Management Lifestyles

E-Learning

E-learning is essentially the computer and network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge. The term refers to out-of-classroom and in-classroom educational experiences via technology. It can be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media in the form of text, image, animation, streaming video and audio.

Streaming is media distributed over telecommunications networks versus inherently streaming (radio, television) or non-streaming (books, video, cassettes). Internet television is a commonly streamed medium.

The worldwide e-learning industry is estimated to be worth over $48 billion according to conservative estimates. The five key sectors of the e-learning industry are: consulting, content, technologies, services and support.

By 2006, 3.5 million students were participating in on-line learning at institutions of higher education in the United States. E-learning is also utilized by public K-12 schools in the United States taking place in a traditional classroom, at home, or other locations. Electronic performance support systems (EPSS) is a "computer-based system that improves worker productivity by providing on-the-job access to integrated information advice, and learning experiences."

E-learning services have evolved since computers were first used in education. There is a trend to move towards blended learning services, where computer-based activities **(continued on page 3)**

Ethical and Moral Dilemma

We live in a fast-paced, turbulent world, in which each person is constantly faced with hard decisions to be made, both as an individual and as a member of a group. As pressures to succeed rise, more people are willing to risk doing things that are not entirely honest. And it is not uncommon for these actions to be rewarded, or at least ignored.

Based on the classic study in competition versus cooperation known as the "prisoner's dilemma," a simulation game, <u>what would you do?</u> Provides a hands-on experience for examining the consequences of individual choices in terms of collaboration and ethics. Try it! [Source: Lorraine I. Ukens, Pfeiffer]

Business Tips:

- Insights into your way of leading others.
- Social networking is building relationships.
- Test the implications of your ethical behavior.
- Survey or investigation—which meets your legal needs?
- Hundreds of employees? Try E-learning!

Social Networking

There is a growing chorus of voices asking or commenting on whether social media is a phenomenon overhyped or a marketing tool — Facebook is reported to have 500 million active users and Twitter has 190 million monthly visitors.

One has to remember that social networking is just building social relationships. With this in mind, make sure when blogging that you are doing so on behalf of yourself and not your company, firm, employer, or civic duty. Also if you are sprouting words of wisdom, that you are doing so as or quoting an expert on the topic.

Beware that: a judge must maintain dignity in every comment, avoid bias, and not gather evidence for cases [12/8/10]; jurors' Internet research, blog comments and tweets have led to dozens of mistrials, appeals and overturned verdicts [12/8/10]; negative comments about a co-worker's personal lifestyle or employment have resulted in disciplinary action and in two cases the suicide of the victims [9/30/10 - abajournal]

Scholars in many fields are investigating how these sites may play into issues of identity, social capital, youth culture, and education.

Public Relations/Publicity

Public relations primarily concerns enhancing and maintaining the image for businesses, non-profit organizations, events or high-profile people, such as celebrities and politicians. It provides an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items.

Although public relations and publicity are not synonymous, many public relations campaigns include provisions for publicity. Publicity is the spreading of information to gain public awareness.

To get a message to target audiences, public relations professionals use such methods as surveys, research, and focus groups. Their tactics are to use information gathered to direct the message through publicity events with such tools as technology and direct communications.

Public relations tools include web sites, webinars, blogs, e-letters, and social media.

An organization that has a stake in how it is portrayed in the public arena employs some level of public relations.

Preliminary Investigations

A preliminary investigation or survey is an inquiry conducted to gather more information about an allegation. It's purpose is to determine whether or not a violation was committed, to identify a suspect or confirm a suspects identity, and/or if there is an opportunity to resolve the complaint informally. It is conducted by asking questions and/or study of available evidence.

An investigation is a formal and official systematic, minute, and thorough attempt to learn the facts about something complex or hidden.

While the Court noted that an investigation "is not necessary in every instance as a matter of law, failure to do so will make it difficult for an employer to prove that it exercised reasonable care to prevent and correct harassment and/or discrimination."

If a preliminary or initial investigation produces evidence that a complaint is valid, there must be an effort to resolve the issue and ensure immediate remedial action.

