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Bringing Work to Life

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Bringing Work to Life. In recent issues (www.elsdon.com/newsletters.htm) we explored the topics of:

- Ethics and leadership (Year End 2004)
- Linking workforce development to value creation (November December 2004)
- How to decide if an organization will be a good fit for you (October November 2004)
- Confronting one of our fears as leaders - the fear of public speaking (September October 2004)
- Bringing meaning to our work lives (August September 2004)
- Seven key aspects of the organizational and business drivers for workforce development (July 2004)

This month we continue our exploration of personal leadership with “Searching for Success.”

Searching for Success

“When 1000 working adults were asked whether they would rather earn high salaries or earn "enough" doing work that makes the world a better place, 86% chose the latter” (Izzo and Withers, Values Shift, 2000, p.79). Was there something wrong with the sample? After all isn't there a simple yardstick for success – money. Let's explore the myth of money first for each of us as individuals and then for our organizations.

There's an apocryphal comment from John D. Rockefeller, who at the time was the richest man in the world, when asked “How much more money do you need?” replied “Just a little more.” Aptly demonstrating the observation that there is enough for our need but not our greed. Rockefeller went on to observe that money

supporting organizations enhance effectiveness through revitalized workforce relationships and leadership practices. Prior to establishing his practice, Ron held senior leadership positions at diverse organizations.

Ron is also author of *Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization* (2003), a book describing leadership approaches to integrate the needs of the individual with the needs of the organization for the benefit of both. Ron holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in Chemical Engineering, an M.A. from John F. Kennedy University in Career Development and a first class honors degree from Leeds University in Chemical Engineering. With his co-author he was awarded the Walker Prize by the Human Resource Planning Society for the paper that best advances state-of-the-art thinking or practices in human resources.

had brought him no happiness. After he died his accountant was asked how much he left, to which the accountant replied “All of it.”

So the people that Izzo and Withers surveyed are reflecting a belief that money is neither an end nor a measure of success. What does this mean in terms of our lives and our work?

Pamela was a vice president in a technology-based organization. She was outwardly successful and well compensated for her business unit responsibility. But there was something missing. She questioned the connection of her contributions at work to her aspirations. She wondered about her ability to communicate effectively with her peers. She wondered about her future with the organization and how to both experience greater meaning and contribute more effectively at a senior level. Success in her case was exploring and finding deeper meaning in her work life bringing her closer to her full potential. Through a re-evaluation of her role and priorities she was able to find greater alignment with her needs and bring more to her organization.

Viewed from another perspective, that of our relationship with our work, Betsy Brewer framed the question of why we work in the context of the interior processes of discovering meaning (what), being (who) and doing (how), and identified four work relationships to the external world:

- A job: based on material rewards, a transaction
- An occupation: involving greater meaning, but doing dominates
- A career: requiring personal initiative, but needing collective approval
- A vocation: calling in the service of a greater good

I frequently ask clients in career counseling where they wish to be in this continuum and invariably it is the search for a vocation or call in the service of a greater good. This is the search that confronted Pamela. Success, then, is complex and highly individual. Increasingly throughout our lives it involves movement from taking and receiving external approval, to giving and expressing internal preferences. This is the generativity of Erikson, and it represents a wealth of human potential. Indeed in our recent surveys people estimated that on average they are operating only at about 60% of their full potential. We have so much more to give.

How about the organizational perspective. What is success for an organization? On one level an answer to this question is that success is a tangible increase in organizational value, which is reflected in shareholder value. However, shareholder value does not address the purpose of nonprofit organizations and there are other aspects in a for-profit organization that need to be included. Considering the organization as part of a broad social network, impacting the lives of employees, the communities in which it operates, and the destinies of partner, customer and supplier organizations, it is reasonable to conclude that factors other than short-term shareholder value are also critically important. One pre-eminent factor is the social contribution of the organization. This means the extent to which the organization enhances the quality of life for those in its constituent communities. Indeed this

social impact is the essence of the long-term contribution of the organization. Value creation in financial terms, particularly related to shareholder value, is simply a subset of this larger contribution. The organization makes this larger contribution by being a key link in the chain between individuals and the broader constituent communities in which it operates. It is not surprising that, just as we conclude for individuals success is not just about money, we must also conclude that for organizations. So as we move forward in this turbulent world, success in organizations becomes a complex tapestry with the expression of human potential at its center. In weaving this tapestry let me suggest that we ask ourselves these questions:

