

Making Work Fun: An Important Role for Managers **4**

We all know that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy — or do we? Somewhere along the way, the notion crept in that a place of business had to be all business, no levity allowed. Yet humor and playfulness need not conflict with high productivity, indeed, it may increase it. Encouraging some fun and humor in the workplace can also increase employee retention. The harder part is striking a balance, but successful managers should be aware that no employee wants to work everyday all year in a place that is never any fun.

John W. Newstrom

Technological Entrepreneurism Characteristics Related to the Adoption of Innovative Technology **9**

Entrepreneurs have been crucial to the development of the U.S. economy and to the introduction of technological innovations, so understanding their characteristics is crucial. Using a classification of entrepreneurs as either Opportunistic (middle to upper class, quite well educated, with some business skills) or Craftsman (blue collar, often technical education, lone operators), the authors sought to find out which was more apt to use technology in their business. Data based on a survey of small manufacturing firms in the St. Louis area found that the Opportunistic type was more than twice as likely to use innovative technology. Statistical relationships between other characteristics and innovative entrepreneurship were also analyzed.

James R. Maxwell and Donald L. Westerfield

Transforming Low-Tech Environments Into High-Tech Environments: Strategies and Developmental Barriers **14**

Although the U.S. economy is becoming increasingly high-tech, not all parts of the country have participated to the same degree in this trend. Specifically, the Midwest with its traditional low-tech base of manufacturing and heavy industry has not attracted as many "pure" technology companies as other parts of the country. Should a low-tech environment attempt to lure tech companies from other areas, or should they be developed indigenously? Can the corporate culture of a low-tech area provide employees that adapt to the more entrepreneurial and creative environment required by high-tech firms? These issues must be examined carefully when choosing a strategy to encourage high-tech businesses.

Shirley A. Hopkins, Willie E. Hopkins, and Billy Thornton

Union Rules in Nonunion Settings: The NLRB and Workplace Investigations **22**

The regulatory thicket regarding the workplace recently became thicker when the National Labor Relations Board ruled that nonunion workers could have a coworker present at an investigatory interview that may lead to disciplinary action. Previously, this so-called Weingarten right applied only to union workers, and the coworker was often a knowledgeable union steward who might have the skills needed to head off a formal grievance. Given the growing importance of workplace investigations, employers and employees need clear guidelines for navigating these potentially difficult situations. Unfortunately, the NLRB ruling creates many uncertainties for employers and employees.

James F. Morgan, James M. Owens, and Glenn M. Gomes

Internet Privacy: Individual Rights and the Common Good 34

Protecting the privacy of information about individuals is a perennial issue in our society but has assumed a greater urgency in the Internet Age. Electronic files can contain an unprecedented amount of information about a person's interests and activities — information often of great value to Internet and non-Internet businesses. Developing acceptable boundaries requires an understanding of the age-old tension between individual and community rights. Right now there is a heightened awareness of the privacy issue, and a balance needs to be struck between privacy and the common good.

Rogene A. Buchholz and Sandra B. Rosenthal

Internet Procurement by Corporate Purchasing Agents: Is It All Hype? 41

In the B2B (business-to-business) realm of the Internet, it stands to reason that purchasing agents would be prime users and benefactors. Apparently not so. Responses from 675 purchasing agents revealed that only a handful used the Internet for procurement, just over one-third of the purchasing departments had a Web page, and virtual trade shows and electronic agents were almost never used. The culprit seemed to be lack of Internet knowledge. Responses varied among sizes of firms, with smaller firms usually reporting the lowest Internet use.

Thomas N. Martin and John C. Hafer

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