays - November, 2019

US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis



Personal income increased 0.5 percent in November after increasing 0.1 percent in October. Wages and salaries, the largest component of personal income, increased 0.4 percent in November after increasing 0.5 percent in October. [Read Report](#)

Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders

US Census Bureau



New orders for manufactured goods in October increased \$1.4 billion or 0.3 percent to \$497.0 billion.

October 2019: +0.3% change, September 2019 (r): -0.8% change. [Read Article](#)

Advanced Report on Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders

US Census Bureau



New orders for manufactured durable goods in November decreased \$5.0 billion or 2.0 percent to \$242.6 billion.

November 2019: -2.0% change; October 2019 (r): +0.2% change. [Read Report](#)

Job Openings and Labor Turnover

US Bureau of Labor Statistics



The number of job openings was little changed at 7.2 million on the last business day of July, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Over the month, hires edged up to 6.0 million and separations increased to 5.8 million. Within separations, the quits rate and the layoffs and discharges rate were little changed at 2.4 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. This release includes estimates of the number and rate of job openings, hires, and separations for the nonfarm sector by industry and by four geographic regions. [Read Report](#)

Civilian Labor Participation Rate

Federal Reserve Economic Data



Data and graph of civilian labor participation rate from 1950 to today. [Read Report](#)

Job Creation - Employment Situation Summary

US Bureau of Labor Statistics



Total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 266,000 in November, and the unemployment rate was little changed at 3.5 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Notable job gains occurred in health care and in professional and technical services.

Employment rose in manufacturing, reflecting the return of workers from a strike. [Read Report](#)

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U.S. Private Sector Job Quality Index

Cornell Law School

Following the release of the Employment Situation Report for November 2019 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the U.S. Private Sector Job Quality Index (JQI)® has been revised to a level of 80.39, representing a minor decline of 0.04% from its level one month ago and reflecting a somewhat lower proportion of U.S. production and nonsupervisory (P&NS) jobs paying less than the mean weekly income of all P&NS jobs, relative to those jobs paying more than such mean. The mean weekly income of all P&NS jobs as of the current reading (reflecting the level as of October 2019) was \$794, a change of 0.9% from its level the month prior. The JQ-Instant™ preliminary read of the 254,000 increase in all private sector, non-farm payrolls in November 2019 shows that approximately 47.76% of the change in private sector jobs in November was in industry sectors offering P&NS jobs with an average weekly income below the above mean weekly income of all P&NS jobs (i.e. "Low Quality Jobs"). The JQ-Instant readings months of October and November were impacted by the departure and return of manufacturing workers associated with the strike at General Motors Corporation. The average of the JQInstant readings for the two months indicated 65.53% Low Quality Job formation for that period. [Read Report](#)



ADP National Employment Report: Private Sector Employment Increased by 67,000 Jobs in November

Yahoo Finance - PR Newswire

Private sector employment increased by 67,000 jobs from October to November according to the November ADP National Employment Report®. Broadly distributed to the public each month, free of charge, the ADP National Employment Report is produced by the ADP Research Institute® in collaboration with Moody's Analytics. The report, which is derived from ADP's actual payroll data, measures the change in total nonfarm private employment each month on a seasonally-adjusted basis. [Read Article](#)

How to Innovate Without Blowing Your R&D Budget

Thomas Insights - Zachary Smith

In 1998, Steve Jobs told Fortune, "Innovation has nothing to do with how many R&D dollars you have." Jobs believed that throwing money at a problem should not be the answer. Creativity and genuine genius should win out. And whether you're a pharmaceutical and software company with a large budget for research and development or a custom manufacturer with considerably less, a budget is still a budget.



So here are a few tips to help you spearhead innovation without blowing your R&D budget.

What Is An R&D Budget?

R&D budget refers to the funds from a business' Research and Experimentation Tax Credit (R&D credit) for companies that incur research and development costs. Its purpose is to reward U.S. companies (software, manufacturing, architecture, engineering, food, food processing and construction, etc.) for increasing their investment, research, and development in applied sciences and technical projects for the current tax year. [Read Article](#)

Clashing U.S. Factory Gauges Divide the Economists Who Use Them

Area Development - Bloomberg, Reade Pickert and Alexandre Tanzi

America's two most-watched manufacturing surveys pointed in different directions in November, and economists and investors can't seem to agree on which one paints the more accurate picture of factory production.

The Institute for Supply Management's measure of manufacturing unexpectedly declined to 48.1, a fourth-straight contraction that suggests the sector continues to shrink. Meanwhile, the purchasing managers' index calculated by IHS Markit advanced for a third straight month to a seven-month high of 52.6. Unlike ISM, that measure has held in recent years above the 50 level that divides expansion and contraction. [Read Article](#)

The Recipe to McDonald's Supply Chain Success

Thomas Insights - Staff Writer

The McDonald's franchise is revered as having one of the most successful supply chains in the world, holding top positions in Gartner's Supply Chain rankings for several consecutive years. In 2018, the fast-food chain was inducted into the Gartner's 'Masters' category, which recognizes global leaders in supply chain management, joining other supply chain giants, such as Amazon, P&G, and Apple.



The key to McDonald's success is its skillful orchestration and execution of

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processes across a vast network of suppliers, service providers, and franchise owners. This achievement is made all the more impressive considering the fast-food chain caters to approximately 69 million customers daily in over 37,000 restaurants across 100 countries.

While McDonald's supply chain and logistics management systems have been duplicated by other franchises, no one has been able to knock the fast-food chain out of the top spot. [Read Article](#)

Secretive Energy Startup Backed by Bill Gates Achieves Solar Breakthrough

Area Development - CNN, Matt Egan, CNN Business
A secretive startup backed by Bill Gates has achieved a solar breakthrough aimed at saving the planet.



Heliogen, a clean energy company that emerged from stealth mode on Tuesday, said it has discovered a way to use artificial intelligence and a field of mirrors to reflect so much sunlight that it generates extreme heat above 1,000 degrees Celsius. [Read Article and See Video](#)

Cleveland-Cliffs to Buy AK Steel in \$1.1B Stock Deal

CFO.com - William Sprouse

The steelmaker has been pummeled amid trade uncertainty. Cleveland-Cliffs has reached an agreement to buy Ohio steelmaker AK Steel for about \$1.1 billion in stock, the companies announced. The combined company will match Cleveland-Cliffs' mining operations with AK Steel's steel production.



Under the deal, AK Steel shareholders will receive 0.40 shares of Cliffs common stock for each outstanding share of AK Steel common stock. Based on current prices, Cliffs is paying \$3.36 per share.

The companies said the valuation represents a premium of 27% based on the 30-day volume weighted average price of AK Steel common shares. AK Steel's 52-week high prior to the deal announcement was \$3.30 per share. [Read Article](#)

These New Shoes are Made of Algae

Thomas Insights - Duane Pokan

Kanye West presented at the fifth annual Fast Company Innovation Festival in early November 2019, and his reveal was quite shocking to the world. The entrepreneurial rap artist revealed a new shoe model from his Yeezy fashion line: sneakers made of algae foam.



"We're going to be farming and going seed to sole," West said as he unveiled his new sneaker model. Called Yeezy Foam Runners, the sneakers are expected to be released in early 2020 for \$75. The eco-friendly sneakers are partially made from pond-sourced algae.

They were manufactured as prototypes in Atlanta while being made out of a combination of petroleum-based ethylene-vinyl acetate and foam produced from algae. The algae will come from the new Yeezy headquarters in Cody, Wyoming; the company has its own hydroponic farm. [Read Article](#)

Nissan Orders Two-Day Furlough for US Workers to Cut Costs

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

Nissan Motor Co. ordered a furlough of employees for two days at the beginning of January, the latest cost-cutting move as U.S. sales continue to slide.



Nissan North America is closing U.S. offices on Jan. 2 and 3 to "optimize business performance and competitiveness," the company said in an emailed statement. In a memo to employees, North America Chairman Jose Valls issued a 50% cut in employee travel expenses, effective immediately, Automotive News reported. [Read Article](#)

Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg Is Out

NPR - Brakton Booker

Dennis Muilenburg, the embattled CEO of Boeing, is resigning from his post, the aerospace giant announced Monday. The company says its board of directors has named David L. Calhoun, the current chairman, as successor.



Boeing has been under intense scrutiny in recent months as it has tried to

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MEMORABLE QUOTES

"Certainly we want good results, but management by results is not the way to get good results...work on the causes of results."

[W. Edwards Deming](#)

American engineer, statistician, professor, author, lecturer, and management consultant
1900-1993

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right thing."

[Peter F. Drucker](#)

Austrian-born American management consultant, educator, and author, whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation.
1909 - 2005

"Quality is more important than quantity. One home run is much better than two doubles."

[Steve Jobs](#)

American business magnate, industrial designer, investor, and media proprietor
1955 - 2011

Recent Proactive

for beyond a major crisis prompted by deadly crashes of its 737 Max series planes that threatens the stability of the company. Officials worldwide ordered the grounding of the aircraft type following the two crashes, which killed a total of 346 people.