- What is the nature of the relationship that should be built with people in organizations? Is it based on growing capabilities and accomplishments over time, or is it based only on short-term transactions?
- How can environments be crafted that enable each person to reach his or her full potential?
- How is the creation of value in our organizations maximized while respecting the needs of each person?
- What is the appropriate role of the organization in supporting community well-being?
- How is success defined both individually and for the organization?
- How can we ensure that our own life is an expression of who we are?

In asking and answering these questions we can fashion our own lives and our organizations so that we invigorate our communities, our organizations and ourselves.

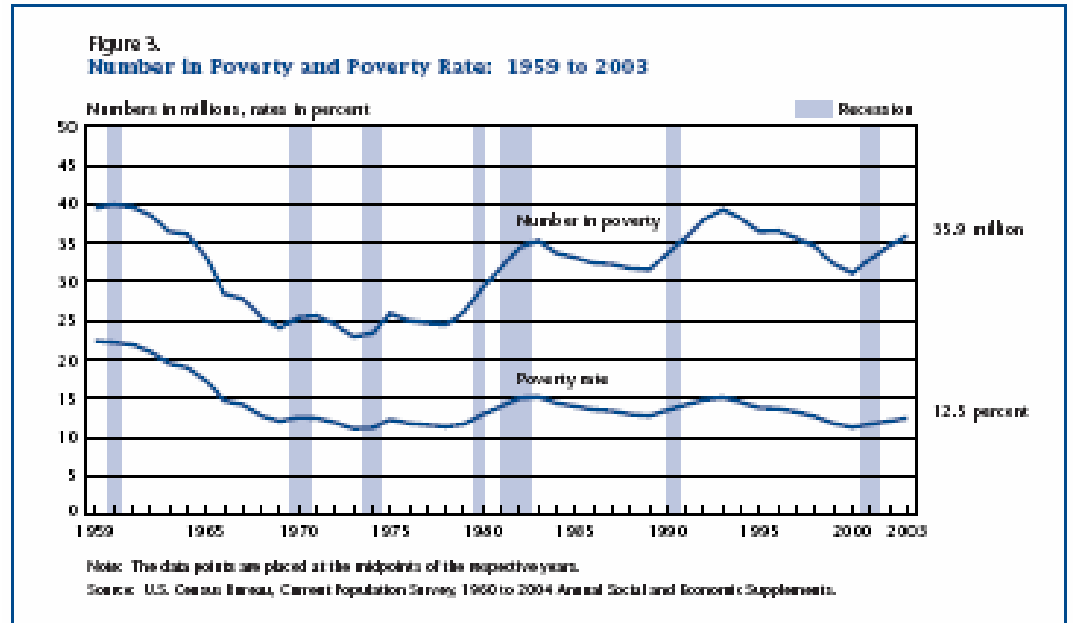
(Some elements of this article were extracted from *Affiliation in the Workplace* by Ron Elsdon, (Praeger, 2003)).

