



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

### **Certifying and Auditing Workers, Subcontractors**

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



When auditors sample worker performance for compliance with process documents and quality standards, they observe the employee perform the steps of the defined process and watch for accuracy. That is necessary for assuring repeatable quality output.

Yet process documents and references to quality standards do not a training strategy make. Technical documents were never intended to be training materials. Depending on the engineer's style, they may be too technical or too verbose for the average user. Rarely are technical documents tested for readability (against the reading levels of the intended users) let alone repeatability.

***Proliferating process improvement to the supplier in the form of process documents AND training materials they can use to train their workers to your evolving specifications is vital to maintaining consistent quality.***

The experienced worker, who has somehow learned to interpret the process document and fill the gaps of missing information to perform the task as envisioned, has the opportunity to repeat that process in a self-standardized way in lieu of proper training. They retain the best practice through repetition. But new-hires and transfers have different skills and abilities and may not be able to identify and assemble the various bits of information into a coherent, repeatable best practice without guidance and structure. The learning curve may become unnecessarily long and costly.

For this among many reasons, structured on-the-job training is critical to efficient process performance and indicative of higher levels of productivity.

**Why would a supplier's experience be any different? [Read More](#)**

### **Assessing Employees With Past Drug Addictions for Work Tricky**

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



A prevalent challenge faced by many employers is what to do with job applicants with a record of past drug use. Current drug use detected during screening is more cut and dry, but candidates that are going through, or went through, treatment and have maintained a clean life-style since need more care to avoid running afoul of the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#).

The Americans with Disabilities Act [protects employees and job applicants from discrimination based on past drug addiction in most cases](#). In a article for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website by Roy Maurer, "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects employees and job applicants from discrimination based on past drug addiction. These individuals qualify as having a disability if they successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program or are

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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 website's [News and Publications](#) page or click [Proactive Technologies Report - February, 2020 Issue](#). While at our website, check out past newsletters, articles and more.

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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**

currently participating in such a program and are no longer using prohibited drugs."

One expert he interviewed, Rayford Irvin, the Houston district director for the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC), said "Opioid addiction is a disability that is affecting millions across the United States, yet many are regaining control over their lives by participating in supervised rehabilitation programs." "When a worker has a record of such a disability and is performing his job proficiently, an employer cannot lawfully preclude the worker from employment because he is receiving treatment for his addiction."

Lawyers interviewed for the article suggested that employers amend their policy manuals regarding drugs and specify exclusions in line with the ADA and [reasonable accommodation provisions](#) issued by the EEOC. [Read More](#)

## Apprenticeships: Be Careful Not To Minimize Integrity While Spiking The Numbers

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



In a *Community College Daily News* article, "[Drawing Lines on Apprenticeships](#)," business and industry representatives seemed to have expressed to their congressional leaders the changes they would like to see in apprenticeships before they would consider participating. The opening statements from the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee chair Sen. Lamar Alexander (Tennessee) and ranking minority member Sen. Patty Murray (Washington) set the debate, with "Alexander arguing that registered apprenticeships limit creativity and flexibility that employers seek because of cumbersome administrative red tape. More companies want less-formal, industry-recognized apprenticeships that allow them to work on specific skill sets, he said, adding they also are more appealing to industries such as health care and information technology that don't traditionally offer apprenticeships."

Ranking Member Pat Murray (Washington) rebutted this claim, "...registered apprenticeships ensure rigor and program quality. She said GOP efforts to encourage more nonregistered programs is designed to 'weaken and water down' programs and to open the training market to for-profit institutions." Most people actively involved with apprenticeships know that much can be done to make apprenticeships more attractive, practical, fulfilling and feasible to employers and more attractive, achievable and valuable to apprentices. And that there is a role for for-profit training providers when the non-profit and institutional related technical instruction in the area is weak, has not been kept up-to-date or is non-existent.

There is no denying that the iconic apprenticeships of old were hard for employers to embrace. An 8-10 year apprenticeship program for, in many cases, 1 apprentice was a non-starter. And with developments in the last 30 years - massive relocation of jobs off-shore, instability of employment even before the Crash of 2008 but more so after (employees not able to continue in a job classification for 3 years let alone 10 year apprenticeship), the stagnation and decline of wages and continual introduction of newer technology that redesigns the nature of jobs - everyone involved including community colleges felt they were playing a seemingly never ending shell game. Add to that a period of uncertainty such as the current trade and tariff action exchanges and the only thing certain is an uncertain workforce development target. [Read More](#)

## Apprenticeships That Make Money? Not as Impossible as it Seems (part 2 of 2) - Setting Up an Apprenticeship Center

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

In part one of a two-part article entitled "[Apprenticeships That Make Money? Not as Impossible as it Seems](#)," appearing in the *Proactive Technologies Report*, I discussed what seemed to be the obvious differences in European and U.S. apprenticeship models. I suggested that visionary U.S. business leaders consider creating a revenue-generating "apprenticeship center" within the organization to cover the costs of the apprenticeship and, in some cases, make money. How could that be accomplished? In continuing the discussion I would like to offer a possible

equipment required.

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

**APPLIES TO ANY ORGANIZATION (Recorded - Available Any Time):**  
[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 following states, **and a**

strategy.

American manufacturers turned to lower wage labor sources, such as Mexico, China and India, during the last 30 years to lower their production costs in the hope that they would be more profitable. It is now understood that with lower wage costs comes additional supply chain costs which can, if uncontrollable, erase some or all of the gains a lower wage level might offer.

But what if some of the services or operations to manufacture products or sub-assemblies that were, or are to be, off-shored could be done internally - at the labor cost of "training wages" as done in Europe - using equipment that would otherwise have to be idled, sold or shipped? What if those training wages could be furthered reduced by state grants? Could employers find that the source of lower wages is in their own back yard?

Although the following approach for determining if an apprenticeship center/cost-reduction center is right for your organization is simple, it should be scalable to any organization with slight modifications:

**Step 1: Review Product/Service Line and Flow** : First, list the products and/or services that the organization offers in order to gain a perspective of the scope of opportunities. [Read More](#)

## Although This Proactive Technologies' [Fall Discount Offer](#)

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[Learn more](#) and get ready to maximize worker performance and return on worker investment...while minimizing your investment to do so!

State training grant funds may be available to cover most, if not all, of the initial investment to set-up and implement the

representative will be in your area, in the month of:

## February, 2020

Colorado (Eastern Slope)

Florida (Northern)

Kansas (Kansas City, Topeka and I70 Corridor)

Kentucky (North and Eastern)

Indiana

Louisiana (Southern)

Missouri (Kansas City, St. Louis)

Minnesota

Mississippi (Southern)

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)

Texas (North-Eastern)

Utah

West Virginia (North-Central, South Central)

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## Industry News

### DOMESTIC ECONOMIC DATA

**Gross Domestic Product - 4th quarter 2019 and 2019 Year (advance estimate); Corporate Profits, 3rd quarter 2019 (revised estimate)**



*US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis*

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased 2.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019, according to the "advance" estimate released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the third quarter, real GDP also increased 2.1 percent. [Read Report](#)

### Personal Income, Outlays - December, 2019



*US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis*

Personal income increased \$40.7 billion (0.2 percent) in December according to estimates released today by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Disposable personal income (DPI) increased \$30.6 billion (0.2 percent) and personal consumption expenditures (PCE) increased \$46.6 billion (0.3 percent) (table 5).

Real DPI decreased 0.1 percent in December and Real PCE increased 0.1 percent. The PCE price index increased 0.3 percent. Excluding food and energy, the PCE price index increased 0.2 percent (table 9). [Read Report](#)

### Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders

*US Census Bureau*

New orders for manufactured goods in November decreased \$3.6 billion or 0.7 percent to \$493.0 billion. November 2019: -0.7° % change; October 2019 (r): +0.2° % change. [Read Report](#)



### Advanced Report on Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders

*US Census Bureau*

New orders for manufactured durable goods in December increased \$5.7 billion or 2.4 percent to \$245.5 billion. December 2019: +2.4° % change; November 2019 (r): -3.1° % change. [Read Report](#)



### Consumer Price Index

*US Bureau of Labor Statistics*

In December, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers rose 0.2 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis; rising 2.3 percent over the last 12 months, not seasonally adjusted. The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.1 percent in December (SA); up 2.3 percent over the year (NSA). [Read Article](#)



### Producer Price Index

*US Bureau of Labor Statistics*

The Producer Price Index for final demand edged up 0.1 percent in December, as prices for final demand goods rose 0.3 percent and the index for final demand services was unchanged. The final demand index moved up 1.3 percent in 2019. [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](#)



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

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

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

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## 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 December, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.5 percent. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Notable job gains occurred in retail trade and health care, while mining lost jobs. [Read Report](#)



## 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](#)



## General Motors Announces \$2.3 Billion Ohio Electric Vehicle Battery Plant

Thomas Insights - Andy Szal

General Motors on Thursday announced plans for a new factory in Ohio that will produce battery cells for electric vehicles.



The Detroit automaker will own 50% of a joint venture with long-time partner battery partner LG Chem; the new company expects to invest \$2.3 billion at a new manufacturing site in Lordstown, Ohio.