Mullenburg's departure from the company is effective immediately, the company said in a statement. [Read Report](#)

NASA Announces Plans to Return to Moon by 2024

Thomas Insights - Staff Writer

In March Vice President Mike Pence announced that the United States would return astronauts to the Moon before the end of 2024. The announcement was made during the fifth meeting of the National Space Council at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.



Just a couple weeks prior, NASA submitted a budget proposal to resume Moon explorations by 2028. When told of the proposed date, Vice President Pence said, "That's just not good enough. We're better than that. It took us eight years to get to the Moon the first time, 50 years ago, when we had never done it before, and it shouldn't take us 11 years to get back."

The decision to return to the Moon comes 50 years after the first lunar voyage by Apollo 11 and 47 years after the last Moon landing. So what sparked the sudden interest in Earth's main satellite? [Read Article](#)

Tesla Model 3 Crashes into Police Car with Autopilot Engaged

CNET - Sean Szymkowski

Thankfully, the crash wasn't worse.



This past Saturday, some typical police activity turned chaotic after a Tesla Model 3 slammed into a police cruiser on the side of I-95 in Connecticut.

The scene, which until the crash was simply State Police responding to a disabled vehicle on the freeway, turned wild as the Model 3 first hit the police car, continued on to hit the disabled vehicle and finally came to a stop with some assistance from a second state trooper.

The driver told police he was checking on his dog in the back seat and had Tesla's Autopilot system engaged. Tesla does not advertise Autopilot as a completely self-driving system, though the name remains controversial, with critics saying it overpromises its abilities. Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment on this incident. [Read Article and See Video](#)

World's Fastest Tractor Tops Out at 153 MPH

Thomas Insights - David Mantey

A young team of engineers has come together to build a tractor that may be the finest in the field but is, without a doubt, the fastest on the track. The recent spectacle found the JCB Fastrac Two at an old World War II airfield in the UK with a mechanic, motorcycle racer, and TV personality Guy Martin behind the wheel.

In a pair of record-setting runs, the 11,000-pound tractor reached a top speed of 153.771 mph, and an average speed of 135.191 mph. Guinness World Records was on hand to verify the achievement as the tractor shattered the record set by its predecessor, the Fastrac One, which set the high watermark at 103.6 mph in July 2019.

Now, getting a five metric ton tractor to reach 150 mph and then stop in less than 1.92 miles is no small feat, but it was made possible by an incredible team of engineers. [Read Article and See Video](#)

New England Plastics Company Continues Major Acquisitions Across 4 States

Thomas Insights - Andy Szal

A Massachusetts manufacturer of plastic molding announced at the end of November its acquisition of a fellow New England plastics company.

Plastic Molding Manufacturing, headquartered in Hudson, Massachusetts, purchased Connecticut-based Phillips-Moldex for an undisclosed total, the Worcester Business Journal reports.



PMM officials said the transaction would enable the company to continue growing. The deal adds Phillips-Moldex's operations in Putnam, Connecticut, to PMM's existing facilities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. The Business Journal reported the agreement did not include Phillips-Moldex's facility and that the number of employees impacted by the

Technologies News Article Quicklinks

December

["Full Job Mastery" means "Maximum Worker Capacity"- A Verifiable Model for Measuring and Improving Worker Value While Transferring Valuable Expertise](#)
by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Algorithms for Hiring, Credit..What Next? Perhaps Caution Should be Exercised](#)
by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S. - Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Tips for Workforce Developers - Partnerships That Matter...and Last](#)
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[Economic Development Opportunities - An Important Incentive in Attracting Companies to Your Region](#)
by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Proactive Technologies Announces Significant Turnkey Project Discount Program - October 15th - December 20th, 2019!"No-Risk" Discount Pilot Program - Witness Approach for One of Your Specific Job Classifications Before You Decide to Expand](#)
by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff

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[Reluctant to Reshore Due to Apparent Shortage of Skilled Labor? Don't Be](#)
by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Have You Captured The Expertise of Your Critical Hourly and Salary Positions?](#)
by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S., Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[The US DOL Wants States To Expand Apprenticeships. Will, and Can, Community Colleges Support Truly Employer-Focused Apprenticeships?](#)
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[Proactive Technologies Announces Significant Turnkey Project Discount Program - October 15th - December 20th, 2019!](#)
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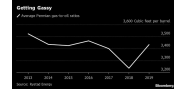
October

[Labor Costs Expected to Increase, So Will Challenges to Worker Development](#)

acquisition is unclear.

PMM provides plastics molding, w all molding, tight-tolerance molding, and part joints and assembly to industrial, medical, electronics, defense, transportation, and consumer sectors. Phillips-Moldex produces injection molded thermoplastic manufacturing gears, bearing retainers, and small precision components. [Read Article](#)

The Permian Gas Problem is Just Getting Worse
MSN News - Rachel Adams-Heard and Catherine Ngai
America's top shale field is becoming increasingly gassy as drilling slows down, undercutting profits for explorers at a time when investors are demanding better returns.



Natural gas has long been a nuisance in the Permian, where a massive glut weighs on prices, with crude producers sometimes having to pay to get it hauled away or burn it off in a controversial practice known as flaring. Now the problem is intensifying as wells age and fewer new wells are drilled.

Shale wells produce a spew of oil when they're first fracked, but over time, production falls -- sometimes as much as 70% in the first year -- and gas becomes a bigger part of the mix.

"Activity levels are no longer what they were," said Artem Abramov, head of shale research at Rystad Energy. "The oil ratio is no longer sufficient to offset gas in older wells, so we're seeing some increase in basin-wide gas-to-oil ratios." [Read Article](#)

Financial News

World's Largest Pension Fund Halts Stock Lending to Short Sellers
MSN News - Reuters, Tim Kelly
Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF), the world's largest pension fund, has suspended stock lending for short selling, calling the practice inconsistent with its responsibilities as a long-term investor.

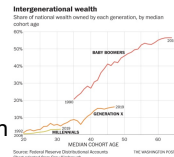


The move, announced by the GPIF on Tuesday, is a blow for short sellers, who rely on securities lending to bet against companies and who are facing renewed moves in a number of countries to curb their activities.

"The current stock lending scheme lacks transparency in terms of who is the ultimate borrower and for what purpose they are borrowing," the GPIF said on its website. [Read Article](#)

The Staggering Millennial Wealth Deficit, in One Chart

MSN News- The Washington Post, Christopher Ingraham
Young baby boomers owned an enormous share of the country's wealth relative to the nation's millennials and Gen Xers, data show.



Few things capture the precariousness of life for today's young adults like a visualization of their wealth.

Economist Gray Kimbrough did just that, using Federal Reserve data to compare how generations fared financially at different points of their life cycles.

Wealth is a measure of what people own: their assets (which typically include homes, cash savings and stocks) minus their debts (like mortgages, student loans, consumer debt). Its importance to an individual, a nation or an entire generation cannot be overstated; it gives families a safety net during hard economic times, such as a layoff, and is intertwined with such milestones of adult life as buying a home, starting a business or retiring comfortably. [Read Article](#)

Crypto Market Loses Over \$40B in A Week

CFO.com -Benzinga
The crypto market has been experiencing a downturn over the last week, with major cryptocurrencies being in the red.



The cryptocurrency market has lost more than \$40 billion over the last week, with bitcoin (BTC) dropping below \$7,000 for the first time since May, data platform CoinMarketCap shows.

What Happened

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[More Employers Finding Ways To Strategically Ensure Fair Pay](#)

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by Jim Poole, President of Lifetime Learning, LLC.

[Explaining Your Process Training to Auditors, Prospects and Clients](#)

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[How Much Would "Full Worker Capacity" Through Full Job Mastery Be Worth to Your Firm?](#)

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

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[Supervisors and First Line Management Need Structured On-The-Job Training, Too](#)

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[Thirteen Good Reasons Why Structured On-The-Job Training Should be Part of Your Business Strategy](#)

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[The High Cost of Employee Turnover](#)

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[Ensuring Worker Training Complies With ISO, AS, TS and Other Quality Mandates](#)

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[From Innovation to Implementation - Success Depends on Preparedness of Those Executing](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

The crypto market has been experiencing a downturn over the last week, with major cryptocurrencies being in the red. Bitcoin has dropped to \$6,930, losing more than 20% in the last seven days. Ethereum, the second-biggest cryptocurrency by market capitalization, dropped to \$136 Monday morning, the lowest point since April, and reached \$148. [Read Article](#)

Private Equity CFOs Face Extra Complexities

CFO.com - Steve Pinsky, UHY Advisors

Responsibilities for financial reporting, FP&A, systems implementation, capital needs, and more can be heavier than other private company CFOs experience.



A successful CFO acts as the gatekeeper for all financial activities (and in many cases HR, administration, and/or other functions) and serves as a conduit for the presentation of operational performance to financial reports. But, having served as finance chief for several sponsor-backed portfolio companies, I know there are significant nuances to these positions that may not apply to CFOs at private companies not backed by private equity.

Other private company CFOs deal with many and varied responsibilities. However, whether through direct responsibility or through the coordination of various consultants and other outside resources, the private equity finance chief must be able to maneuver through an even broader variety of financial and accounting disciplines and challenges. [Read Article](#)

Companies Face Demand for Third-Party CSR Certifications

CFO.com - Eric Rothenberg, Hannah Chanoine, Rochelle Karr and Cailley Martin



A host of stakeholders are looking for external verification of companies' claims about the success of their corporate social responsibility programs. Like never before, companies face demands for robust corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability programs. These programs are typically based on benchmarking against environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria, utilizing the Global Reporting Initiative's core option.