Our Evolving Society

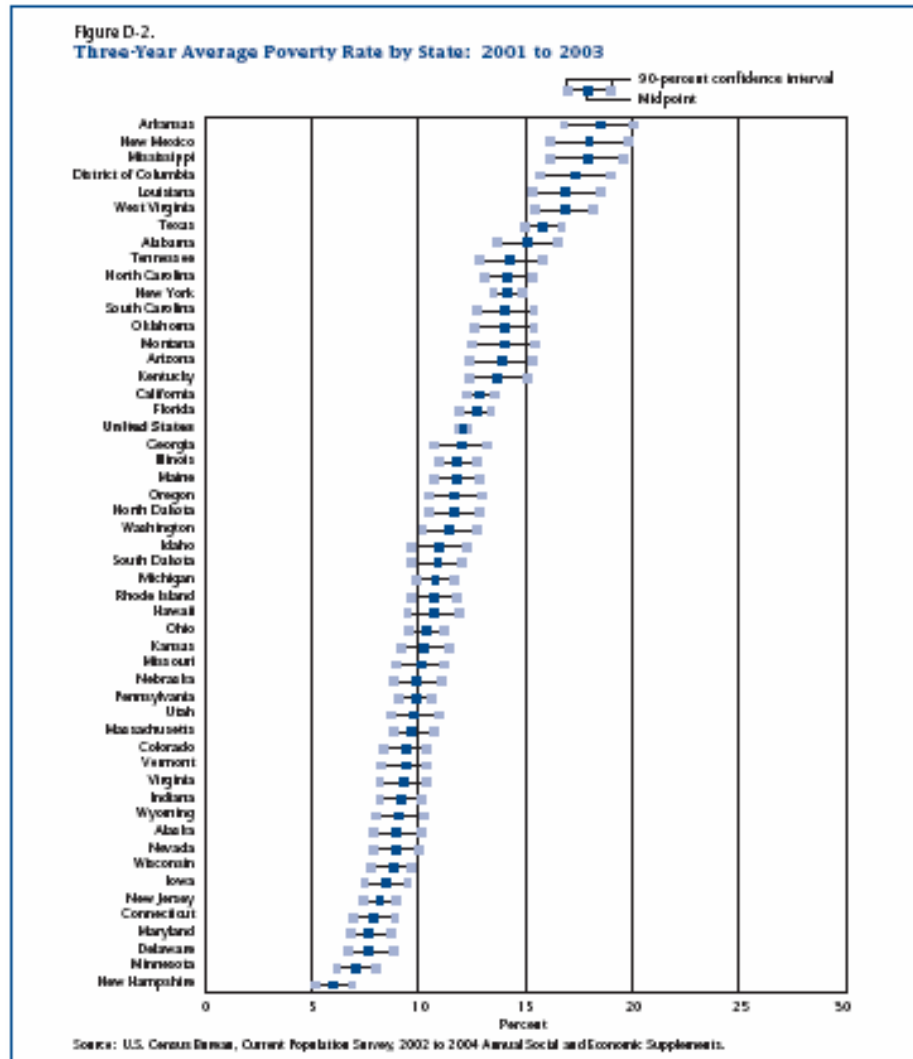
For many of those who are disadvantaged in our U.S. society, financial concerns speak not to self-actualization but to survival. In the September October newsletter we saw that income and wealth inequity has grown in the U.S. since the early 80s. In the November December newsletter we saw how this is creating a U.S. income distribution that is moving closer to that of some third world countries. Let's look at some other key points from trends reported by the Census Bureau in an August 2004 study (*Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, Current Population Reports P60-226*).

The following figure shows the number of people in poverty, and the poverty rate from 1959 to 2003 in the U.S.. Poverty is defined as having an annual income below a defined and very low level, for example below an annual income of \$9,573 for a single person under 65 years of age. Both the number of people in poverty and

the percentage decreased substantially in the 1960s, then held steady in the 1970s. It then increased in the 1980s, and fell in the 1990s. Particularly disturbing is the recent increase since 2000 in both the absolute number (35.9 million people in 2003) of people and the percentage of people (12.5% in 2003) in poverty. For children under 18 years of age that percentage increased to 17.6% in 2003.

