

WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Louisiana Department of Civil Service

Volume Three, Issue 29: August 2008

In This Issue:

- *Workforce Trends for the Future – p. 1*
- *Social Workers Among Top Ten In-Demand Jobs Nationwide – p. 2*
- *Telecommuting – Not Just an Employee Perk Anymore – p. 2*
- *By The Numbers – Workforce Statistics – p. 3*

WORKFORCE TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE

At the 60th annual national conference of the Society for Human Resource Management this past June, the global consulting firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. predicted a number of changes in the workplace due to rapidly evolving technology, the aging population and rising health care and energy costs. Here are some of the major changes predicted.²

Four-day work weeks – According to a survey done by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, 23% of companies already offer a condensed work week, usually four ten-hour days as an alternative work schedule, and this trend is expected to continue. In most cases this is offered as a perk for

retention of select employees to address work/life balance or rising gasoline prices but is increasingly being used to allow companies to save energy costs by shutting down offices one day a week.

WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

“There are no easy answers' but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right.” – Ronald Reagan.

Mandated Wellness Programs – The increasing cost of employer paid health insurance is causing many organizations to mandate worker enrollment in wellness programs. These involve a range of activities including company sponsored fitness classes, in-office gyms and healthy food options in the office cafeteria. Some are even adopting innovative equipment such as Steelcase Walkstations which allow workers to walk on treadmills while at their computers.

In addition, many employers are cracking down on unhealthy practices. They are implementing programs to require workers who smoke, drink, are obese, or maintain high cholesterol to pay higher health insurance premiums.

Corporate Degree Programs – Would you hire someone with a degree in Web Design from Microsoft College? How about a degree in Virtual Community Relations from Google University? This is the predicted wave of the future. Increasingly, jobs require advanced technological expertise, creative problem solving and communications skills. But the required advanced education is becoming financially out of reach for many people. In addition to providing tuition assistance, many organizations will create their own programs of specific coursework tied to their particular organization's culture and goals.

No More Cubicles or Private Offices – In order to improve employee interaction and teamwork, employers will replace isolating cubicles with more open community spaces. Work spaces will be redesigned to eliminate individual desks and instead feature common areas, conference rooms and tables. Employees will work via wireless laptops moving from space to space as required by their work. Such office design will accommodate the increasing number of telecommuters who only come to the office occasionally and often work at home. Aside from being more flexible, such office spaces will require less space and be less expensive.

SOCIAL WORKERS AMONG TOP TEN IN-DEMAND JOBS NATIONWIDE

Social workers and counselors were ranked as the seventh most wanted professionals nationwide in a June report from Jobfox.¹ The rankings were based on a sample of hiring activity encompassing more than 4,000 job openings across the country.

The top ten in-demand professionals listed in order from most in-demand to least in-demand were:

1. Software design/development
2. Sales representative/business development
3. Accounting/Finance Executive
4. Accounting
5. Nursing
6. Networking/system administration
7. Social work/counseling
8. Business analysis – research
9. Business analysis – software implementation
10. Mechanical Engineering

In the Human Resources field, Recruiters and Staffing Specialists ranked as 24th and Human Resources Executives as 25th in terms of hiring activity.

TELECOMMUTING – NOT JUST AN EMPLOYEE PERK ANYMORE

Many employers have been offering telecommuting as an option to selected employees as a perk for good performance or as a retention tool for reasons of work/life balance or even to help employees out with rising gasoline prices. However, increasingly employers are looking to telecommuting as a blanket policy applying to all employees in order to save real estate and operating costs.

Real estate is a major fixed cost of employers who maintain an on-site workforce. When telecommuting is offered only to select employees as a perk or retention tool, office space still needs to be maintained for all those workers not telecommuting. But converting most of your workforce to telecommuters reduces the need to own or lease office space and reduces energy and operating costs. Sun

Microsystems, has more than 18,000 telecommuting employees and estimates it saved \$67.8 million in real estate costs in 2006 as a result.⁶

BY THE NUMBERS – WORKFORCE STATISTICS

Shortage of ten million skilled workers predicted – The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that as baby boomers continue to leave the workforce, the country will face a shortage of ten million skilled workers by 2010³

Less than 8% of professional working women leave the workforce for extended periods to raise a family – Despite the myth that large numbers of women continually leave the workforce to raise their children, less than 8% of professional women born since 1956 have left the workforce for a year or more during their prime childbearing years according to a study published in the June 2008 American Sociological Review.⁴ Furthermore, 38% of mothers born between 1966 and 1975 who have young children are working full-time. By comparison, for an earlier generation of mothers born between 1926 to 1935 only 6% of those with young children worked full-time.

40% of the workforce will be free-agents by 2012 – The days of employees working for one employer for life are over. Increasingly, companies are hiring temporary and contract employees, freelancers and consultants. This is the fastest growing segment of the workforce and will comprise 40% of the workforce by 2012.⁵

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Great things are not accomplished by those who yield to trends and fads and popular opinion.” – Jack Kerouac

¹Plumb, Tierney, “Social workers needed now more than ever,” *Washington Business Journal*, June 27, 2008

²“Workforce Trends of the Future,” *California Job Journal*, June 29, 2008

³Cotton, Jeff, “Preparing Generation Y for leadership, service,” *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*, June 9, 2008

⁴Marquez, Jessica, “Study Disputes Opt-Out Trend for Women,” *Workforce Management*, July 10, 2008

⁵“Workforce Trends of the Future,” *California Job Journal*, June 29, 2008

⁶Marquez, Jessica, “Employers Offering Telecommuting to Cut Real Estate Costs,” *Workforce Management*, July 3, 2008

CREDITS

Editor: Max Reichert, Workforce Planning Assistant
Division Administrator (email: max.reichert@la.gov)

Issued: Monthly

Purpose: The purpose of the *Workforce Horizons* is to educate readers about workforce planning issues and best practices, inform them about upcoming Civil Service workshops and training related to workforce planning and to provide practical job aids to assist agencies with workforce planning.

Comments and submissions: We welcome questions about workforce planning and suggestions for improvements to the newsletter as well as submissions of articles about what your agency is doing in workforce planning. Questions, comments, and requests to be added to the distribution list for the newsletter should be sent to the editor.

Current and Back Issues may be viewed by going to the workforce planning portal of the Civil Service web page at www.civilservice.louisiana.gov