The factory is expected to create more than 1,100 new jobs in the city near Youngstown, which was formerly home to a GM assembly plant with a workforce of about 4,500. The Lordstown plant closed down in March; GM recently sold the complex to a secretive new company known as Lordstown Motors Corp., which aims to produce an electric truck at the site.

The GM-LG Chem battery plant, officials said, will feature an annual capacity of more than 30 gigawatt-hours to supply forthcoming GM electric vehicles, including a truck set to debut in 2021. GM said the two new Lordstown facilities would position Northeast Ohio as "a major hub for technology and electric vehicle manufacturing." [Read Article](#)

## Weak Pricing Environments Caused Nearly 800 Trucking Companies to Close Doors in 2019

Thomas Insights - Mike Hockett

Earlier this month, Celadon, North America's largest provider of international truckload services, announced it was shuttering operations after filing for bankruptcy - becoming just the latest trucking company to go under this year.

New data shows that trucking's downfall may be far worse than previously reported.



On December 14, FOX Business cited Donald Broughton, principal and managing partner of data firm Broughton Capital, saying that 795 trucking companies have failed so far in 2019 as of mid-December - removing almost 24,000 trucks from the United States' capacity. That 795 figure is more than 2.5 times what it was a year earlier. FOX Business added that in 2018, 310 trucking companies failed, removing 2,805 trucks. Those 2018 figures, according to Broughton, were a "historically record-low rate for trucking company failures." [Read Article](#)



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## Aerospace Manufacturer Announces \$128 Million Ohio R&D, Manufacturing Center

*Thomas Insights - Andy Szal*

Oregon aerospace manufacturer Precision Castparts Corp. this week announced plans for a new \$128 million engineering and manufacturing campus in Southwest Ohio.



PCC, which produces castings, fasteners, and other complex components for the aerospace, power, and industrial sectors, said the new facilities in the Cincinnati suburb of Mason would include a research and development center for its aerostructures division, as well as a manufacturing center for its SPS Technologies components subsidiary.

The project is expected to create 190 new jobs.

PCC officials said the site, located in a 400-acre R&D park, provided easy access to clients and partners in the aerospace industry. The company hopes to bolster its vertical integration and streamline its processes. [Read Article](#)

## Improve Production with This Injection Mold Setup Checklist

*Thomas Insights - Staff Writer*

The mold setup procedure is an unavoidable part of injection molding. During this process, the molding machine is shut down for a period of time while the mold is changed. Sometimes, however, setups are mismanaged and, as a result, machines sit idle for far longer than they have to.



What's more, an inferior setup can lead to sluggish cycles, high scrap rates, tool damage, flawed parts, rework, an unsteady process, and delayed product delivery. Shops could even erase their entire profit margin on the job as a result of a flubbed mold change procedure.

So how do you avoid all these potential fiascos? [Read Article](#)

## Hot Jobs: Growing Industrial Sectors

*Area Development - Steve Kaelble, Staff Editor*

Although the number of jobs lost during the Great Recession have been regained, not all regions or industry sectors have experienced the same recovery.

State	2019 Jobs	2010-2019 % Job Change
California	1,309,414	-2.00%
Texas	911,900	1.20%
Ohio	712,469	2.20%
Michigan	438,011	7.20%
Illinois	374,481	1.50%
Pennsylvania	363,177	0.60%
Indiana	348,370	4.70%
North Carolina	261,139	3.00%
Wisconsin	254,455	2.90%

Where are the best job opportunities, and in what sectors? The research from market analytics consultant Emsi suggests that some of the most attractive sectors in terms of decent-paying jobs are also doing fairly well in terms of job growth.

Most states will welcome all the manufacturing activity they can get, for example, and many states have been seeing healthy manufacturing job growth in recent years. Auto manufacturing is in respectable shape, biopharm is healthier all the time, and there's always a need to make more food. Some job sectors are relatively flat, but even the one that has suffered the most in the past few years - oil and gas - seems to be on the mend.

## The State of Manufacturing

Manufacturing jobs continue to be a bit of a wild card. It's a U.S. sector that by most measures isn't what it used to be, thanks to ever-increasing competition from overseas locations. And according to projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's not a hot sector overall, with total employment expected to drop by half a percent between 2018 and 2028. [Read Article](#)

## US Factory Sector in Deepest Slump in More Than 10 Years

*MSN - Reuters, Jason Lange and Dan Burns*

The U.S. manufacturing sector fell into its deepest slump in more than a decade in December as the U.S.-China trade war kept a lid on factory output, orders and employment, although the long-awaited Phase 1 deal between Washington and Beijing could limit further downside.



The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its index of national factory activity fell to 47.2 last month from 48.1 in November. It was the lowest reading since June 2009 and, coupled with readings for both new orders and factory employment at multi-year lows, thwarted expectations for a leveling off in the pace of decline in a sector buffeted by trade



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tensions.

A reading below 50 indicates the sector is in contraction, and December's reading marked the fifth straight month below that benchmark level. [Read Article](#)

### Can You See Beyond the Hype?

*Industry Week - Peter Fretty*

AI has become a buzzword for most recent tech releases. Question is whether or not it's living up to the hype.



Hype is a crucial component to introducing any emerging technology into the marketplace. It draws attention and, in many instances, entices organizations to come out onto the bleeding edge. However, at some point, manufacturers need to move beyond the hype and realize the return on their investment.

A recent report by Lux Research, Artificial Intelligence: A Framework to Identify Challenges and Guide Successful Outcomes, takes a deeper look at the current state of AI. The goal was to provide companies with an outcome-focused framework to make more successful investment decisions and better manage their AI projects. [Read Article](#)

### Boeing Suspends Max Jet Production

*Thomas Insights - Anna Wells*

After dedicating months to the redesign of its Max jet, Boeing has announced that it will suspend production of the model beginning in January. And we don't really know whether or not it's for good.



The Max has been grounded since March, when it was determined that a software problem within a pilot control system bore significant responsibility for two separate plane crashes killing, in total, 346 people.

Boeing's airline customers have been consistently pushing back timelines as the aerospace company grapples with the FAA over approvals that the agency stressed would be on their timeline, not Boeing's.

According to the AP, this decision by Boeing to cull production could have huge consequences.

Many of the 12,000 workers at the company's Renton, Washington plant will, for now, be diverted to other Boeing work in the Seattle area, though there is no timetable on when - or if - the Max will return. All Boeing is saying is that there will be no layoffs "at this time." [Read Article](#)

### Boeing Names New Chairman & CEO Amidst a Confidence Crisis Prevailing In a Sudden Turn of Events

*MarketWatch*

The Board of Directors of Boeing BA, -0.71% on Monday appointed the current serving Chairman David L. Calhoun as the new CEO and President of the Company, as part of their efforts to tide over a crisis that had set in, ever since the deadly crashes of two of its Boeing 737 Max planes over the last one year. Billions of dollars have been lost over the last six months, with the regulators putting Boeing's operations on hold temporarily. This was seen a drastic move by Boeing, considering the gravity of the situation involved, with more and more details becoming public about their ability to handle the system that cost several human lives. The relationship with Federal Aviation Administration that oversees and investigates these accidents was being seen as taken a beating earlier. The importance of bringing back complete faith among the stakeholders was necessary, that includes developing smoother relationships with the regulators and other stakeholders.



Greg Smith, the present Chief Financial Officer is expected to serve temporarily as the CEO during the transition period. Mr. Calhoun is expected to finish his other commitments before formally joining as CEO. [Read Article](#)

### U.S. Pushes Voluntary Guidelines for AV Industry

*CFO.com - Matthew Heller*

Safety advocates say the guidelines for autonomous vehicles "fall well-short of the safeguards that are necessary to protect the public."



The Trump administration has unveiled updated guidelines for self-driving vehicles, saying it wanted to encourage



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## MEMORABLE QUOTES

innovation without compromising safety.

In the so-called AV 4.0 guidance released on Wednesday, the Department of Transportation said it will adopt and promote "flexible, technology-neutral policies that will allow the public, not the federal government or foreign governments, to choose the most economically efficient and effective transportation and mobility solutions."

The guidelines are voluntary, reflecting, White House technology adviser Michael Kratsios said, the administration's intent to "help foster an environment for innovators to advance safe [autonomous vehicle] technologies." Among other things, automakers would be allowed to submit self-assessments on safety. [Read Article](#)

### This New Law Might Protect You from Robocalls

*Thomas Insights - Anna Wells*

In general, we Americans love to argue about anything and everything, but there are a few things we can all agree on - Honey Crisp is the best apple, Betty White is a national treasure, and Robocalls are the worst thing ever.



Well, good news on the Robocalls front - the federal government is trying to do something about the illegal robocallers and texters that seem to be rampant these days. And can I just say that we're all good with this?

After being approved by Congress, President Trump recently signed a bill titled the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence - or TRACED - Act. [Read Article](#)

### How to Make Your Procurement Processes More Sustainable

*Thomas Insights - Sydney Wess*

The supply chain industry is deeply integrated in the vast majority of business services, creating an interconnected network of people and products. Companies can utilize this network to develop more sustainable business practices.