As companies are increasingly called upon to not only invest in but also report on the depth of their CSR programs, including detailed CSR reports and often public ESG disclosures, they now face requests for third-party verification of their programs' achievements.

These requests come from a host of stakeholders, including consumers, investors, financing sources, and supply chain buyers. And we are seeing an unprecedented increase in the creation and growth of "social impact funds" that require detailed data from third-party vendors. [Read Article](#)

Employment Fails to Protect Against Poverty, Study Shows

DeutscheWelle



A comparison of the world's most developed countries has found that rising employment is masking an increased risk of living below the poverty line. In Germany, the contrast is particularly stark between generations.

Despite unemployment beginning to fall to pre-financial crisis levels in most EU and OECD countries, poverty is still on the rise, according to a new study by Germany's Bertelsmann Foundation published on Thursday.

After examining 41 of the world's most developed economies, the report found that poverty was either stagnating or increasing in 25 of them. The worst performers were the United States and Israel, and younger generations were at a greater risk of living below the poverty line than their elders.

"The upswing in the labor market could become a boomerang, it must be accompanied by policies to minimize the risk of poverty," said Bertelsmann Foundation board chairman Aart De Geus. [Read Article](#)

Trader Pockets Windfall After Betting \$49 Million Against S&P 500

MSN News - Marketwatch, Shawn Langlois

It may have started out like a year-end hedge, as Trade Alert's Henry Schwartz described it, but a day later and it had already delivered a tidy profit.

An unidentified investor early Monday paid some \$49 million to buy 23,000 January put options at the 2,980 level on the S&P 500, according to Schwartz. Puts like these are typically used as protection against declines,



July

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

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[Are Advances in Technology Distracting, Rather Than Assisting, HR From the Fundamentals of Worker Selection and Development?](#)

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

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[Enterprise Expansion/Contraction](#)

as they give the right to sell the value of an underlying index at a fixed level in the future.

That's likely the case here, with Schwartz explaining that the bearish bet was probably used to protect about \$5 billion in assets against a pullback. But the timing couldn't have been better. Stocks on Tuesday saw their biggest one-day fall since early October after manufacturing data showed a continued contraction in November and fresh trade jitters put investors on the defensive. The S&P closed down at 3,093, and the trader unloaded a chunk of his bet to earn a profit of \$13 million, while still holding an unrealized profit on 15,000 puts. [Read Article](#)

Mapping America's Stark Wage Inequality

MSN News - CityLab, Richard Florida

a person sitting on a table: People count money at Macy's Herald Square store during the early opening of the Black Friday sales in New York, November 26, 2015. © Andrew Kelly/Reuters
People count money at Macy's Herald Square store during the early opening of the Black Friday sales in New York, November 26, 2015.



One of the most important economic stories of the past couple of decades is the rise of economic inequality in the United States and around the world. As readers of CityLab know, inequality is stark in the "superstar" cities that power advanced economies.

In a new study, economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York document this phenomenon in America's leading cities and knowledge hubs. Jaison Abel (with whom I have previously collaborated) and Richard Deitz track the rise in wage inequality for the country as a whole and across some 200 metropolitan areas over the period 1980 to 2015. Thomas Piketty and Paul Krugman have suggested that 1980 was a tipping point, when advanced economies (and the U.S. in particular) shifted from convergence to greater divergence and inequality across classes and regions. [Read Article](#)

International Tax Reporting Standard Is Finalized

CFO.com - David McCann

Under the Global Reporting Initiative's new standard, thousands of companies will be voluntarily reporting tax information on a country-by-country basis.

Thousands of companies may soon be reporting tax-related and other financial information on a country-by-country basis, following Thursday's finalization of a proposal by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), a sustainability standards-setting body.



Three-quarters of the world's largest companies that report their sustainability results use GRI's reporting standards. Internationally, 62 countries have policies that reference or require the use of the GRI standards for sustainability reporting, including capital market regulations in 45 countries.

In the United States, 78% of the companies that comprise the Dow Jones Industrial Average voluntarily use GRI standards for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosure.

The new standard - GRI 207: Tax 2019 - calls for companies to report on tax practices as part of their sustainability reporting. The requested information includes disclosures on tax strategy, governance, and risk management that meet different stakeholder expectations of reporting. [Read Article](#)

Consumer Prices Increased More Than Expected in November

MSN News - Reuters

U.S. consumer prices rose more than expected in November, which could further support the Federal Reserve's intention not to cut interest rates again in the near term after reducing borrowing costs three times this year.



The Labor Department said on Wednesday its consumer price index increased 0.3% last month as households paid more for gasoline. The CPI advanced 0.4% in October. In the 12 months through November, the CPI rose 2.1% after gaining 1.8% in October.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI climbing 0.2% in November and rising 2.0% on a year-on-year basis. [Read Article](#)

Worker Development Standardization

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

April

More Education Won't Fix Flat or Declining Wages, But Appropriate Compensation and Stable Job Markets Can Make College Worth It

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

Your Resident Expert May Not Be an Expert Trainer, But Easily Could Be

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

Put Yourself in a Trainee's Shoes

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

Worker Capacity: Malperformance Cause-Effect

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

March

Eight Scenarios That Would Make You Wish You Had a Structured OJT System

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

Employers Say They Struggle With a "Skills Shortage," Yet They Cut the Training Budget. What Gives?

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?

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

Can't Find The Right Workers? Why Not Train Workers To Your Own To Specification?

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

February

Is it Possible to Close the "Skills Gap" if Focused on the Symptom, Not The Cause?

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

Internships of Value - For Employer and Intern

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

Workforce Development Partnerships That Last; My Experience

By Randy Toscano, Jr., MSHRM, CEO of Legacy Partners 2

Do U.S. Productivity Measures

IASB Proposes Changes to Reporting of Profit and Income

CFO.com - Vincent Ryan

The International Accounting Standards Board on Tuesday proposed improvements to the statement of profit or loss and a more disciplined and transparent approach to the reporting of management-defined (or "non-GAAP") performance measures.

The standard-setter is hoping to nudge companies to make the comparison of financial statements easier and more meaningful.

Companies would be required to provide three new profit subtotals: "operating profit," "operating profit and income and expenses from integral associates and joint ventures," and "profit before financing and income tax." [Read Article](#)

Five IT Workers Charged in Insider Trading Ring

CFO.com - Matthew Heller

A former IT administrator at Palo Alto Networks has been charged with tipping off friends in advance of the cloud-computing company's quarterly earnings announcements as part of an insider trading ring that made more than \$7 million in illegal profits.



Federal authorities said Janardhan Nellore was at the center of the ring, using his access to a PAN database and work contacts to obtain highly confidential information about the company's financial performance, including target and actual billings, bookings, revenue, and growth rate.

"With that inside information, Nellore acted as both a trader and a tipper," the Department of Justice said in a news release. [Read Article](#)

Banks Settle Bond Price-Fixing Claims for \$337M

CFO.com - Matthew Heller

"The brazen attitude exhibited by Wall Street traders toward public institutional buyers of GSE bonds was shocking," the lead plaintiff says.

Institutional investors have won the last in a series of settlements against banks accused of rigging the \$550 billion market for bonds backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.



Under a preliminary agreement filed on Monday, 13 banks and financial services companies will pay \$337 million to settle the investors' antitrust allegations, with Barclays, which underwrote the most Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac bonds, contributing \$87 million.

The other defendants - including Bank of America, Citigroup, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and UBS - will separately pay a combined \$250 million. [Read Article](#)

Congress Showers Health Care Industry With Multi-billion Victory After Wagging Finger at it for Much of 2019

MSN News - The Washington Post, Jeff Stein, Yasmeen Abutaleb

Vilified by lawmakers from both parties for months, the health-care industry this year appeared to face an existential threat to its business model.

But this week, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, insurance companies and medical device manufacturers practically ran the table in Congress, winning hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks and other gifts through old-fashioned lobbying, re-exerting their political prowess.

"It's the 'no special interest left behind bill' of 2019. That's what it feels like this is," said Andy Slavitt, a former health administrator who served in the Obama administration. "There's no other explanation." [Read Article](#)

Cost Management: Intent Means Everything

IndustryWeek - Paul Ericksen

I wonder how an OEM would react if a potential end-use customer asked them to define their costs and profit margin prior to their buying decision?



The October 16 article Dullsville Just Got Interesting struck a nerve with me. It laid out the various approaches to Cost Management and how OEMs could apply related cost analysis in negotiations. In case you are new to the concept, Cost Management is where OEM customers determine what the parts they are sending out for quote should cost. That's all fine and good. Unfortunately, the underlying intent behind how OEMs apply Cost Management—at least in my experience—doesn't always align with the price

Measure Productivity?

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

January

Yet Another Reason Structured On-The-Job Training Should Be Part of Any Company's Business Model - New ISO 30414 Standards for Human Capital Metrics

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

A "Pay-for-Value" Worker Development Program - Fair to Management and Workers, and Effective Too!