Employment Law

Defendants Wearing Glasses

The New York Daily News cites a 2008 study that found jurors are less likely to convict defendants wearing glasses, and lawyers are asking their clients to wear glasses during jury trials. [by Debra Cassens Weiss, abajournal.com 2/14/11]

Religious Discrimination

A federal court agreed with EEOC that Abercrombie & Fitch committed religious discrimination against a 17-year old Muslim girl when they failed to hire her for a sales position because she wore a hijab, or head scarf, in observance of her religious beliefs. [EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch 7/15/11]

Handbooks and Arbitration

A provision in an employee handbook requiring employees o arbitrate all disputes was unenforceable because it did not contain the essential elements of a binding contract and the employee signature page of the handbook stated, "This handbook is not a contract… all employment is at will…" [*Whitworth v. McBoarde & Son Homes, Inc.* (Montana Sp. Ct., 2011)]

Random Alcohol Testing

EEOC filed an ADA suit against U.S. Steel Corporation for its nation-wide policy of random alcohol tests for probationary employees. [10/5/10]

Professional Development

Many training programs are learning instruments on how to perform in certain areas.

Improving Management Techniques, a mini-series training program, is no exception for it provides self-assessments on how one currently performs in six management areas, compares their style with basic management techniques, and shares enhancement and alternative techniques.

The mini-series includes: Leadership, Problem Solving, Performance Appraisals, Interviewing, Negotiating, Coaching, and Workplace Civility.

The sessions are based on resources to include self-assessments and general or common techniques determined from national research and studies.

> **Professional development is lifelong learning, increasing knowledge, and enhancing skills.**

E-Learning (continued from page 1)

are integrated with practical or classroom-based situations.

Also, one of the most promising innovations to improve teaching and learning with the help of modern information and communication technology is computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL). The concept of collaborative or group learning is instructional methods designed to encourage or require students to work together on learning tasks.

E-learning is naturally suited to distance learning and flexible learning, but can also be used in conjunction with face-to-face teaching in which case the term Blended Learning is commonly used.

E-learning software includes: domin**Know**, ANGEL **LEARNING**, and Adobe Connect 8. E-learning service companies are also available.

T&J is a limited liability company, T&J Associates of New Jersey LLC, providing employment consulting and training services in the areas of business and campus human behavior since 1986.

Our first concern is making a meaningful contribution to companies and institutions by bringing new ideas and options to help promote positive inter-relationships. Our focus is working with the client to find the best and most cost-effective solutions that contribute to improved performance in critical human resource areas.

Some workplace or campus issues are isolated or periodic and do not require the daily services of on-site staff. That's where T&J is an asset. This newsletter is a promotional piece to inform the reader of issues you may need to address. Your human resource issues and dilemmas can become our challenges. Throw down the gauntlet and lets begin!

Helping new managers get started and experienced managers get better!

Effective Leadership Styles

Aristotle believed, *We are what we repeatedly do.* While each individual is unique, certain commonalities can be used to describe and assess everyone's personality style. Many researchers describe style in terms of two dimensions, although they vary from one research to another, this paper uses HRDQ's style assessments:
Assertiveness—the degree to which a person tries to influence other people's thoughts and actions, and
Expressiveness—the degree to which a person displays his or her emotions when interacting with others.

For example, predict the way a coworker would behave if he or she were put in charge of a project. Per-haps the coworker would leap into action to set an example for others. Or would the coworker first outline a procedure for others to follow. Your predictions are likely accurate because you have become familiar with certain patterns in the other person's behavior. These patterns represent the other person's behavioral style.

We all have our own way of leading. *What's My Leadership Style?* will provide you with some insight into your way of leading others — the first step in learning to lead effectively.

Take the self-assessment! Once you are aware of leadership styles, strengths and weaknesses, the next step to becoming an effective leader is understanding of behavior types and adapting your leadership style to the requirements of the situation.

Effective Leadership Styles for a Diverse Environment

Joyce A. Pratt
T&J Associates of New Jersey LLC
January 2008