Procurement - the process of acquiring goods from suppliers - presents a great opportunity to make many links in the supply chain more sustainable. While 58% of supply chain companies are confident in their ability to mitigate risk through sustainable procurement processes, many businesses are deterred from adopting more sustainable practices in fear of high costs and a lack of resources to manage such changes to their operations.

Although these concerns are valid, there are several ways to make strides toward sustainability without sacrificing profit or too many resources. In fact, companies that employ these practices commonly see a good ROI from them. [Read Article](#)

### West Coast Longshore Union Braces for Bankruptcy, Unnerving Labor Nationally

*MSN News - Los Angeles Times, Richard Read*

SAN FRANCISCO - The union that handles every shipping container that crosses West Coast docks is bracing for bankruptcy. It's a rare prospect for a bargaining group, and it's rattling organized labor nationally.



The International Longshore and Warehouse Union traces its roots to a 1934 strike that claimed the lives of two men commemorated by silhouettes marked on a sidewalk in front of Local 10, the organization's San Francisco chapter. The ILWU's motto - "An injury to one is an injury to all" - attests to the wariness and solidarity of its 15,000 waterfront members, handsomely compensated blue-collar workers already threatened by port automation.

Few of those workers could have imagined that an obscure feud over two dockside jobs in Portland, Ore., would jeopardize the whole union, whose members line up daily at hiring halls to operate cranes, trucks and machinery in ports from San Diego to Bellingham, Wash. But a \$94-million federal jury award Nov. 4 to ICTSI Oregon Inc., a cargo terminal operator, has forced union leaders to warn that a filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection may be ahead. [Read Article](#)

### Ford Plans to Invest \$1.45 Billion in Detroit Production

*Thomas Insights - David Mantey*

Ford Motor has announced plans to invest \$1.45 billion to produce new trucks, SUVs, EVs, and autonomous vehicles at two factories in Detroit.



**"Profit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them."**

**W. Edwards Deming**

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

**"Quality is free. It's not a gift, but it's free. The 'unquality' things are what cost money."**

**Phillip B. Crosby**

Businessman and author who contributed to management theory and quality management practices.  
1934-2004

**"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."**

**Sun Tzu**

Chinese general, military strategist, writer and philosopher who lived in the Eastern Zhou period of ancient China.  
544-496 B.C.

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by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

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by Stacey Lett, Regional Manager - Eastern U.S. - 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.

**Apprenticeships That Make Money? Not As Impossible as it Seems - Part 1 of 2: The European Difference**

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

**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,

The company will invest \$750 million and add 2,700 jobs over the next three years at the company's manufacturing plant in Wayne, Michigan, where they will build the new Ford Bronco as well as a new Ford Ranger. The deal also includes a modification center to support autonomous vehicles.

Beginning in 2021, the modification center will be responsible for completing Ford's first autonomous vehicles. The center will install the self-driving technology as well as the purpose-built interiors.

An additional \$700 million investment will add 300 new jobs at its manufacturing site in Dearborn, Michigan, where they will build the new F-150 and F-150 Hybrid as well as an all-electric version of the best selling truck. The truck is the top-selling vehicle in the U.S. [Read Article](#)

**Financial News**

**Wealthy Investors Steer Billions Toward New Trump Tax Break**

MSN - Bloomberg, Noah Buhayar

The controversy keeps mounting over a new tax break for investing in poor U.S. communities. But investors keep piling in.



They just pumped \$2.26 billion into funds that are planning to take advantage of "opportunity zone" tax incentives, a 51% jump from early December, according to a survey released Thursday from tax adviser Novogradac. To line up the full benefit, investors had to commit their capital by the end of last year. But the figure also rose because the survey's sample included more funds and because respondents updated how much they raised. [Read Article](#)

**Bosses are Wary of the Return of the Corporate Raider**

BBC - Nell Mackenzie, Business Reporter

Corporate raiders may now style themselves as "shareholder activists" but firms are no less worried



When Chefs' Warehouse flew Christina Carroll from California to her first board meeting they put her up in a haunted hotel.

It was not clear which was the bogeyman, the hotel or Ms Carroll, for she was not a normal board member but had been hired by an activist investor, Legion Partners, to turn the firm around.

Unlike a typical shareholder, an activist buys enough stock to corner the vote on important company decisions - like appointing board members or firing chief execs.

Legion Partners bought 5.9% of shares, garnered the support of fellow shareholders and demanded a seat in the boardroom. Legion's method is to buy a struggling company's shares at a low price, turn the firm around and sell at a profit once the business and its share price have improved.

[Read Article](#)

**Risk of Pension Meltdown Grows as Congress Fails to Act**

MSN - Reuters, Mark Miller

The window is closing on the chance to avert a pension meltdown that will slash the retirement benefits of more than a million U.S. workers.



Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., have been working on ways to protect the benefits promised to participants in multiemployer pension plans, which are created under collective bargaining agreements and jointly funded by groups of employers in industries like construction, trucking, mining and food retailing.

Last year, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate laid out blueprints with very different visions for solutions, and failed to reach any agreement on a way forward.

Congress did slip a rescue package into the massive \$1.4 trillion spending bill passed last month for one plan close to failure, sponsored by the United Mine Workers of America. But the House and Senate are deeply divided on how to solve the broader problem. Democrats are pushing for a package of low-interest loans to prop up the funds, while Republicans want to boost insurance premiums paid by employers, add new premiums paid by plan participants and force more conservative accounting assumptions.

Inc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**[Pre-Employment Physical Ability Tests Can be a Legal Liability If Not Done Right](#)**

by Jim Poole, President of Lifetime

[Read Article](#)

**Moving Beyond GDP**

NPR - Planet Money, Greg Rosalsky



Earlier this month, a group of economists gathered at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association to discuss the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, which for over 75 years, has been tracking GDP, or Gross Domestic Product. GDP is the total monetary value of all the goods and services produced by a country within a given period of time. Politicians, journalists, and many others regularly cite GDP as the ultimate measure of national prosperity.

The economists, who were speaking at a panel called "Beyond GDP," made clear they think that's a huge mistake. GDP misses a lot. It doesn't, for instance, count the cooking, cleaning, and childrearing done in households. It doesn't count the value of people's health or a clean environment. It doesn't pay attention to the distribution of income or wealth. It doesn't pay attention to quality of life.

One of the panelists was the Nobel Prize-winning Princeton economist Angus Deaton, who has spent the last few years researching the rising numbers of "deaths of despair," which is when struggling people die from self-inflicted causes, like suicide and drug overdoses. "Life expectancy has fallen for three years in a row," Deaton said. "One of the major drivers of that is the opioid epidemic, which has so far killed over 200,000 Americans."

Pharmaceutical companies, he said, have made billions off this epidemic. "We've got a system that's really killing people-and we're counting that money as part of GDP. That's gotta be crazy." [Read Article](#)

**Global Debt-to-GDP Hits Record 322% in Q3**

CFO.com - Matthew Heller



The Institute of International Finance sees debt growth accelerating this year due to low interest rates and "loose financial conditions."

The global debt-to-GDP ratio hit a new all-time high in the third quarter of 2019, raising concerns about the financing of infrastructure projects.

The Institute of International Finance reported Monday that debt-to-GDP rose to 322%, with total debt reaching close to \$253 trillion and total debt across the household, government, financial and non-financial corporate sectors surging by some \$9 trillion in the first three quarters of 2019 .

Additionally, the IIF sees debt growth accelerating this year.

"Spurred by low interest rates and loose financial conditions, we estimate that total global debt will exceed \$257 trillion in Q1 2020, driven mainly by non-financial sector debt (now approaching \$200 trillion)," it said. [Read Article](#)

**The End of Retirement**

MSN News - The Wall Street Journal, John D. Stoll

It took about six years of annual asset reviews with my financial planner, Joe Mackey, to confront a big question. After I spent my entire adult life trying to save enough to quit working by 65, Mr. Mackey wanted to know what my rush was.

"Do you even think you'll want to retire?" I'm a 42-year-old writer with a job offering travel, intellectual grist and social connection. With few hobbies and an allergy for sitting still, it's fair to assume my view of a comfortable retirement includes more work than quit. Maybe I'll deliver the mail, write books or teach.

People spend a lot of time wondering if they'll have the means to retire, often ignoring the equally important calculation: Do they have the will to retire? A job, historically seen as simply a way to make money, is increasingly the source of the types of friendship and stimulation that are hard to find in bingo halls, on beaches or riding a golf cart. [Read Article](#)

**SEC Planning to Loosen Auditor Independence Rules**

CFO.com - Vincent Ryan



On Monday, the SEC proposed changing the rules to keep auditor committees and auditors from spending time on "non-substantive" rule breaches.

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

by Proactive Technologies, Inc. Staff

## September

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

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[Task-Specific Performance Reviews - An Accurate Metric for a Structured On-Job-Training Outcome](#)

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

[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](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

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

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

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

[Decreasing the Cost of Turnover WHILE Increasing Worker Capacity, Work Quality and Compliance...With One Approach!](#)

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

[The Skills Gap Solution; Employers Still Reluctant to Commit to Role Only They Can Fill](#)

by Staff

[Apprenticeships - An Alternative to the "400 Hours For Drill Press"](#)

Learning, LLC. appear to be headed in opposite directions in the United States and the United Kingdom.