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

Proactive Technologies Discount Program Ends, But... "Low-Risk" Pilot Approach Option Remains in Effect

by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff

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

Replicating Your Best Performers

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

December

Is It Possible To Improve Worker Performance Without Documented Task Mastery?

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

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

Proactive Technologies Discount Program Ends, But... "Low-Risk" Pilot Approach Option Remains in Effect

by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff

Confusion Over What Constitutes "Training" is Stumbling Block to Effective Worker Development Strategies

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

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best suppliers. In fact, the intent of some OEMs-which will be laid out below-is to bastardize the whole Cost Management process to their own advantage. [Read Article](#)

Why Filing Your Income Tax Return Will Never be the Same

MSN News - CNBC, Darla Mercado

Dan Herron, CPA, didn't want to be the bearer of bad news, yet there he was explaining to a couple why they owed the federal government approximately \$10,000 in taxes on their 2018 return.

"They were used to paying around \$1,100," the San Luis Obispo, Calif., accountant said.

The couple had three children, all under the age of 6, and were homeowners in southern California. "They were hit with this huge tax bill," said Herron, principal of Elemental Wealth Advisors.

They could attribute it to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the first major overhaul of the tax code in more than 30 years. [Read Article](#)

Congress Leaves the Surprise Medical Bill Plague Untreated

USA Today - The Editorial Board

Private equity groups profit from out-of-network medical bills. Congress goes home without treating the problem.

In health care, it is always best to treat the disease, not just the symptoms.

In the politics of health care, however, treating symptoms is about all we can hope for. And even that can be a slog in Washington.

Witness the issue of those surprise medical bills that patients receive, like unwelcome Christmas gifts, thanks to private equity groups that have bought up medical practices and organized doctors.

The insidious practice involves placing doctors who are not part of insurance networks in hospitals that are. Patients might think they will only be liable for a manageable co-pay then get slapped with massive bills for, say, an out-of-network surgeon and anesthesiologist. [Read Article](#)

The Decade in Which Everything Was Great But Felt Terrible

MSN News - The Atlantic, Annie Lowrey

In the 2010s, America achieved late capitalism.

If I had to pick the story that best captured the economy of the 2010s, it might be the tale of CamperForce: a group of elderly nomads, living in vans and RVs, spending their twilight years temping at Amazon fulfillment centers.

There's a positive spin to the story. Some people want the structure and community that work can provide well into retirement age. They may want the freedom and mobility that comes with "van life". Or the flexibility of temp gigs. But many members of CamperForce were grandparents who had been evicted from their homes during the housing collapse and were struggling to stay out of poverty. It's a modern-day, AARP twist on The Grapes of Wrath.

Or maybe the most representative story is that of the former graduate student who ended up as a warehouse janitor. Or of the thousands of people who have gone online to beg for money to help them stay afloat through a life-threatening illness. [Read Article](#)

International News

Mexico, Latin America, South America and the Caribbean

The New Trade and Integration Monitor is Now Available in English

InterAmerican Development Bank

The 2019 edition of the Trade and Integration Monitor identifies the factors underlying recent developments in exports of Latin America and the Caribbean, examines the risks that are present at the current juncture, and concludes that the ongoing contraction in the region will continue. It argues that the third trade contraction in a decade, which is unfolding against a backdrop of limited dynamism in global trade,



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Proactive Technologies has continued to partner with community colleges, universities, workforce development agencies and training providers with its ["hybrid approach"](#) to worker training.

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underscores the vulnerability of Latin American and Caribbean economies to increased external risks.

Looking ahead, the publication highlights that integrating the regional market and boosting the competitiveness of the services sector are fundamental to expanding exports and improving their resilience. [Download Report](#)

Cuba Names Manuel Marrero Cruz as First Prime Minister Since 1976

BBC

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has appointed the country's first prime minister in more than 40 years - the tourism minister, Manuel Marrero Cruz.

The post of prime minister was scrapped in 1976 by the then revolutionary leader Fidel Castro.



It was reinstated under the rules of a new constitution for the communist-run island passed earlier this year.

Mr Marrero, 56, will take on some of the responsibilities that currently fall to the president.

"The head of government will be the administrative right hand of the president of the republic," state-run online news outlet Cubadebate said.

[Read Article](#)

Spain to Probe Mexico Embassy Incident That Angered Bolivia

MSN News - AFP

Spain pledged Saturday to send investigators to La Paz after its embassy staff were accused of trying to sneak into the Mexican diplomatic mission accompanied by several masked individuals, an action denounced by Bolivia as a violation of its sovereignty.



Bolivia says the incident occurred on Friday when Spanish embassy staff tried to sneak into the Mexican embassy.

Both Spain and Mexico said the incident occurred on Friday during a Spanish diplomatic visit to the Mexican embassy.

Bolivia's foreign ministry said "people identified as staff members at Spain's embassy in Bolivia, accompanied by people with their faces covered, tried in a secretive and underhand manner to enter Mexico's diplomatic residence in La Paz". [Read Article](#)

Canada, Europe and Great Britain German Industrial Slump Deepens With Worst Output Drop in Decade

IndustryWeek - Bloomberg

Germany's industrial slump unexpectedly deepened in October amid a steep decline in investment goods, raising concerns that some of the early signs of a manufacturing revival may have already been smothered.



Output fell an annual 5.3%, the most in a decade, highlighting the damage U.S.-China trade tensions and Brexit uncertainty have done to the economy that once was Europe's powerhouse. Makers of machinery and cars, a core part of German industry, have fared particularly badly, contributing heavily to the toll of 100,000 job cuts planned in the manufacturing sector.

The report is putting a question mark to claims that growth momentum will increase. German factory orders unexpectedly slipped in October amid weak demand for investment goods within the country and outside the 19-nation euro area, and business confidence -- while stabilizing -- remains subdued. [Read Article](#)

Rapid Greenland Ice Loss to Amplify Sea Level Rise

DeutscheWelle

The world's second-largest ice sheet is declining seven times quicker than in the 1990s, according to a new UK study. The Greenland meltdown means tens of millions more people could also suffer from sea level rises.

A team of 96 polar scientists from 50 international organisations have produced a revealing picture of long-term Greenland ice loss.



Published today in Nature, the findings show that Greenland has lost 3.8 trillion metric tons of ice between 1992 and 2018, enough to raise global sea levels by more than a centimeter. This amounts to a seven-fold

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increase in less than three decades - from 33 billion tons per year in the 1990s to 254 billion tons per year in the last decade.

Combining 26 surveys and data from 11 different satellite missions to quantify shifts in Greenland's ice sheet - smaller only than Antarctica's and covering roughly 80% of the world's largest island - the study is the most comprehensive look at the ice sheet's changing volume, flow and gravity across recent decades. [Read Article](#)

France Cuts Holiday Rail Travel as Labor Strike Continues

DeutscheWelle

Holiday train travel is at a near standstill in France as nationwide public sector strikes enter their third week. From the Paris metro to high-speed long-distance trains, rail services will mostly not be running.



On Tuesday, France's national rail carrier, SNCF, announced that domestic and cross-border routes would run with extremely reduced service over the Christmas holiday period as strikes by public sector workers enter their third week. French President Emmanuel Macron had asked workers for a holiday pause to their strikes against his proposed changes to their pension system and increased retirement age.

"Due to a nationwide strike affecting multiple industries, SNCF traffic is likely to be severely disrupted across the entire network," an announcement on the carrier's website reads. "We urge all passengers to postpone their journey." The announcement was last updated December 5, but the information remains current. [Read Article](#)

UK Lawmakers Pass Boris Johnson's Brexit Withdrawal Deal

DeutscheWelle

The prime minister has been rewarded for his convincing general election victory by having his deal comfortably overcome a House of Commons vote. Britain's departure from the EU now seems inevitable.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson managed to secure a majority of 124 on Friday as Members of Parliament (MPs) voted heavily in favor of his Brexit deal, paving the way for the UK to leave the European Union on January 31. The vote was the second reading of the withdrawal agreement bill in Parliament. This sees the UK legally bound to leave the EU at the end of next month and to negotiate an agreement on future relations with the EU by the end of 2020, in a so-called "transition period."

The bill was supported by 358 MPs, while 234 voted against the proposal. "Today we will deliver on the promise we made to the people and get the Brexit vote wrapped up for Christmas," Johnson said ahead of the vote, which comes just a day after Parliament officially reopened. [Read Article](#)

China and Southeast Asia

China Bars U.S. Military From Hong Kong Ports Over Support For Protesters

NPR - Bill Chappell

"China urges the U.S. to correct its mistake and stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs," a government spokesperson says, as China retaliates for U.S. support of pro-democracy demonstrators. Here, an activist holds a flag at a lunchtime protest Monday at Chater Garden in Hong Kong.



China is barring U.S. Navy port calls and American military aircraft from visiting Hong Kong in retaliation for Washington's recent adoption of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act - legislation that supports pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong.

"China urges the U.S. to correct its mistake and stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs or interfering in China's other internal affairs by any word and act," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, according to the state-run media outlet Xinhua. [Read Article](#)

Japan's Cabinet Approves \$122B Stimulus Package

CFO.com - William Sprouse

The country has struggled with a slump of exports, a sales tax hike in October, and natural disasters.