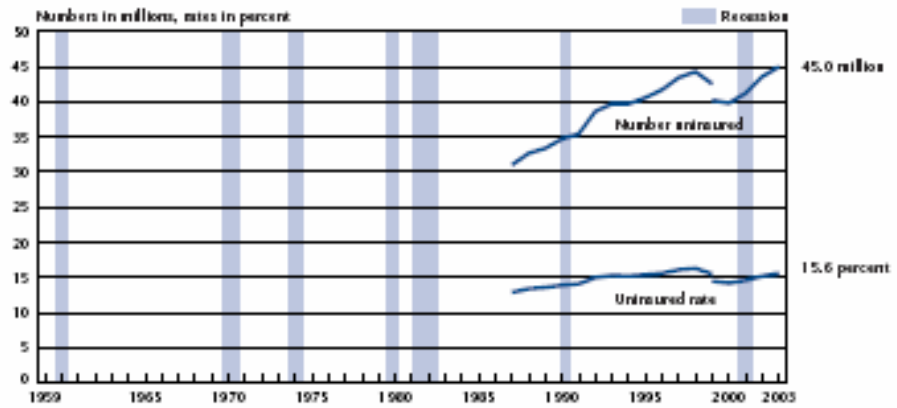


Poverty rates vary greatly by state as shown in the following figure with Arkansas and New Mexico at the high end and New Hampshire and Minnesota at the low end.



Similarly disturbing is the increase since 2000 in the number of people without healthcare insurance (either private or government) in the U.S. as shown in the following figure. Today there are 45 million people without any healthcare coverage in the wealthiest nation in the world, 15.6% of our population.

Figure 6.
Number Uninsured and Uninsured Rate: 1987 to 2003

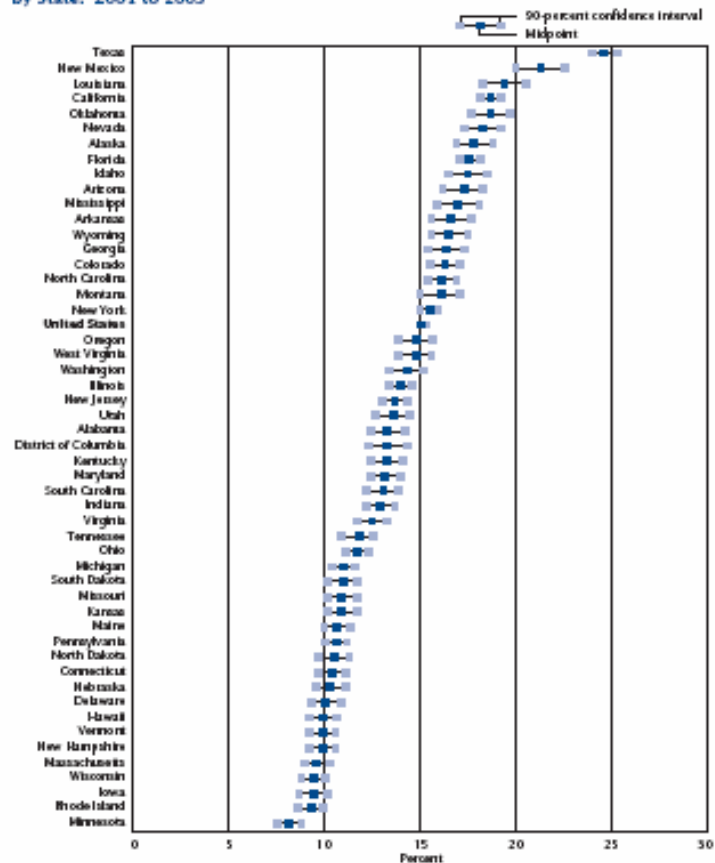


Notes: Respondents were not asked detailed health insurance questions before the 1988 Current Population Survey. Implementation of Census 2000-based population controls occurred for the 2000 ASEC, which collected data for 1998. These estimates also reflect the results of follow-up verification questions which were asked of people who responded "no" to all questions about specific types of health insurance coverage in order to verify whether they were actually uninsured. This change increased the number and percentage of people covered by health insurance, bringing the CPS more in line with estimates from other national surveys. The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1988 to 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

This also varies greatly by State as shown in the following figure. Texas is a particular concern with almost 25% of its population not covered by healthcare insurance. This is much greater than any other state and about three times the rate in Minnesota, which has the lowest percentage of uninsured people.