At a time when auditors in the U.K. are still under fire for the meltdown of Carillion, U.S. auditors may be getting a break on some of the rules governing impartiality and objectivity.

On Monday, the Securities and Exchange Commission proposed loosening some of the restrictions around whether an auditor's objectivity and impartiality are compromised because it has nonaudit ties to a client. [Read Article](#)

### U.S. Billion Dollar Weather Disasters Doubled in Last Decade

CFO.com - William Sprouse

The nation experienced 14 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters last year totaling \$45 billion.



The United States saw 14 weather and climate disasters that caused financial losses of at least \$1 billion last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's annual U.S. climate assessment. 2019 was also the second-wettest year on record behind 1973.

In total, the weather events cost \$45 billion and caused at least 44 deaths. They included wildfires in Alaska and California, two tropical cyclones, and inland flooding that affected the Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi Rivers.

"During the 2010s, the nation saw a trend of an increasing number of billion-dollar inland flooding events," the report said. "Even after adjusting for inflation, the U.S. experienced more than twice the number of billion-dollar weather and climate disasters during the 2010s (119) as compared with the 2000s (59)."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has tracked 258 billion-dollar disasters since 1980. The total cost of those storms and climate events between 2015 and 2019 was in excess of \$525 billion, the highest figure on record. [Read Article](#)

### Pension Plans' Struggles Continue Despite Big Investment Gains

CFO.com - David McCann

While 2019 was a banner year for returns, low interest rates prevented plan sponsors from meaningfully improving their funded states.



Large companies operating pension funds enjoyed eye-popping investment returns in 2019, averaging almost 20%. Unfortunately, lower interest rates resulted in a large increase in future plan obligations that negated most of the investment gains.

According to a Willis Towers Watson study of defined benefit pension plans sponsored by 376 U.S.-based Fortune 1000 companies, their aggregate funded status barely inched up last year, reaching an estimated 87%. That was only a single percentage point higher than the funded status level at the end of 2018.

The analysis found that those sponsors' collective pension deficit was estimated to be \$216 billion at the end of 2019, slightly lower than the \$222 billion deficit a year earlier. Pension obligations, however, increased 9%, from \$1.58 trillion in 2018 to an estimated \$1.72 trillion in 2019.

Pension plans' overall 2019 performance continued a long run of frustration for plan sponsors, marked by disturbing shortfalls in assets needed to fund future obligations. [Read Article](#)

### Shrinking Influence of Central Banks Ends Decades of Business as Usual

MSN News - The Wall Street Journal, Greg Ip

The Federal Reserve and other central banks have long been the unchallenged drivers of financial markets and the business cycle. "Don't fight the Fed," goes one Wall Street adage.



That era is drawing to a close. In many countries, interest rates are so low, even negative, that central banks can't lower them further. Tepid economic growth and low inflation mean they can't raise rates, either.

## [Training Model](#)

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

## **June**

### [The US is Ranked 12th in Talent, Topped By Those Pesky Socialist Countries. What's Gone Wrong?](#)

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

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

### [Is the "Gainful Employment" Requirement For Education Realistic?](#)

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### [Is an Apprenticeship Without Structured On-The-Job Training an Apprenticeship?](#)

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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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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. Since World War II, every recovery was ushered in lower rates as the Fed moved to stimulate growth. Every recession was preceded by higher interest rates as the Fed sought to contain inflation.

But with interest rates now stuck around zero, central banks are left without their principal lever over the business cycle. The Eurozone economy is stalling, but the European Central Bank, having cutting rates below zero, can't or won't do more. Since 2008, Japan has had three recessions with the Bank of Japan, having set rates around zero, largely confined to the sidelines. [Read Article](#)

### **House Passes Bill to Close '8-K Trading Gap'**

CFO.com - Matthew Heller

The current system that allows insiders to trade on information about a significant corporate event is "a total abuse of the public trust."



The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a bill to close a loophole that allows corporate insiders to trade company shares before the public disclosure of a significant corporate event.

According to a 2015 study, the loophole has created an opportunity for insiders to make "meaningful" profits during the four-day window that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission gives companies to file a Form 8-K reporting a significant development.

Under the 8-K Trading Gap Act passed by the House on 384-7 vote, public companies would be required to have policies and procedures reasonably designed to prohibit insiders from trading company stock after the company has determined that a significant corporate event has occurred, but before it is publicly disclosed. [Read Article](#)

### **Media to Go Tech-Free in Data Release 'Lockups'**

CFO.com - Mathew Heller

The Trump administration says reporters' use of computers in secure lockup rooms can give high-speed traders a "head start" on market-moving news.



The U.S. Department of Labor is changing the way it releases potentially market-moving information to the public, saying the current system gives an unfair advantage to high-speed traders.

The new procedures bar reporters from using electronic devices in the secure "lockup" rooms from which they prepare stories in advance of the release of the DoL's monthly employment and other bulletins. The stories are transmitted online to the public as soon as the lockup ends.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the use of computers in lockups allows media organizations such as Reuters and Bloomberg to "pre-load" data so traders who subscribe to their services potentially get information before the general public, which has to wait to download the data after it gets posted to the DoL website.

The updated procedures, which limit reporters to using only paper and pen in lockups, "will strengthen the security of our data and offer the general public equitable and timely access," Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner William Beach said in a news release. [Read Article](#)

### **McClatchy Gets Standstill Agreement on Pension Payments**

CFO.Com - William Sprouse

The company has said it cannot make \$124 million in contributions it owes in 2020.



McClatchy Co. has reached a standstill agreement with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC) to extend negotiations with its creditors.

The month-long standstill agreement was effective January 14. In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, McClatchy said it had a minimum funding contribution due January 15 in excess of \$1 million.

McClatchy, publisher of The Miami Herald and other newspapers, entered into non-disclosure agreements with lenders holding approximately 87% of first lien notes and 100% of other liens.

"These conversations are ongoing and productive, and the standstill agreement will allow McClatchy, as well as its lenders, the PBGC, and their respective legal and financial advisers, time to continue their negotiations,"

Inc.

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

by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

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### [Is it Possible to Close the "Skills Gap" if Focused on the Symptom, Not The Cause?](#)

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

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

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by Dean Prigelmeier, President of Proactive Technologies, Inc.

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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](#)

the company said in a statement. [Read Article](#)

## **International News**

### **Mexico, Latin America, South America and the Caribbean**

#### **6.4 Magnitude Earthquake Leaves 1 Dead, Power Out Across Puerto Rico**

USA Today - John Bacon and Adrianna Rodriguez, A 6.4 magnitude earthquake rumbled across Puerto Rico, killing at least one person and knocking out power to virtually the entire island of more than 3 million.



An aftershock three hours later registered at magnitude 6.0. The tremors came one day after the island was shaken by a 5.8 magnitude quake that crumbled homes and triggered states of emergency across the island. Tuesday's quake was the largest in a series that have struck the U.S. territory in recent days and caused heavy damage in some areas, forcing more than 300 Puerto Ricans to leave their homes and seek refuge.

Puerto Rican Gov. Wanda Vázquez declared a state of emergency, activating the National Guard but ordering government employees, except for first responders, to stay home. [Read Article and See Video](#)

#### **Political Unrest In Puerto Rico After Discovery Of Unused Hurricane Aid**

NPR - Vanessa Romo

Angry residents took to the streets of Puerto Rico on Monday.



Fury over the government's mishandling of disaster aid following a spate of devastating earthquakes earlier this month, coupled with the recent discovery of unused supplies - some dating back to Hurricane Maria - is driving frustrated demonstrators to the gates of the governor's mansion. Fed up with what they say is rampant corruption, they are demanding the resignation of Gov. Wanda Vázquez, who just months ago served as the island's Justice Secretary. [Read Article](#)

#### **7.7-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Between Jamaica and Cuba, One of the Strongest on Record in Caribbean**

The Washington Post - Matthew Cappucci and Jason Samenow

One of the strongest earthquakes on record in the Caribbean, 7.7 magnitude, struck about 70 miles northwest of Montego Bay, Jamaica, shortly after 2 p.m. Tuesday. Minor shaking was felt as far north as Florida, while more moderate shaking was reported in Jamaica.



Shaking was also reported in the Cayman Islands, Cuba. and Mexico. Initial reports of damage from the region have been spotty.

In South Florida, where shaking was felt when the earthquake struck, multiple buildings were evacuated in Miami. [Read Article](#)

### **Canada, Europe and Great Britain**

#### **Scotland Seeks New Vote On Independence As U.K. Hurtles Toward Brexit**

NPR - Bill Chappell

Scottish National Party leader and Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is calling for a second referendum on Scottish independence, saying voters endorsed the idea during the U.K.'s recent elections. Sturgeon is seen here Thursday at Bute House in Edinburgh.



The people of Scotland have already rejected the U.K.'s political agenda, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says - and now she wants them to vote in a public referendum on leaving the U.K. altogether. Sturgeon says she's sending Prime Minister Boris Johnson a letter formally requesting that Scotland be allowed to hold a vote on its future.

"Let's assert our rights as an equal nation and partner," Sturgeon told Scotland's residents as she began the push for what's widely being called #IndyRef2.

[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 Left, 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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Structured on-the-job training attracts and engages employers in workforce development partnerships...some projects sustainable for more than 18 years!