Japan's cabinet has approved a \$122 billion fiscal stimulus package, its first since 2016 and one of the largest in the world, as the country seeks to

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revive GDP growth after its economy stalled through summer and fall.

"For the first economic stimulus of the Reiwa era, we've been able to put together a suitably powerful package," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, in remarks to officials, before a cabinet decision on the package.

In a statement, the government said, "The current situation calls for all possible steps to prevent overseas risks from curbing not only exports but also capital spending and private consumption."

Abe said the stimulus would be used to repair typhoon damage and make infrastructure upgrades. It also includes funding for young scientists and "moonshot" technology projects.

"Now is the time to adopt bold fiscal policy to overcome various downside risks and secure future safety while the Bank of Japan is patiently continuing powerful monetary easing," the government said. [Read Article](#)

China's Ambitious Bid for Southeast Asia Hegemony

DeutscheWelle

Concerns about China's hegemonic ambitions, mostly over the Belt and Road Initiative, are rising across Southeast Asia. While some countries in the region have succumbed to Chinese pressure, the rest are resisting it.



"China's economic role in the region has been especially robust since the BRI increased financing for Chinese infrastructure investment and the US-China trade war launched by the Donald Trump administration caused China to shift many of its economic activities to the Southeast Asian region," Carla Freeman, director of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Foreign Policy Institute, told DW.

The \$1 trillion infrastructure project's maritime route runs through the disputed South China Sea (SCS), a resource-rich waterway over which Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and China have overlapping claims. There are concerns that China will seek to tie the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) hands to control the strategic waterway by wielding its expanding economic influence gained from infrastructure projects in the region. [Read Article](#)

Asia, India and Australia At Least 5 Dead After Volcano Erupts Off New Zealand's Coast

NPR - Braktkton Booker

At least five people are dead after an eruption on a volcanic island off the coast of New Zealand on Monday, local officials have confirmed.



New Zealand police say a number of people were injured and have been taken to an area hospital, but it remains too dangerous for emergency services to access the island and search for those missing.

Authorities believe fewer than 50 New Zealanders and international tourists were on or near White Island - about 30 miles off the coast of New Zealand's North Island - but the exact number of people unaccounted for is unclear. [Read Article](#)

Australia Fires: A Visual Guide to the Bushfires and Extreme Heat

BBC

Australia is grappling with massive bushfires fueled by record-breaking temperatures and months of severe drought.



In the worst-affected state, New South Wales, fires have burned more than 3 million hectares (7.4m acres) destroying more than 800 houses. Eight people - including two volunteer firefighters whose vehicle was hit by a tree - have died.

What's the situation in New South Wales?

Hot, dry weather combined with prolonged drought and strong winds have created perfect conditions for fire to spread rapidly. [Read Article](#)

Kashmir Crisis 2019: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

BBC - M Ilyas Khan

The year 2019 has been one of dramatic political eruptions



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

Let's start with what we already know:

- Classes alone will not train workers to perform your tasks...
- Quality Control policies and Process Documents are not a substitute for task training...
- Putting 2 people together and hoping for the best is not a training strategy...
- 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!**

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in Kashmir, a Himalayan region divided between and disputed by Pakistan and India.

A climax of sorts came in August when the Indian government amended its laws to annex the part of Kashmir it controls, leaving the world in shock.

But Kashmir is a region used to upheaval: India and Pakistan fought three wars here since their independence from British colonial rule in 1947, and a Pakistan-backed Islamist insurgency has been raging across the region in undulating waves since the 1980s, leaving more than 70,000 people dead.

[Read Article](#)

Nepal Police Arrest Over 120 Chinese Nationals

DeutscheWelle

Nepali authorities said it was the biggest crackdown on crime committed by foreigners. Over the past year, hundreds of Chinese nationals have been arrested across Asia for involvement in cybercrime.



Nepali police said on Tuesday that they had detained 122 Chinese nationals for suspected involvement in financial crimes.

"This is the first time that so many foreigners have been detained for suspected criminal activities," said Uttam Subedi, chief of police in Kathmandu.

Targeted Operation

Police seized laptops and passports during the raids. The suspects were held in detention centers across the Nepali capital. [Read Article](#)

Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe and Russia

Ryrkaypiy: Far-north Russian Village Overrun by Polar Bears

BBC

Conservationists counted 56 polar bears near Ryrkaypiy, including cubs. More than 50 polar bears have descended on a village in Russia's far north.



All public activities in Ryrkaypiy, in Chukotka region, have been cancelled, and schools are being guarded to protect residents from the bears.

Conservationists say climate change could be to blame, with weak coastal ice forcing the bears to search for food in the village rather than at sea. Other experts have said polar bear visits are now so frequent, Ryrkaypiy should be permanently evacuated. [Read Article](#)

What's Behind the Wave of Middle East Protests?

BBC

You might remember the uprisings in the Middle East in 2011. As dictators were toppled hundreds of thousands of protesters called for change, for freedom and a new start. Their high hopes came to very little and the region lurched back towards war and repression.



But the grievances that drove the 2011 uprisings - the so-called Arab Spring - never went away. 2019 might be the year it started again. Already protests have forced the resignations of two Prime Ministers - in Lebanon and Iraq. [Read Article and See Video](#)

At 34, Finland's Sanna Marin Set To Become World's Youngest Sitting Prime Minister

NPR - Paolo Zialcita

Sanna Marin is set to become Finland's third female prime minister - and its youngest - leading a coalition of four other parties, all headed by women.

At just 34, she will also stand out on the world stage by being the world's youngest sitting prime minister.



Marin was nominated Sunday by her Social Democratic party after its leader, Antti Rinne, stepped down after losing the confidence among his coalition government over his handling of a postal strike. [Read Article](#)

Anti-French Sentiment on the Rise in West Africa as Security Situation Deteriorates

DeutscheWelle

Despite the ongoing presence of French troops in the



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troubled Sahel region, violent attacks against civilians and security forces are still commonplace. So why isn't the situation improving.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou have agreed to postpone a meeting between G5 country leaders following an attack on a Niger military camp on Tuesday evening which left at least 71 soldiers dead.

The meeting was supposed to take place later this month in order to address France's ongoing military presence in the region and the ongoing fight against extremist groups including Boko Haram.

Despite ongoing efforts by French security forces since 2013, the security situation in the Sahel region has remained poor. Thousands of civilians and soldiers have been killed after armed Islamists first revolted in northern Mali in 2012. [Read Report](#)

Ivory Coast Issues Arrest Warrant for Ex-rebel Chief Ahead of Presidential Election

DeutscheWelle

The arrest warrant against Guillaume Soro threatens to plunge the West African country into uncertainty and violence. The former rebel leader is contesting next year's presidential election against an ally-turned-rival.



Ivory Coast issued an arrest warrant for presidential candidate Guillaume Soro, prosecutors said Monday, forcing the former rebel leader to divert his planned flight home to neighboring Ghana as security forces raided his party headquarters.

The arrest warrant against Soro, who retains the loyalty of several former rebel commanders who are now in senior military roles, could significantly raise tensions ahead of an October 2020 election that is seen as a test of Ivory Coast's stability, particularly after deadly unrest that followed the 2010 election.

Public prosecutor Richard Adou said that the arrest warrant had been issued for an "attempt against the state authority," benefiting from stolen public resources and money laundering.

He said intelligence services had evidence that "the project was to be implemented shortly," without elaborating. [Read Article](#)

International Trade News

INTERNATIONAL TRADE DATA

Monthly Wholesale Trade

US Census Bureau

October 2019 sales of merchant wholesalers were \$494.3 billion, down 0.7 percent (+/- 0.5 percent) from last month. End-of-month inventories were \$675.6 billion, up 0.1 percent (+/- 0.4 percent)* from last month. October 2019: +0.1* % change in Inventories; September 2019 (r): -0.7 % change in Inventories.

[Read Report](#)



Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales

US Census Bureau

U.S. total business end-of-month inventories for October 2019 were \$2,042.8 billion, up 0.2 percent (+/- 0.1 percent) from last month. U.S. total business sales were \$1,456.0 billion, down 0.1 percent (+/- 0.2 percent)* from last month. October 2019: +0.2 % change in Inventories; September 2019 (r): -0.1* % change in Inventories. [Read Report](#)



U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, October, 2019

US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis

The U.S. monthly international trade deficit decreased in October 2019 according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. The deficit decreased from \$51.1 billion in September (revised) to \$47.2 billion in October, as imports decreased more than exports. The previously published September deficit was \$52.5 billion. The goods deficit decreased \$3.7 billion in October to \$68.0 billion. The services surplus increased \$0.2 billion in October to \$20.8 billion. [Read Article](#)



The U.S. current account deficit, which reflects the combined balances on trade in goods and services and income flows between U.S. residents and residents of other countries, narrowed by \$1.1 billion, or 0.9 percent, to \$124.1 billion in the third quarter of 2019, according to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The revised second quarter deficit was \$125.2 billion.

The third quarter deficit was 2.3 percent of current dollar gross domestic product, down less than 0.1 percent from the second quarter.