Figure D-3.
Three-Year Average Percentage of People Without Health Insurance Coverage by State: 2001 to 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2002 to 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

Quote

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being."

Johann W. von Goethe (Peter's Quotations, 1979, p. 409)

Upcoming Elsdon Organizational Renewal (EOR) Events

- Presentations for UC Berkeley Haas School of Business on interviewing, resumes and cover letters, and salary negotiations
 - Saturday, January 8, 2005
- "Career Fitness in Turbulent Times: Maintaining Job Search Readiness." Presentation for UCLA Anderson School of Management Alumni
 - <http://hrms.net/conferences/01152005/>
 - Saturday, January 15, 2005 UCLA Anderson School of Management
- "Affiliation in the Workplace." Presentation for ASTD Mount Diablo Chapter
 - [Mount Diablo Chapter of ASTD - Evening Program](http://www.mtdiabloastd.org/meetings/calendar/2005/01/18/1730)
(<http://www.mtdiabloastd.org/meetings/calendar/2005/01/18/1730>)
 - Tuesday, January 18, 2005, Crow Canyon Country Club, Danville/San Ramon
- Presentation for HR Connection, Silicon Valley
 - Friday, February 11, 2005
- "Create a Business Case for Workforce Development." NCHRA workshop, San Francisco
 - Thursday, May 26, 2005
- "Becoming Career Fit in Turbulent Times" for PMI-ISSIG PDS'05 Symposium, San Francisco
 - Tuesday, June 14, 2005
- "Building the Organizational Bridge for Career Development" Professional Development Institute for NCDA Global Conference, Orlando
 - Wednesday, June 22, 2005

About EOR: Our Value Contribution

We enhance your workforce, leadership and organization by:

- Using proprietary approaches to understand workforce and leadership challenges

- Creating tailored action plans and solutions to strengthen workforce and leadership practices
- Building individual capabilities and contributions

We enable you to focus on external results and building value, confident that your organization and leadership are operating at peak effectiveness.

Our Mission

To support your organization by enhancing performance, productivity and effectiveness through revitalized workforce relationships and leadership practices.

Our Approach and Values

We tailor our engagements to the needs of each organization with a process designed to surface critical issues, identify root causes, build effective solutions, monitor progress and implement.

With a scope that ranges from system and organizational interventions to work with individuals, our focus is on the heart of the relationship among the individual, the organization and the community. We believe that organizational and community prosperity are built on enabling each person to fulfill his or her potential.

Our Services

We work with individuals and groups in your organization to drive performance and development for both the short and long term. As a result people will choose to work in your organization and will prosper there.

We bring solutions when you need to:

- Reverse declining revenues and performance
- Revitalize your workforce
- Stem the loss of key talent
- Redirect your organization to new areas
- Stop losing customers or market share
- Penetrate new markets
- Combat aggressive competitors
- Handle major change
- Break down communication barriers
- Energize your leadership team
- Successfully build on an acquisition or merger

Our proprietary services include:

- State-of-the-art tools to take the pulse of your organization and then move to action
 - Web enabled systems
 - Experts to gather and analyze information, moving your organization to action
- Individual leadership coaching to give you world class leadership capabilities
 - Leaders who know themselves and their aspirations, build their capabilities and become catalysts developing others
- Workshops to build interpersonal skills in your organization so that:
 - Communication is timely, concise, accurate and personal
 - People listen to each other
 - Negotiations are quick and effective
 - Differences create rather than destroy value
 - Teams move forward, get results and quickly commercialize new products and services
 - People understand and link their motivations to your organizational needs
 - Your teams understand what it takes to create a committed, energized workforce
 - People use their time well
- Systems that make it easy to drive performance and build capabilities by:
 - Linking objectives throughout the organization
 - Strengthening key competencies
 - Making sure you have the bench strength where and when you need it
 - Giving people tools to take charge of their own careers, development and have a major long term influence on your organization
- Proprietary simulation and modeling techniques that let you explore how to maximize the value of your workforce
 - Move from guessing what might happen to looking in depth at the financial impact of different approaches