This creates a steady need for your related technical instruction, services and a pathway for employment.

These partnerships:

Scotland held a landmark independence vote in 2014, when roughly 55% of voters chose to remain in the U.K. But Sturgeon says times have changed drastically since then - most notably, Scotland voted to remain in the EU in the 2016 Brexit vote. She also notes that in the U.K.'s recent general election, her pro-independence Scottish National Party had one of its best showings ever at the polls. [Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

## Brexit Day: What To Know When The U.K. Leaves The EU

NPR - Frank Langfitt

More than 3 1/2 years after the landmark Brexit referendum, the United Kingdom will finally leave the European Union at 11 p.m. GMT on Friday.



That means Britain will exit the bloc of 27 remaining countries and the bloc's economic market of about 450 million people and will begin to forge its own way in the world.

The U.K. has been a member of the EU since 1973. Leaving is one of the biggest, riskiest and most divisive steps the country has taken in decades. Here are some of the ways Brexit is expected to play out in the near term. [Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

## China and Southeast Asia

### How Chinese Financing is Fueling the World's Megaprojects

Area Development - Visual Capitalists, Nick Routley

On a mountaintop a few miles north of the bustling streets of Harare, Zimbabwe, a curving, modern complex is beginning to take shape. This building, once completed, will be the home of the African country's parliament, and the centerpiece of a new section of the capital city.



Aside from the striking design, there's another unique twist to this development - the entire \$140 million project is a gift from Beijing. At first glance, gifting a country a new parliament building may seem extravagant, but the project is a tiny portion of China's \$270 billion in "diplomacy spending" since 2000.

AidData, a research lab at the W&M Global Research Institute, has compiled a massive database of Chinese-backed projects spanning from 2000-2017. In aggregate, it creates a comprehensive look at China's efforts to grow its influence in countries around the world, particularly in Africa and South Asia. [Read Article](#)

## Chinese Authorities Begin Quarantine of Wuhan City As Coronavirus Cases Multiply

NPR Morning Edition - Emily Feng, Amy Cheng, Merrit Kennedy, Merrit Kennedy

Wuhan's public health authorities say they are in a "state of war" as they quarantine the Chinese city in an attempt to halt the spread of a never-before-seen strain of coronavirus.



"Strictly implement emergency response requirements, enter into a state of war and implement wartime measures to resolutely curb the spread of this epidemic," urged a committee of Wuhan's top officials. "Homes must be segregated, neighbors must be watched."

Later Thursday, health officials from the World Health Organization decided not to declare the outbreak an international health emergency. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that after two days of meetings in Geneva with the organization's Emergency Committee, the group was divided. [Read Article](#)

## Asia, India and Australia

### In Australia Wildfires, Scenes Of Smoke, Sparks And Chaos

NPR - Leah Donnell

Wildfires are a regular occurrence in Australia, but on New Year's Eve, residents of the state of New South Wales experienced blazes stronger and more destructive than they had in years. In several of the southeastern towns, smoke blocked out the sky, houses were destroyed, and thousands of tourists and locals were forced to flee to nearby beaches. Seven people have died so far, and several others are unaccounted for.



It's still unclear how long the fires will last or what the extent of the damage

- enhance your institution's opportunity to market your products and services to incumbent workers;
- allow your organization to include structured on-the-job training as a capstone to pre-employment preparation;
- document a trainee-to worker's increasing value to the employer - the key to retention - rather than leaving it to chance;
- properly aligns workforce development resources and maximizes the impact and results;
- allows you to engage an employer's facility, equipment and staff in the training process;
- provides the best infrastructure for apprenticeships and internships that last!
- is a win for the trainee, win for the worker, win for the employer, win for the institution and win for the community!

This approach has continued to prove itself since 1988, and does not compete with your products and services; it adds to your efforts the clear, tangible, measurable advantage that employers seek.

**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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will be. The New South Wales Rural Fire Service, made up of 74,000 volunteers, predicts that conditions will remain unsafe through the weekend. But that doesn't mean things will clear up anytime soon; fire season in Australia's southeast, where it's currently summer, lasts for months. The most recent fires are coming after weeks of strong winds, record-breaking heat and years of drought in parts of the country. [Read Article](#)

## India Says Internet is Being Restored to Kashmir, But No Social Media

*DeutscheWelle*

After a monthslong internet blackout, Indian authorities said that Kashmir residents can now go online under strictly controlled conditions. The users can visit only about 300 websites and cannot access social media.



Kashmir is back online, according to Indian officials, following a five-and-a-half-month internet blackout. However, the authorities limited internet traffic to only 301 websites pre-approved by the government and allowed only low-speed 2G connections for mobile users. Starting on Saturday, Kashmiris should have access to Google, Amazon and Netflix, but not to any social media sites that allow "peer-to-peer" communications.

"It's good some internet access has been restored but it's so slow I'm hardly able to access anything and social media is also off-limits," Raashid Ahmad, a university student, told the AFP news agency.

The Indian government imposed the unprecedented blackout during a crackdown in August, when it stripped the Muslim-majority region of its partial autonomy. [Read Article](#)

## Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe and Russia

### Netanyahu's Gamble on Trump Plan Backfires at Home, Abroad

*DeutscheWelle*

Reactions have been almost unanimous in proclaiming that US President Trump's plan only benefits Israel. But even there, voters are mixed and not enthused with the longtime PM's calculus, says Peter Philipp.



US President Donald Trump's newly unveiled Middle East "peace plan" sparked exceedingly divergent reactions around the world, but also within Israel itself - despite the fact that most see the state of Israel as the big winner in Trump's latest announcement.

And no one seemed more surprised by that split reaction than Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself. In his view, his appearance alongside Trump in Washington and the duo's collective praise for the US plan should have kicked off the final stretch of Israeli parliamentary elections - the third within one year's time - that would this time secure the politician's grip on power, something the prior two elections failed to do.

More than anything, Netanyahu had hoped to immediately "finish the job" before Israel's March vote, cementing the current status quo in the occupied territories in the West Bank with US approval. Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are a priority for Netanyahu, who immediately implemented steps to "expand Israel's sovereignty" on land occupied by Jewish settlers, initiating Israeli annexation of the disputed area. [Read Article](#)

### Ghanaian Traders Livid at Nigeria Border Closure

*DeutscheWelle*

Traders in Ghana have labeled Abuja's decision to continue shutting its border as needless and un-African.

On the contrary, Nigeria claims the border closure has spurred local production and reduced



Gabriel Nartey casts a sad look as he sits idly in his spare parts shop located in Ghana's capital Accra. The 50-year-old trader complained that he has not seen business this bad. "I am stuck, I am losing customers because I don't have what they need," Nartey told DW in an interview. "I don't know what to do, it's just a few who can go to China, which is more expensive that can manage, but for those like us who rely on Nigeria only, it is challenging for us." [Read Article](#)

## CLIENT SERVICES

**To supplement onsite PROTECH™ system of managed human resource development classes, these regularly scheduled webinars are available to the registered staff of clients:**

"Structured On-The-Job Training Instructor Certification"

"Structured On-The Job Training Checklist Administrator Certification"

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"Supporting "Pay-For-Value" Systems"

"Promoting Continuous Process Improvement While Implementing the PROTECH System for the Accelerated Transfer of Expertise™"

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**Contact US to attend one of these seminars and we will send you an e-reservation. Include your client ID, name and user ID number and which webinar you would like to attend.**

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## Billions of Locusts Swarm Over East Africa

*DeutscheWelle*

A locust invasion in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia has left crops devastated. It is the biggest swarm in decades, with billions of the ravenous insects nibbling their way through the already climate-ravaged region.



Thick clouds of locusts are blackening the skies of East Africa from Ethiopia and Somalia into Kenya due to extreme weather changes.

Experts warned Friday that the insect infestation could have disastrous effects on a region still recovering from recent drought and aggressive flooding.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that one locust invasion in Kenya covered around 2,400 square kilometers (930 square miles) and contained up to 200 billion locusts which descend to feed off plants and vegetation. [Read Article](#)

## International Trade News

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE DATA

#### Monthly Wholesale Trade

*US Census Bureau*

November 2019 sales of merchant wholesalers were \$500.7 billion, up 1.5 percent (+/- 0.5 percent) from last month. End-of-month inventories were \$674.9 billion, down 0.1 percent (+/- 0.2 percent)\* from last month. November 2019: -0.1\* % change in Inventories; October 2019 (r): +0.1\* % change in Inventories.