The \$1.1 billion narrowing of the current account deficit in the third quarter mainly reflected a reduced deficit on goods and an expanded surplus on primary income. [Read Report](#)

New Foreign Direct Investment in the United States, 3rd Quarter 2019

US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis



The U.S. net international investment position, the difference between U.S. residents' foreign financial assets and liabilities, was -\$10.95 trillion at the end of the third quarter of 2019, according to statistics released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Assets totaled \$28.26 trillion and liabilities were \$39.21 trillion. At the end of the second quarter, the net investment position was -\$10.61 trillion. [Read Report](#)

France Vows Retaliation Over \$2.4 billion US Tariff Threat

MSN News - Bloomberg, William Horobin, Jenny Leonard and Laura Davison



France's government said the European Union would retaliate if the U.S. follows through on a threat to hit about \$2.4 billion of French products with tariffs over a dispute concerning how large tech companies are taxed.

California, U.S., on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2019. President Donald Trump's latest tariffs take effect Friday: A 25% charge on gourmet imports from Europe, like French wine, Italian cheese, Spanish olives and Scotch whiskies.

The decision by the office of the U.S. Trade Representative marks a setback for efforts to stop a conflict over a digital services tax. The levy, which the USTR says "discriminates against U.S. companies," would hit the revenues of large tech companies including Google, Apple Inc., Facebook Inc. and Amazon.com Inc.

The American tariffs in response could target sparkling wine, cheeses, handbags and makeup. [Read Article](#)

China Tariffs to Eat Into Dollar Tree Q4 Profits

CFO.com - Matthew Heller



The discount retailer's shares fell more than 16% after it cut its outlook for the holiday season due in part to tariff costs.

Dollar Tree shares tumbled on Tuesday after the discount retailer cut its forecast for the holiday season, citing costs from tariffs on Chinese goods. Dollar Tree has been trying to mitigate the tariff costs by negotiating price concessions with vendors and canceling orders. But in its third-quarter earnings release, it said the tariffs, if fully implemented, would increase its cost of goods sold by about \$19 million, or six cents per share, in the fourth quarter.

The company expects fourth quarter-earnings of between \$1.70 and \$1.80 per share, well below analysts' expectations of \$2.02 per share. [Read Article](#)

New ECB Chief Urges Domestic Demand Push

CFO.com - Matthew Heller



While "all advanced economies are facing a growth challenge, the euro area has been slower to embrace innovation," Christine Lagarde says.

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde has called on euro zone members to boost domestic demand to withstand disruptions in world trade and keep growth trajectories on course.

In her first major speech since becoming ECB chief at the start of this

month, Lagarde singled out Germany, saying the world's second largest economy should be "open to the world but confident in itself-an economy that makes full use of Europe's potential to unleash higher rates of domestic demand and long-term growth."

But she also noted that public investment in the euro area remains some way below its pre-crisis levels and, while "all advanced economies are facing a growth challenge, the euro area has been slower to embrace innovation and capitalize on the digital age than others such as the United States." [Read Article](#)

The China-Africa Trade Relationship

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH - Tralac, Willemjen Viljoen

Trade Brief

China is the most important individual trade partner for African countries. As a grouping, the EU member states are the most important destination and source region for African exports and imports. However, in 2018 Africa's trade with the entire EU was only about double Africa's trade with China. Over the last five years (2014-2018), Africa's total trade (exports + imports) with China increased, while total trade with other significant trade partners (including the EU, India, Switzerland, Japan and Brazil) declined. China shows a trade deficit with only 15 African countries; mainly their major African trading partners, including Angola, South Africa and DRC.

[Read Report](#)

OPEC, Allies Agree to Deepen Oil Output Cuts

MSN News - Reuters, Rania El Gamal and Alex Lawler and Ahmad Ghaddar

OPEC and allies led by Russia on Thursday agreed one of the deepest output cuts this decade to prevent oversupply in a deal that will apply for an unexpectedly short period of the first three months of 2020.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) began a meeting to discuss policy in Vienna at 1630 GMT. On Friday, OPEC will meet with Russia and other producers, a group known as OPEC+ that accounts for more than 40% of global oil production. [Read Article](#)

Trump, Pelosi Seal Revised NAFTA Deal

Material Handling & Logistics - Bloomberg News

The USMCA deal "will be the model for American trade deals going forward," said U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

House Democrats embraced the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement after securing key revisions and announced plans to vote on the deal next week, putting President Donald Trump closer to a political win as he heads into the 2020 election.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi praised the changes her House Democrats were able to negotiate, saying the revised deal is better for American workers. She said the new version of the accord, known as the USMCA, will be a model for other trade agreements going forward.

"This is the day we have been waiting for," Pelosi told reporters. "It is infinitely better than what was initially proposed by the administration."

[Read Article](#)

Mexico Rejects US Trade Deal Proposals on Steel, Aluminum

MSN News - AFP

Mexico's foreign minister said Sunday the country would not accept a US proposal for steel and aluminum production under the new trade deal, saying it would leave Mexico at a disadvantage.



a truck is parked in front of a building: Mexico's Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard has said it will not accept a US proposal that 70 percent of steel for automobile production come from the North American region.

During a meeting with senators to discuss details of negotiations for the United States-Mexico-Canada treaty (USMCA), Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said the US proposed that 70 percent of steel for automobile production come from the North American region.

The proposal would put Mexico "at a very great disadvantage," said Ebrard, because cars produced in Mexico also use components made in Brazil, Japan and Germany. [Read Article](#)

US Debate on Internet Liability Spills Over to Global Trade Deals

MSN News - AFP

US law makers seeking to rein in Big Tech have been stepping up efforts to limit legal immunity for online services, and now are taking that fight global.



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi this week backed a move by fellow law makers to carve out the so-called Section 230 protection -- which some activists say is a cornerstone of the open internet -- from a North American trade pact with Canada and Mexico, known as USMCA.

"There are concerns in the House about enshrining the increasingly controversial Section 230 liability shield in our trade agreements, particularly at a time when Congress is considering whether changes need to be made in US law," Pelosi spokesman Henry Connolly said. [Read Article](#)

2019 Africa Investment Forum: African Development Bank, EU Reaffirm Partnership, Ambition to De-risk Business Environment, Create Jobs in Africa



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH - African Development Bank Group

The African Development Bank and the European Union shook hands on a renewed commitment to unlock hundreds of millions in financing for African infrastructure and development needs. Collaboration between the two institutions would focus on de-risking the business environment in Africa, providing equity, guarantees and other types of non-grant support, African Development Bank President Akinwumi and European Union Commissioner Neven Mimica said at a news conference held Monday, on the sidelines of the Africa Investment Forum. [Read Release](#)

U.S. Department of Commerce Issues Affirmative Preliminary Determinations in the Countervailing Duty Investigations of Imports of Wind Towers from Canada, Indonesia, and Vietnam



U.S. Department of Commerce

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced affirmative preliminary determinations in the countervailing duty (CVD) investigations of imports of utility scale wind towers from Canada, Indonesia, and Vietnam, finding that exporters from these countries received countervailable subsidies at rates of 1.09 percent, 20.29 percent, and 2.43 percent, respectively.

As a result of today's decisions, Commerce will instruct U.S. Customs and Border Protection to collect cash deposits from importers of utility scale wind towers from Canada, Indonesia, and Vietnam based on these preliminary rates. [Read Release](#)

Retail Imports Surged in November Ahead of December Tariffs

Material Handling & Logistics - Staff

Even though growth has slowed, low unemployment and higher wages have helped bolster purchases and, thereby, imports for consumer goods. Volume at the nation's major container ports bumped up significantly in November as retailers imported merchandise ahead of new tariffs set to take effect this month, according to the Global Port Tracker report released on Dec. 9 by the National Retail Federation and Hackett Associates.

"At this point, holiday merchandise is already in the country, so the direct impact of new tariffs won't be seen until the season is over," NRF vice president for Supply Chain and Customs Policy Jonathan Gold said.

"Nonetheless, tariffs are bad for both consumer and business confidence, and we hope that the December tariffs will be canceled or postponed as a sign of good faith," Gold added. "We need a deal with China as soon as possible so we can bring an end to the trade war that has put a drag on the U.S. economy for far too long." [Read Article](#)

Fed Study: Tariffs Have Hurt Manufacturing Employment and Increased Prices

Axios - Rashaan Ayesh

The Federal Reserve has released a study that found the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration in 2018 led to higher prices and fewer manufacturing jobs.



The big picture: President Trump has ordered tariffs on a number of countries and a range of goods in a bid to protect manufacturers and correct what he sees as "unfair" trading practices - most notably in the United States' relationship with China.

The study from the Fed finds that overall, manufacturing production has not increased.

- U.S. tariffs may have reduced competition domestically, but trading partners responded with retaliatory tariffs that may harm U.S. manufacturers "by decreasing their competitiveness in foreign markets."
- "The traditional use of trade policy as a tool for the protection and promotion of domestic manufacturing is complicated by the presence of globally interconnected supply chains," the Fed said.
- "We find the impact from the traditional import protection channel is completely offset in the short-run by reduced competitiveness from retaliation and higher costs in downstream industries"

[Read Article](#)

Education and Workforce Development News

Grant Funding Buoy Bottom Lines, Strategies

Community College Daily News - By Ed Finkel

Seven-figure grants to community colleges were once a rarity. Not anymore.