[Read Report](#)



#### Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales

*US Census Bureau*

U.S. total business end-of-month inventories for November 2019 were \$2,037.4 billion, down 0.2 percent (+/- 0.1 percent) from last month. U.S. total business sales were \$1,465.7 billion, up 0.7 percent (+/- 0.2 percent) from last month. November 2019: -0.2 % change in Inventories; October 2019 (r): +0.1\* % change in Inventories. [Read Report](#)



#### U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, November, 2019

*US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis*

The U.S. monthly international trade deficit decreased in November 2019 according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. The deficit decreased from \$46.9 billion in October (revised) to \$43.1 billion in November, as exports increased and imports decreased. The previously published October deficit was \$47.2 billion. The goods deficit decreased \$3.9 billion in November to \$63.9 billion. The services surplus decreased less than \$0.1 billion in November to \$20.8 billion. [Read Report](#)



#### International Transactions, 3rd quarter 2019

*US Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Analysis*

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



## EMPLOYERS!

**If your organization sees training as a cost, not as an investment, maybe you should consider another approach!**

### **The PROTECH™ system of managed human resource development:**

- \* Captures worker expertise and legacy knowledge for the [accelerated transfer of expertise™](#);
- \* Cuts the employer's internal costs of training;
- \* Lowers the costs associated with turnover;
- \* Drives new-hires and incumbent workers to "full job mastery;"
- \* Increases worker capacity, work quality, productivity and compliance (ISO/AS/TS training and records requirement, engineering specifications and safety mandates);
- \* Creates framework for cross-training, retraining and worker certification;
- \* Establishes the framework for employer specific/job-specific apprenticeships and internships - registered or not;
- \* Builds career development tracks and succession plans for hourly (and salary) workers;
- \* Ensures the increased and maintained "Return on Worker investment" through any type of change...

### **ALL OF THIS FROM ONE APPROACH!**

**This structured on-the-job training is performed where, and while, the work takes place!**

**You need no additional staff, and this will not disrupt your work schedule or burden your existing staff!**

If your firm is partnered with local career and technical educational institutions, use of shared

liabilities were \$39.21 trillion. At the end of the second quarter, the net investment position was -\$10.61 trillion. [Read Report](#)

### **Initial US-China Trade Deal Has Major Hole: Beijing's Massive Business Subsidies**

*MSN News - The Washington Post, David Lynch*

President Trump's trade deal with Beijing leaves untouched the marriage of business and government known as China Inc. that American executives for nearly two decades have said tilted global markets against them.



Trump insisted for months that he wanted to resolve all outstanding trade issues with China in a single, comprehensive accord that would refashion the Chinese state's economic role. As late as September, he rejected talk of a partial agreement, saying instead that he wanted "the big deal."

The two sides discussed industrial subsidies in the early rounds of negotiations over an agreement that exceeded 150 pages. But Chinese officials resisted making structural changes, and by the time officials settled this month on an 86-page partial accord, any commitments to reduce subsidies had been excised. [Read Article](#)

### **Transparency in Federal Government: Commerce Department Makes its Data Accessible to Citizens with New Interactive Tool**

*US Department of Commerce - Christine Heflin, Director of Performance Excellence, Deputy Performance Improvement Officer*



As America's "Data Agency" and co-leader of the Data Goal in the President's Management Agenda, the Department of Commerce is leading improvement in how federal agencies make data accessible and useful to the American public. With the launch of Commerce Performance Data Pro, seeing the Department's impact data just got way easier. This new website provides citizens an interactive online tool to learn more about the Department's strategic objectives and measures of progress. It also puts the user a few clicks away from entire data sets on program performance.

By using the following innovative capabilities, taxpayers can monitor the Department's efforts to strengthen the U.S. economy, and improve critical services: [Read Article](#)

### **A New Government Study Shows How Trump's Tariffs Have Backfired**

*MSN News - VOX, Zeeshan Aleem*



President Donald Trump has promised throughout his presidency to revive American manufacturing by slapping punishing tariffs on foreign competition.

But a new study from the US Federal Reserve suggests that his efforts have backfired - and that the manufacturing sector is worse off than it was before the president began his protectionist trade policy.

Economists Aaron Flaaen and Justin Pierce, who describe their study as "as the first comprehensive estimates of the effect of recent tariffs on the US manufacturing sector," argue that the data shows that any benefits from protection from foreign competition have been more than canceled out by retaliatory tariffs from trading partners and an increase in the rise the need for US manufacturers to source components abroad. [Read Article](#)

### **Trump Signs USMCA, Revamping North American Trade Rules**

*The Washington Post - Jeff Stein*

After fulfilling key campaign promise, president celebrates new pact without Democrats who helped pass it

President Trump signed a revamped trade agreement with Canada and Mexico into law Wednesday, fulfilling his pledge to rework the North American Free Trade Agreement even as he contends with the Senate impeachment trial.

The revised treaty, called the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), creates new environmental and labor standards for the countries, while also giving farmers greater access to Canadian markets and ensuring car companies have to use a higher share of North American parts in their production, among other changes.

Mexico has ratified the deal, and Canada is expected to formally approve it soon.

Trump was able to win congressional passage of the deal because of

employer's equipment, facilities and paid wages of trainer(s) and trainee(s) are attractive match for potential grant assistance.

[Contact a Proactive Technologies representative for more information.](#)

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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!**

AND, unstructured, uncontrolled, undocumented task training is going on all day, every day. **But if you cannot explain the process, you surely cannot measure and improve it.**

Proactive Technologies's approach to structured on-the-job training takes place where, and while, the work is performed. **You need no additional staff** and structured on-the-job training **does not interrupt your work schedule** like unstructured, haphazard and ad hoc training does.

You probably have most of the pieces already in place; they just need structure around them to make the training experience work for everyone through the [accelerated transfer of expertise™](#).

As part of every project, **Proactive Technologies provides the support to set-up, implement, manage,**

substantive changes to made to get support from Democrats and labor unions. But no Democratic lawmakers were present at the signing ceremony. [Read Article](#)

### With Trump's Farm Bailout Came Surprising Profits but Little Help for the Neediest

MSN News - The Washington Post, Andrew Van Dam, Laris Karklis

The trade war and wet weather should have blown them out of the water, but farmers had their best year in half a decade thanks to government bailouts.

In 2019, the farm belt felt about as hospitable as the asteroid belt. Record rainfall turned fields to sludge and made it nigh-on impossible to plant corn and soybeans until long after the typical window had passed. President Trump's long-running trade war cut off farmers' access to China's enormous market. Across the farm sector, commodity prices remained in the doldrums.

Yet the Agriculture Department now estimates 2019 was farmers' most profitable in five years. What happened? [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 find 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." [Read Article](#)

### Predicting Tariff Impacts on Industrial Business in 2020 [New Podcast]

Thomas Insights - Mikaela Tierney

After months of slow progress, the creation of an agreement to resolve the ongoing trade war between China and the United States now seems to be picking up speed. Last week on January 15, President Trump signed the "Phase One" trade deal with China to implement a partial truce on international trade between the two countries.

In the latest episode of the Thomas Industry Update Podcast, Thomas CEO Tony Uphoff spoke with Andrew Blasi Jr., a director at Crowell and Moring International with a specific focus on regulatory policy and international affairs, about how manufacturers should prepare for the impacts of ongoing tariff uncertainty and the changes expected in both the short- and long-term. [Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

### Is Automation Changing the Reshoring Equation?

Area Development - Industry Week, Douglas Gastich

Tariffs are a trigger for reshoring. But I see the cost of labor and training as a bigger driver of where things get made.

When China joined the WTO, U.S. manufacturing had to face off against incredibly low Chinese wages. U.S. companies closed facilities and moved them to China. The price of making something fundamentally influences where it's made and by whom. The trade war between the U.S. and China is evidence of that.

Tariffs have some companies either talking about or already reshoring manufacturing. For instance, Panther Global Technologies, which makes crankshafts and piston pumps for lawn and garden tools, recently closed one of its two factories in China and moved some operations back to the U.S.

Tariffs are a trigger for reshoring. But I see the cost of labor and training as a bigger driver of where things get made. Panther is a good example. [Read Article](#)



document and revise the worker development system so you can stay focused on business.

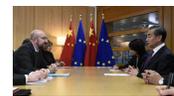
[Ask your Proactive Technologies, Inc. representative](#) about the [PROTECH™ system of managed human resource development](#)

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## China Calls for Opening Free Trade Talks With the EU

*EURACTIV.com - Jorge Valero*

Chinese foreign affairs minister Wang Yi on Monday (16 December) called for the launch of free trade talks with the EU, in parallel with ongoing negotiations on an investment deal.



On an official visit to Brussels on Monday and Tuesday, Wang said that both partners should launch the feasibility study for a free trade agreement, which could take "one or two years" to prepare.

"We should seize the opportunity", he said in an event hosted by the European Policy Centre. "I want to make the plea here."

"Why aren't you talking to your largest trading partner? I cannot understand," Wang said. "Isn't that a good thing for the European people? Why don't you do it?" [Read Article](#)

## EU to Evaluate Chinese Offer for European Investors

*European Commission*

This week the EU and China held the 25th round of negotiations for the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment. This round saw the second exchange of market access offers on both sides.



The Commission will analyse the Chinese offer carefully to assess its level of ambition and the extent to which it reflects the EU specific requests.

The EU had made specific requests to China for a meaningful offer to rebalance the current disparity in China's level of market openness compared to the EU. In particular, the EU seeks an opening of key sectors, such as telecommunications, information and communication technology, health, financial services, and manufacturing.

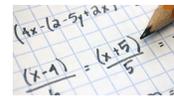
For the EU, the agreement should not only create new investment opportunities but also improve the business environment for EU companies once they are operating on the Chinese market. Therefore, the EU also expects China to take commitments to ensure that European companies can compete in China on a level playing field. This includes avoiding forced technology transfers, removing discriminatory authorisation procedures, ensuring that state-owned enterprises compete on equal terms and act on the basis of commercial considerations, and improving transparency regarding subsidies to Chinese companies. [Read Release](#)

## Education and Workforce Development News

### 'Math Misalignment' Shuts Many Out of STEM Careers

*Community College Daily News - Ellie Ashford*

Students entering community college with the goal of a STEM career often face a huge obstacle when they place into developmental math, a new study concludes.



STEM careers paid a median salary of \$84,800 in 2018, compared to \$37,020 in all non-STEM fields, thus offering a huge opportunity for many low-income and students of color in community colleges, according to the report by Wheelhouse: The Center for Community Leadership and Research at the University of California, Davis.

Between 2010 and 2016, approximately 65 percent of first-time California community college enrollees started their college trajectory in developmental math courses for which they made no progress toward a degree or transfer.

That effectively shuts many students out of STEM careers, as strong math skills are needed for just about all STEM-related degrees, the report says. [Read Article](#)

### Bridging the Skilled Trades Gap

Area Development - Todd Sachse, Founder and CEO, Sachse Construction

Public institutions and private companies are deploying innovative solutions to address the ongoing scarcity of skilled trades workers and narrow the nationwide skilled trades gap.



Mike Rowe, the longtime host of the hit show Dirty Jobs, and vocal advocate for the value of blue-collar work and workers, once said, "I think a trillion dollars of student loans and a massive skills gap are precisely what

happens to a society that actively promotes one form of education as the best course for the most people. I think the stigmas and stereotypes that keep so many people from pursuing a truly useful skill begin with the mistaken belief that a four-year degree is somehow superior to all other forms of learning."

While there are many reasons for the skills gap that has resulted in a national shortage of skilled laborers, Rowe's reference gets at the heart of the problematic messaging that has been one of the primary issues driving this trend. Beginning in the 1980s, the way we have talked about careers in the skilled trades has been both overtly and implicitly dismissive. While going to college and continuing education beyond high school is perfectly admirable, there has been a troubling social and cultural stigma associated with not going to college. This idea, reinforced by institutions and individuals across society, has contributed to the erroneous notion that skilled trades professions are somehow less respectable or desirable. The way we think and talk about things matter, and because perception ultimately shapes reality, this dynamic has led to a significant and worsening national shortage of skilled trades workers. [Read Article](#)

### **Veterans Need Clear Career Pathways**

*Community College Daily News - Ellie Ashford*

Community colleges are playing a major role in helping military members transition to private-sector careers, but more is needed to better align the skills people learn in the military with employers' requirements.



That's the conclusion of experts who spoke Wednesday at the opening session of the American Association of Community Colleges' Workforce Development Institute.

Ensuring that military training counts toward a higher education credential is critical if Lumina Foundation will be able to meet its goal of having 60 percent of Americans attain a high-quality postsecondary credential by 2025, said Lauren Runco, Lumina's strategy officer for military-based learning.

That means moving away from the type of institution-focused learning of yesterday in which postsecondary learning can only happen at traditional higher education institutions, Runco said. [Read Article](#)

### **The Workforce Needs Massive Upskilling**

*Community College Daily News - Ellie Ashford*

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. - Never mind robots fully replacing humans in the workforce. At least not yet. The real story is the challenging demographics of the workforce, according to Bill Bonvillian, senior director of the MIT Office of Open Learning.



There will be shortages of workers in some areas, along with new opportunities that require "massive upskilling," Bonvillian said this week at the American Association of Community Colleges' Workforce Development Institute. He cited some of the findings from the MIT Work of the Future Report:

- The United States lost one-third of all manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2010, and only 18 percent of them came back by 2018.
- Most of the jobs that were lost dealt with routine assembly work; skilled jobs were retained.
- Between 1990 and 2013, the median income of men without a high school diploma fell 20 percent. In the same period, the median income of men with a diploma or some college fell 13 percent.
- Of the 11.6 million jobs created between 2000 and 2018, 11.5 million went to people with some college education.

The result of these trends is a shrinking middle class and growing inequality, Bonvillian said. [Read Article](#)

## **Training and Organizational Development News**

### **Do Good Engineers Make Good Managers?**

*Thomas Insights - Staff Writer*

The world today needs creative leadership and technological entrepreneurship. So why do so many companies still believe that effective, science-minded engineers invariably will fail as good managers?



"Most engineers become managers in their careers, and typically they are

unprepared for the transition," according to a paper that appeared in Engineering Management Journal in 2002.

Why, after all these years, is this view so widely held? Especially in large corporations?

Perhaps it flows from an assumption that engineers prefer working with things (materials) and the laws of physics rather than managing people with their complex mix of emotions, passions, habits and some logic. Those who hold this perspective may not realize that many engineers enter the profession to help people meet their basic needs for lodging, food preparation, mobility, communication, and health. Architectural engineers, food-processing engineers, transportation engineers, biomedical engineers, and many others simply wanted to solve human problems technologically. [Read Article](#)

### **Employees Aren't Happy With Their Training**

*Training Magazine - Anthony Onesto, Chief People Officer, Suzy*



Training is still heavy on classroom lectures and written tests. Is it any wonder that new hires and old hands alike come out of sessions glassy-eyed and bored beyond measure?

To many employees, their workplace training has as much appeal as watching beige paint dry on an interior wall. Too many employers still think handouts and PowerPoint presentations are enough to keep employees interested and up-to-date with industry changes. In fact, using Suzy, a consumer insights platform, we found that most employees are frustrated with their company's learning and development programs. We asked Suzy, "What three words come to mind when thinking about your company's training programs?"

The most popular words were "boring" and "long," showing that most employees are not satisfied with their company's learning and development programs.

Training is still heavy on classroom lectures and written tests. Is it any wonder that new hires and old hands alike come out of sessions glassy-eyed and bored beyond measure? Effective training has to include a number of teaching methods developed to appeal to a variety of learners and applied year-round. [Read Article](#)

## **Quality News**

### **Ten Elements of Effective Document Control**

*Quality Magazine - Glen Fraser*

The document control system is a hub for the information that drives your quality system.



In the manufacturing realm, employees are often remotely located on a factory floor, a logistics or warehousing center, or in the field.

Document control is the cornerstone of quality, compliance, environmental health and safety (EHS) and process excellence. Quality process information, work instructions, job descriptions, and specifications must all be created, revised, distributed, tracked and "retired" with consistency and efficiency. While other elements of the corporation are working on various stages of automation and digital transformation, the quality department and the documents that fuel the organization remain mired in manual (or email-aided) processes.

This situation can be remedied with automation, too, but first it's important to consider the backdrop of what makes effective document control and how it can drive operational excellence. Let's look at ten elements to keep top of mind when considering deploying an automated document control system. [Read Article](#)

### **A Quality Assurance Toolset for Modern Manufacturers**

*Quality Magazine - Ron Pulicari*

Before you can fully utilize machine vision, you need to understand the basics.



The official definition of "machine vision" encompasses all industrial and nonindustrial applications in which a combination of hardware and software provide operational guidance to devices in the execution of their functions based on the capture and processing of images. In short, machine vision helps companies manufacture quality goods, repeatably. And since companies that manufacture defective goods don't last long, the

manufacturing world has turned to machine vision for the quality (re)assurance it needs. But before a company can fully utilize machine vision, it needs to understand the basics.

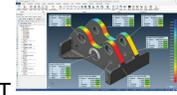
For example, modern machine vision systems rely on digital sensors inside industrial cameras with specialized optics to acquire images. After an image is acquired, computer hardware and software process, analyze, and measure various characteristics of the image for the purposes of automated decision-making. [Read Article](#)

### **GD&T, Manufacturing Imperative**

*Quality Magazine - Ernie Husted*

Without it, nothing ships, and nobody gets paid.

Today's manufacturing industry relies on the use of GD&T definitions, and the ability to verify parts directly to them for first article and production inspection and reporting. Only then do orders ship and the manufacturer gets paid. Price and scheduling are negotiable, quality is not!



Geometric dimensioning and tolerancing (GD&T) is a system of symbols, definitions, and rules used by engineers to communicate design intent through engineering drawings and computer-generated three-dimensional models. The system explicitly describes nominal geometry and its allowable deviation. GD&T is recognized as a universal design language and has been rigorously studied and used by manufacturers around the world. GD&T is not only an essential tool to communicate design intent, it also simplifies and reduces the amount of overall design requirements while maintaining adequate definitions to verify that finished parts have the desired form, fit, function and interchangeability. [Read Article](#)

### **The 7 Guiding Principles of ISO 9001 - and How to Uphold Them**

*Thomas Insights - Shelagh Dolan*

The International Organization for Standardization defines ISO 9001 as the international standard specifying requirements for an organization's quality management system, inclusive of all sizes and industries.



The current standard, ISO 9001:2015, provides a process-oriented approach to achieving adherence and certification. Its emphasis on continual improvement is guided by seven principles.

Here, we'll outline each one along with some actionable steps you can take to ensure you're on the right track. [Read Article](#)

## **Cyber Security and IT News**

### **Iran's Cyberattack on Billionaire Adelson Provides Lesson on Strategy**

*MSN - Bloomberg, Alyza Sebenius, Kartikay Mehrotra and William Turton*



As the U.S. awaits possible retribution over a recent airstrike that killed a top general, there's at least one American businessman who can attest, in detail, to what happened after he provoked Iran.