Funders across the spectrum - from alumni and other community members, to foundations and corporations - are increasingly recognizing the value of community colleges, and colleges themselves are increasingly aware of - and going after - the opportunities.

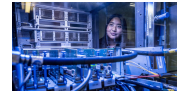
Doing this successfully requires synergy between the college and its fundraising arm to ensure that strategic plans are well-developed and that the fundraising effort aligns with those plans, says Marc Westenburg, director of the Center for Community College Advancement (CASE). [Read Article](#)



How Vocational Education Got a 21st Century Reboot

Area Development - Politico, Erick Trickey

Suriana Rodriguez is only 19, but she's already lined up a full-time job at IBM. After her junior year in high school, she interned at the tech giant's Poughkeepsie, N.Y., campus, 20 miles north of her hometown, for \$17 an hour. For a year, Rodriguez has worked 40-hour weeks as an apprentice test technician, examining IBM mainframes to confirm they work before shipping them to customers. In January, she'll move to a permanent position with a future salary that she says is "definitely much more than I ever thought I'd be making at 19."



Rodriguez's opportunities with IBM came to her thanks to her high school, Newburgh Free Academy P-TECH. It's part of an innovative public-school model that combines grade 9-12 education with internships and tuition-free community college. P-TECH, which stands for Pathways in Technology Early College High School, has spread to 10 states and 17 countries since its founding in Brooklyn in 2011. The P-TECH network is growing fast. By the end of 2019, there will be 220 P-TECH schools in operation. With 93,000 students nationwide, it is one of the most extensive career and technical education programs in the United States. [Read Article](#)

Preparing the Next Generation: A Model for Workforce Solutions

Quality Magazine - Rob Luce

The new generation needs to first be made aware of the opportunity in advanced manufacturing.



Summer camps and introductory technology programs are available to even elementary school-age students in the Cazenovia Central School District, and those foundations are built upon once students enter high school. Cazenovia High School's Riley Lordon and Savannah Johnson are pictured here.

Developed nations, though equipped with industrial and educational infrastructures, face a current and increasing shortage of qualified, skilled and motivated workers.

American manufacturers and smaller operations know this shortage is severe. The skills gap could lead to a shortage of as many as 2.4 million manufacturing workers in the next decade.

The SME Education Foundation has developed and implemented a model to meet workforce development challenges: The SME PRIME (Partnership Response In Manufacturing Education) initiative. SME PRIME is directly enhancing the talent pipeline by partnering with industry to develop

Training and Organizational Development News

How To Take An Employee-Centric Approach To Change Management

Thomas Insights - Kaitlyn Krigbaum



In today's increasingly dynamic and ever-changing market, organizational change isn't only to be expected; it's essential. However, change isn't always easy, and it's important to understand how different employees will respond in order to implement and manage change effectively.

Communication is essential to the success of any change management initiative. But communication can't be one-size-fits-all; it must be tailored to the employees on the other end of the message, and it must address their specific fears and reasons for resistance.

To that end, there are typically four different employee types in every organization, and each one will respond differently. [Read Article](#)

Why Isn't Your Transformation Showing Up in the Bottom Line?

CFO.com - Ryan Davies, Douglas Huey, and David Kennedy, McKinsey



Transformation success rates vary widely. Finance can make a big difference by articulating and validating the link between transformation and value.

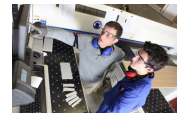
"Transformation" is the buzzword of the day for companies in most industries. But for many it carries an asterisk.

Studies show wide variation in companies' rates of success with organizational transformations - whether they are changing how they go to market, updating back-office processes, automating production systems, or otherwise making significant changes in how their businesses are structured and run.

In some cases, this variation exists because executives propose fundamental changes in how the business operates but don't go through the hard process of setting commensurate performance targets. They often set targets too low, aiming for incremental change. [Read Article](#)

3 Steps to Effectively Retraining Your Employees for New Technology

Thomas Insights - Staff Writer



Does your company employ an automation ethicist, an interactive chatbot designer, or a 3D printing technician? If not, there's a good chance you'll be needing one (if not all) of these roles sometime soon.

Evidence suggests that technological advances, including AI and automation, will create far more jobs than they replace. But to handle these changing industry needs, employers will need to commit to retraining rather than replacing employees to fill the many skill gaps the future will bring.

A McKinsey report predicted that 800 million jobs will be automated by 2030 with 62% of executives planning to replace or retrain at least 25% of their employees within the next five years. Another study estimates that 120 million workers will need re-training within the next three years as a direct result of AI. [Read Article](#)

Quality News

ECA Probes Improve Inspection Flexibility-in More Ways than One

Quality Magazine - Bill Ziegenhagen



Eddy current array (ECA) technology has long been used for nondestructive testing in aerospace, power generation, oil and gas, and other industrial applications. It's a fast, accurate, chemical-free method for detecting surface and sub-surface indications including cracks, pits, corrosion, and damage due to temperature or fatigue.

ECA has the added benefit of generating an electronic inspection record for advanced analysis and reporting, a big advantage over dye penetrant testing (PT), magnetic particle testing (MT), and other types of manual

examinations. Unlike PT or MT, ECA results can be saved, shared, stored, processed, and compared at any time. Indeed, with the right surface array probe, software, and handheld eddy current instrument, an operator can set up an inspection quickly, capture more information in a single pass, see results instantly on a C-scan display, and dramatically increase the speed, accuracy, and repeatability of the test. [Read Article](#)

10 Telltale Signs That a 'Culture of Quality' Is Lacking at Your Company (Infographic)

Entrepreneur - Laurel Nelson-Rowe, Managing Director for Global Business Development for the American Society for Quality

With quality (or its lack) making business headlines, leaders of organizations are often wrestling with how to improve things. Yet while entrepreneurs might vigorously pursue other key tools to help their business grow, they often let their company's attention and commitment toward quality evolve naturally.



Research by my organization, the American Society for Quality, or ASQ, has shown that achieving quality goals requires a strong commitment: setting a compelling vision, companywide shared values and complementary performance metrics and incentives. The report, "Culture of Quality: Accelerating Growth and Performance in the Enterprise," analyzed responses from more than 2,000 executives and quality professionals (members of ASQ) and showed that while two-thirds of executives say their organizations exhibit a culture of quality, only half say that these values are clearly understood throughout the organization. [Read Article](#)

Cyber Security and IT News

Evil Corp: US charges Russians Over Hacking Attacks

BBC

Maksim Yakubets (L) and Igor Turashev are accused of running Evil Corp



US authorities have filed charges against two Russian nationals alleged to be running a global cyber crime organisation named Evil Corp.

An indictment named Maksim Yakubets and Igor Turashev - who remain at large - as figures in a group which used malware to steal millions of dollars in more than 40 countries.

Those affected by the hacks include schools and religious organisations. It is also alleged that Mr Yakubets worked for Russian intelligence. Speaking at a news conference, Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski said the attacks were among "the worst computer hacking and bank fraud schemes of the past decade". [Read Article](#)

Facial Recognition Software Can Identify Brain Scans

Thomas Insights - Jeff Reinke

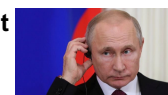
The use of facial recognition software draws a variety of reactions - from those who laud the potential for quicker responses and enhanced security to those who worry about the potential lack of privacy and additional personal information that could potentially fall into the wrong hands.

A recent report from The Wall Street Journal seems to offer additional support for both arguments. The article highlighted a Mayo Clinic study that found how a commonly available version of facial recognition software was able to identify people based on their MRI scans. Its identifications were accurate 83% of the time. [Read Article](#)

Russia 'Successfully Tests' its Unplugged Internet

BBC - Jane Wakefield, Technology Reporter

The net independence plan is seen as a way for Russia's government to get more control over online life



Russia has successfully tested a country-wide alternative to the global internet, its government has announced.

Details of what the test involved were vague but, according to the Ministry of Communications, ordinary users did not notice any changes.

The results will now be presented to President Putin. Experts remain concerned about the trend for some countries to dismantle the internet. [Read Article](#)

US Navy Bans TikTok, Citing 'Cybersecurity Threat'

PC Magazine - Justin Herrick

Both the United States Navy and the Army are instructing service members to avoid ByteDance's TikTok on government-issued smartphones. Law makers suggest the popular app poses a threat to national security. ByteDance, however, denies any close relationship with the Chinese government.



Law makers are urging the United States Armed Forces to drop TikTok as an approved app. Service members in the US can no longer use TikTok on government-issued smartphones, according to Reuters, due to the popular video-sharing app's emergence as a "cybersecurity threat."

Both the Navy and the Army are disabling smartphones with TikTok currently installed. Any members still using the app are now unable to access branch intranets. In a statement, Navy Lieutenant Colonel Uriah Orland confirmed TikTok has been banned to "address existing and emerging threats." Simply put: the US government doesn't trust developer ByteDance, and that's enough for the US Armed Forces to act. [Read Article](#)

Senate Passes New Limits on Robocalls, Sending Legislation to Trump

MSN News - The Washington Post, Tony Romm

The new law requires telecommunications companies to offer the technology to block unwanted calls free of charge.



Congress on Thursday approved the country's first major anti-robocall law in decades, hoping that a mix of new federal powers and regulations targeting the telecom industry will spell relief from spam calls that rang consumers a record 54 billion times this year.

The vote in the Senate, weeks after the House passed the legislation, sends the bill to President Trump, who is expected to sign it. The measure won't cut down on robocalls immediately, its backers acknowledge, but over time should lessen the unwanted interruptions - and take aim at the fraudsters behind them.

Under the proposal, dubbed the TRACED Act, the government will gain new powers to find and prosecute criminals who place batches of calls under fake numbers without obtaining permission, remedying what law enforcement officials have said was a major weakness that inhibited their ability to punish those who contact Americans en masse. [Read Article](#)

Kroger Credit Card Machines Working After Being Down; Upset Shoppers Share Experiences

USA Today - Cincinnati Enquirer, Segann March

Kroger stores in Greater Cincinnati, including Northern Kentucky and Dayton, are back online and able to accept credit cards, a Kroger official confirmed just after 2 p.m. Tuesday [December 24th].



Close to an hour later, Kroger released this statement nationwide: "Our stores are open - and accepting all forms of payment, including credit and debit cards - for customers, whether they are completing their lists or putting final touches on their holiday meals."

For roughly an hour early afternoon, Twitter was blowing up with memes and comments from upset shoppers about Kroger stores the day before Christmas.

According to online users, all registers were down and could not accept card payments. Customers had to pay in cash until the issue was resolved. Shoppers also could not purchase gift cards even with cash. [Read Article](#)

Amazon, Ring Face \$5 million Proposed Class Action Lawsuit That Alleges Camera 'Vulnerable' to Cyber-Attacks

ABC News - Christina Carrega

Several Ring customers have reported their camera systems were hacked. Hackers are finding their way into families' homes through the use of home security cameras like Ring.



Amazon and Ring were slapped with a \$5 million proposed class action federal law suit Thursday that alleges their camera systems are vulnerable to cyberattacks.

Earlier this month, at least four families in Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas reported that their Ring camera systems were compromised. In those cases, the customers say hackers tormented them with racial slurs,

encouraged children into destructive behavior and demanded a ransom in Bitcoin.

But John Baker Orange, the lead plaintiff of the law suit, charges that there are "thousands of putative class members" around the world. [Read Article and See Video](#)

Human Resource Management News

Despite Job Boom, More Men Are Giving Up On Work

NPR Morning Edition - Jim Zarroli

The long economic recovery has brought unemployment to historic lows. But the number of men in the labor force during their prime working age has dropped significantly over the past 50 years.



David Pierce was never someone who sat around watching life go by. He worked as a chef and had a catering business on the side. He sang in his church choir and did community theater, where he met his wife.

Then, in his mid-50s, doctors removed part of Pierce's foot, a complication of diabetes.

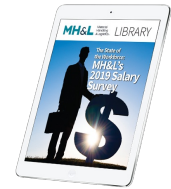
"My health just went, kind of really downhill. It really took a turn for the worse," says Pierce, sitting at his dining room table in his tidy home in Apalachin, N.Y. "I couldn't maintain even a part-time schedule."

A year ago, he went on disability, joining the large army of men who have left the workforce for good. [Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

2019 Salary Survey

Material Handling & Logistics

How much do you think you're worth, and does your company agree with you on how valuable you are?



Every year, as part of its annual Salary Survey, MH&L asks its readers-material handling and logistics professionals-what motivates and inspires them, and while the size of the paycheck certainly comes into play, so do things like job stability, career advancement opportunities, and recognition of their importance to their companies.

In this special eBook guide to workforce issues, we'll look not only at the typical salaries for supply chain professionals in various roles, but also at the unique challenges they face in their jobs, and how they deal with them. We find out what supply chain professionals would most like to change about their jobs. We identify where you can find the talent you need to keep your workforce on top of its game, and we'll offer suggestions on how to manage Millennial workers. [Read Article](#)

Firing Without Progressive Discipline

SHRM - Paul Falcone

Conditions may be right to offer a separation package.

Sabrina is the director and head of human resources in a 400-employee manufacturing plant, and she's faced with a nightmare scenario: an operational vice president and her executive assistant who can't or simply won't get along with one another. The vice president, Ellen, wants to fire the assistant but has never documented any performance problems. There are no progressive disciplinary warnings on file, and the executive assistant's performance reviews all say "meets expectations." How should Sabrina guide both parties through such a quagmire, especially when she knows that the subordinate, Jasmine, is over 40, diverse and could file a law suit?



"If there ever were a case where HR should call an employment defense attorney for advice and counsel, this is it," said Sharon Bauman, partner at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips in San Francisco. "These are exceptionally tricky cases, and, structured the wrong way, they can lead to significant liability. Each case must be determined on its own merits, considering your organization's policies, past practices and the documented performance record in place. Proceed with caution and attempt to protect your internal written communications and drafts using the attorney-client privilege to minimize the chances of their being legally discoverable in litigation." [Read Article](#)

Environmental, Health & Safety News

How Fear Can Affect Your Safety Efforts

EHS Today - John Dyer

Don't let it happen. These three steps go a long way toward reducing fear and allowing good people to focus on doing great things.



"If one piece of candy gets past you and into the packing room unwrapped, you're fired!" - I Love Lucy chocolate factory scene in the "Job Switching" episode, Season 1

In the late 1980s, I shared Dr. W. Edwards Deming's eighth point of his 14 points of transformation with a group of GE executives. That eighth point says, "drive out fear." One of the executives totally disagreed. "Fear is a good thing," I remember him saying. "Every employee should come to work every day afraid of the competition and afraid of being fired. Fear is a great motivator." While it might be true that every organization should keep its eye on the competition (and changing customers' needs), fear can motivate good people to do stupid things in the name of trying to achieve their goals and objectives.

In my new book, *The Façade of Excellence: Defining a New Normal of Leadership*, I highlight several examples of ways fear can have a devastating impact on an organization's ability to make improvement happen.

[Read Article](#)

10 Reasons Why a Safety Perception Survey Should be Your First Measurement Option

EHS Today - Dennis Ryan

Companies that are at the top of their safety game obtain the best improvement information from their workers.



Safety perception surveys are essential safety performance measurement tools. For more than 40 years renowned safety leaders such as Dan Petersen have advocated their use. Many times Petersen has been quoted as saying, "there is no better predictor of safety performance than a safety perception survey". Surveys reveal information critical to safety improvement that is not revealed by other methods of measurement such as auditing. The purpose of this article is to explain why safety perception surveys should be considered your company's first safety performance measurement option.

Today, incident statistics and safety system audits are the two methods of measurement most commonly used to assess company safety performance. As with all methods of performance measurement, there are pros and cons with respect to their use. For example, incident statistics are not forward looking and therefore not predictive of future safety performance. They are often used to evaluate whether or not a company's past incident rates warrant future work contracts. This can pressure companies to find creative ways to keep the numbers low. One of the biggest limitations to the system audit measurement approach is that only a few performance indicators such as investigation, inspection, etc. are incorporated into the audit protocols. Research into what really drives safety performance confirms that other indicators of equal or greater importance such as management credibility, employee satisfaction, autonomy, work-life balance, etc. significantly influence safety performance. [Read Article](#)

If it's difficult to identify, explain or document your firm's worker development process, maybe you don't have one.

Perhaps your firm finds it difficult to accommodate change or measure and improve worker performance. Or, scrap and rework are unreasonably high for workers that were thought trained.

Spend a few minutes to learn more about a worker training approach:

- **designed for manufacturing;**
- **proven for any industry;**
- **customized to your job classifications, your tasks and specifications, and your business operation's needs...**

Does your organization struggle with high turnover rates

leading to

lower organizational capacity, work quality and quantity and compliance? Is your organization faced with these increasing costs while seeing a decreasing training budget?



Wouldn't it be worth a few minutes of your time to find out how you can drive every worker - incumbent and new-hires - through structured on-the-job training to full job mastery. with a small investment and huge return?

Check the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter for when a Proactive Technologies Representative will be in your area next and schedule an onsite briefing!

Proactive Technologies, Inc. [always offers a low-to-no risk pilot program approach.](#) We work with the client to design a project to fit their budget and meet their business needs.

Plan to attend one of our **scheduled live online presentations** (see schedule on left) **OR tell us a date and time that fits your schedule**, which we can follow-up with an onsite presentation. Or skip the online presentation and schedule an onsite briefing.



The PROTECH™ approach:

- Is designed to your job classification, your operation and incorporates your firm's specifications, process, standards and policies;
- Ends your worries and costs over finding qualified candidates and closing the "skills gap;"
- Drives every worker to full job mastery while they simply learn their job;
- Cuts your employee turnover costs;
- Captures worker expertise before it leaves and use it to quickly and thoroughly train replacements;
- Provides metrics and reports for process monitoring and improvement.

European-style apprenticeships without the exorbitant cost... whether registered or not.

We research available training grant funds for each project and help the client apply. Grants may offset most or all of the investment to set-up and implement the structured training system!!

Low investment, no risk, high returns - everything to gain!

Isn't an hour of your time worth it to see if this approach to worker training is the one you always wished you had?

[Contact a Proactive Technologies, Inc. representative](#) today!