In October 2013, Sheldon Adelson, the casino magnate and prominent supporter of conservative politicians and Israel, appeared on a panel in New York in which he suggested that the U.S. could send a message to Iran, regarding its nuclear ambitions, by detonating an American warhead in the middle of the Iranian desert.

"You want to be wiped out? Go ahead and take a tough position," said Adelson, who later became a major supporter of President Donald Trump. His comments infuriated Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who two weeks later said America "should slap these prating people in the mouth."

Months later, in February 2014, hackers inserted malware into the computer networks of Adelson's Las Vegas casino. The withering cyberattack laid waste to about three quarters of the company's Las Vegas servers; the cost of recovering data and building new systems cost \$40 million or more.

A year after the attack, the top U.S. intelligence official confirmed that Iran was behind it. [Read Article](#)

### **Travelex Services Shut Down by Malware Attack**

*CFO.com - William Sprouse*

The international foreign currency exchange took systems offline "as a precautionary measure in order to protect



data."

Travelex said it had taken down its site to contain a malware attack that began New Year's Eve.

The international foreign currency exchange said it took systems offline "as a precautionary measure in order to protect data" and to stop the spread of the attack. There is no timeline for when the Travelex website will be restored.

The company said it discovered a software virus but that its network of branches was still providing foreign exchange services manually.

Travelex did not elaborate on the specifics of the malware attack, citing an ongoing forensic investigation. It said there was no indication that personal data or customer data had been compromised. [Read Article](#)

### **8 Ways to Shore Up Cybersecurity Agreements**

*CFO.com - Charles Russman*

Here's how companies can better negotiate the data privacy language in contracts with cybersecurity vendors, insurers, and entities that hold personal data.



Most businesses have realized the risks posed by and to their data. Some experience significant operational interruptions after data breaches. The litigation they face as a result directly impacts their bottom line.

Below are eight tips for protecting a company's finances through better negotiation of data privacy language in vendor contracts. Such agreements may be with cybersecurity services vendors, insurers, or any entity - for example, customer service management software vendors, outsourced IT providers, accounting and law firms, and management consultants - that holds personal data.

The language in these contracts is crucial for ensuring that a company maximizes its investment and protects or eliminates risks associated with data privacy, among other reasons. [Read Article](#)

### **Cybersecurity 2020: Welcome to the Digital Cold War**

*CFO.com - Steve Durbin, Information Security Forum*

The race to develop strategically important next-generation technology will drive an increase in nation-state-backed attacks.



In the year ahead, organizations must prepare for the unknown. They can do so by ensuring they have the flexibility to endure unexpected and high-impact cybersecurity events. Businesses will need to manage security risks in ways beyond those traditionally handled by the information security function, as well. Increasingly innovative attacks will most certainly impact both business reputation and shareholder value. And for some organizations, these attacks will come from well-funded and technologically advanced actors.

Based on comprehensive assessments of the threat landscape, we believe businesses must focus on the following security areas in 2020: the race for technology dominance among nation-states; third parties, the internet of things (IoT), and the cloud; and cybercrime, from both internal and external sources. [Read Article](#)

### **2020 Bug Hits Parking Meters, 2K Video Game**

*USA Today - Jazmin Goodwin*

Sure, it's 2020, but it seems the bug is back: Y2K. In fact, you might just be able to chalk up that inexplicable credit card rejection or parking meter fail to something that's so 2000.



Twenty years ago, you may recall, there was a race against the calendar to update computer systems to correct what was deemed the Y2K or millennium bug. During the advent of computers, they were coded to store dates counting the years by the last two digits instead of all four, so when the year 2000 arrived requiring a full four-number shift, many systems would have jumped back to the year 1900, which many feared would wreak havoc across industries that had become dependent on the burgeoning network of interconnected computers. [Read Article](#)

### **U.N. Urges Probe of Reported Hacking Of Jeff Bezos' Phone by Saudi Arabia**

*NPR All Things Considered - Avie Schneider, Shannon Bond*



The phone of Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO and owner of The Washington Post, reportedly was hacked via a WhatsApp account owned by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

In 2018, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent a WhatsApp message to the world's richest man. That message was behind a high-profile hack of Jeff Bezos' phone, according to a report commissioned by the Amazon CEO and reviewed by United Nations human rights experts.

"The information we have received suggests the possible involvement of the Crown Prince in surveillance of Mr. Bezos, in an effort to influence, if not silence, The Washington Post's reporting on Saudi Arabia," the experts said in a news release on the incident. Bezos is the owner of The Washington Post. [Read Article and Hear Podcast](#)

### **Windows 10 Security Flaw 'Makes Trust Vulnerable' Says NSA**

*Forbes - Davey Winder, Senior Contributor*

Earlier today, I reported that the security grapevine was buzzing with rumors that an "extraordinarily serious" security vulnerability in a core cryptographic component of Windows 10 was to be disclosed when the monthly Microsoft Windows Patch Tuesday updates were released. While there is still no news from Microsoft itself ahead of the Patch Tuesday disclosure, the National



Security Agency's (NSA) director of cybersecurity, Anne Neuberger, has now confirmed that the vulnerability exists.

Here's what she had to say, and what we now know. [Read Article](#)

## **Human Resource Management News**

### **U-Haul Will No Longer Hire Smokers in 21 States**

*USA Today - Jazmin Goodwin*

U-Haul is taking a stand on smokers and nicotine users. The moving and storage rental company announced that, effective Feb. 1 in 21 states, it will no longer hire nicotine users. Employees hired before that date will be unaffected by the new policy.



"We are deeply invested in the well-being of our Team Members," Jessica Lopez, U-Haul chief of staff, said in a news release. "Nicotine products are addictive and pose a variety of serious health risks. This policy is a responsible step in fostering a culture of wellness at U-Haul, with the goal of helping our Team Members on their health journey."

Age limit increase: FDA officially raises federal minimum age to purchase all tobacco products from 18 to 21

Cigarette smoking: At an all-time low in the USA, but can it stay that way after vaping scare? [Read Article](#)

### **U.S. Department of Labor Issues Final Rule To Update FLSA's Joint Employer Regulations**

*U.S. Department of Labor*

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the U.S. Department of Labor announced a final rule to update the regulations interpreting joint employer status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). They have not been meaningfully updated in over 60 years.



Under the FLSA, an employee may have, in addition to his or her employer, one or more joint employers-additional individuals or entities that are jointly and severally liable with the employer for the employee's wages. The FLSA requires covered employers to pay their employees at least the federal minimum wage for every hour worked and overtime for every hour worked over 40 in a workweek.

"This final rule furthers President Trump's successful, government-wide effort to address regulations that hinder the American economy and to promote economic growth," said Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia. "By giving greater clarity to businesses who want to work together, we promote an entrepreneurial culture that has driven American prosperity for decades."

"The changes in this final rule break down barriers that keep companies from constructively overseeing, guiding and helping their business

partners," said Wage and Hour Division Administrator Cheryl Stanton. "For small business owners, and the employees working in those businesses, the relationship and the guidance coming from franchisors and other contracting companies can greatly improve the workplace and help them create jobs."

In the final rule, the department provides a four-factor balancing test for determining FLSA joint employer status in situations where an employee performs work for one employer that simultaneously benefits another entity or individual. [Read Release](#)

## Environmental, Health & Safety News

### Instead of Resolving Conflict, Try Managing Agreement

*EHS Today - Rick Bohan*

It takes patience and very good listening and team skills. But the results are worth it.



We all know that individuals and groups within organizations often see things differently, have different perspectives or possess different information. Further, we know that these differences can be the source of tension, stress, and ineffective teamwork within the organization. So, it's in the organization's interest to stay abreast of and address these differences as much as possible. I've always wondered, though, why this process is called "conflict management." After all, isn't the thing we're trying to "manage" actually agreement? Shouldn't our approach be founded on a spirit of agreement management?

Lest you think I'm getting caught up in semantics, let me relate a story that I was a part of several years ago. A client's plant experienced an increase of employee lost time because of back and leg strains. The plant manager sought to address this issue by developing an edict: No employee to lift or even plan to lift anything that weighed 55 pounds or more. [Read Article](#)

### What Plastics Mean for Safety, the Environment and Sustainability

*EHS Today*

2020 will bring a whole new set of conversations to the forefront when it comes to the debate of plastics.



Despite its significant contributions to innovation, the plastics industry has garnered increasing criticism over the years for its environmental impact. So, why do we continue to use plastics in the first place?

The technical answer is that plastic has a high strength-to-weight ratio and can be easily shaped into a wide variety of forms that are impermeable to liquids and are highly resistant to physical and chemical degradation. These materials can be produced at a relatively low cost, making it easier for companies to sell, scale, save, etc. The primary challenge is that the proliferation of plastics in our everyday use in combination with poor end-of-life waste management has resulted in widespread and persistent plastic pollution. Plastic pollution is present in all the world's major ocean basins, including remote islands, the poles and the deep seas, and an additional 5 to 13 million metric tons are introduced every year.

However, consider for a moment that it is possible that the plastics industry is doing more good than harm, and that the environmental issues the industry faces have more to do with recycling than production. [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!**



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