



Third Quarter 2008

Bringing Work to Life

Volume 5, Number 3



In This Issue

- Career Interdependence
- Income Inequality
- Quote
- EOR Recent Mentions
- About EOR

Contact Us

Elsdon Organizational
Renewal (EOR)

www.elsdon.com

renewal@elsdon.com

Tel. 925 838 2362

Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Bringing Work to Life.

We explored the following topics in the past twelve issues (all newsletters are available at www.elsdon.com/newsletters.htm):

- Demystifying workforce metrics (Second Quarter 2008)
- Transforming a Human Resources (HR) career (First Quarter 2008)
- Stewardship and governance (November/December 2007)
- Finding the peaks (September/October 2007)
- Career plateaus – what to do about them (July/August 2007)
- Workforce planning (May/June 2007)
- Assessing your organization (March/April 2007)
- Individual change (January/February 2007)
- Guiding organizational change (November/December 2006)
- One to one (September/October 2006)
- New horizons (July/August 2006)
- Our greatest asset (May/June 2006)

In this issue we address “Career Interdependence.”

Career Interdependence

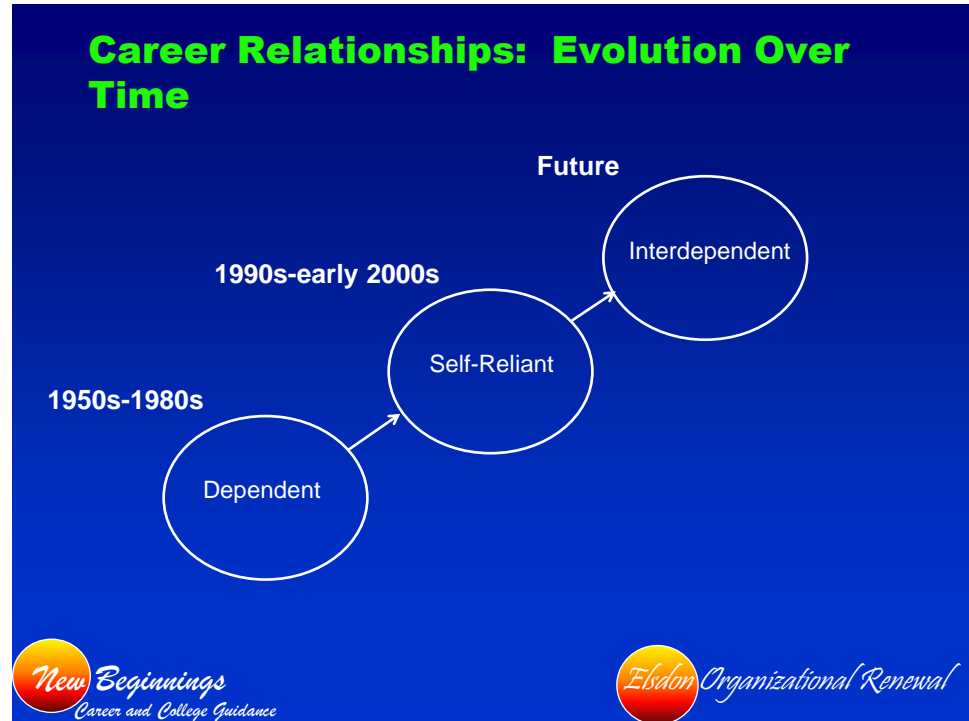
Enthusiasm and energy cascaded over the phone as we talked. “It is so good to see these opportunities come to life.” This is a paraphrase of words from a recent client



Ron Elsdon, Ph.D., is founder of *Elsdon Organizational Renewal* (a division of Elsdon, Inc.), which focuses on 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 co-founder of New Beginnings Career and College Guidance, which provides caring and personalized help to individuals and families in career guidance, coaching and college planning.

Ron is author of *Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization*, 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.

calling to describe his journey from the corporate world through the world of consulting, to a new opportunity building a business in a field he cares deeply about. Each step along this path required courage, personal initiative, and each step required support from others. These steps epitomize the career world of today and the future. How different it is from career worlds of the past. The following figure provides one perspective on this evolution:



From the 1950s through the 1980s large organizations were prominent in the career landscape, whether in public or private sectors. People in many such organizations enjoyed a measure of employment stability in exchange for their continued presence and fealty. This relationship fractured in the 1990s as the concept of career tenure disintegrated in the private sector. Survival skills became those of career self-reliance – survival of the fittest. Indeed in the mayhem of the technology meltdown in the early 2000s, such an approach is an understandable response to an unknown and radically reshaping career landscape.

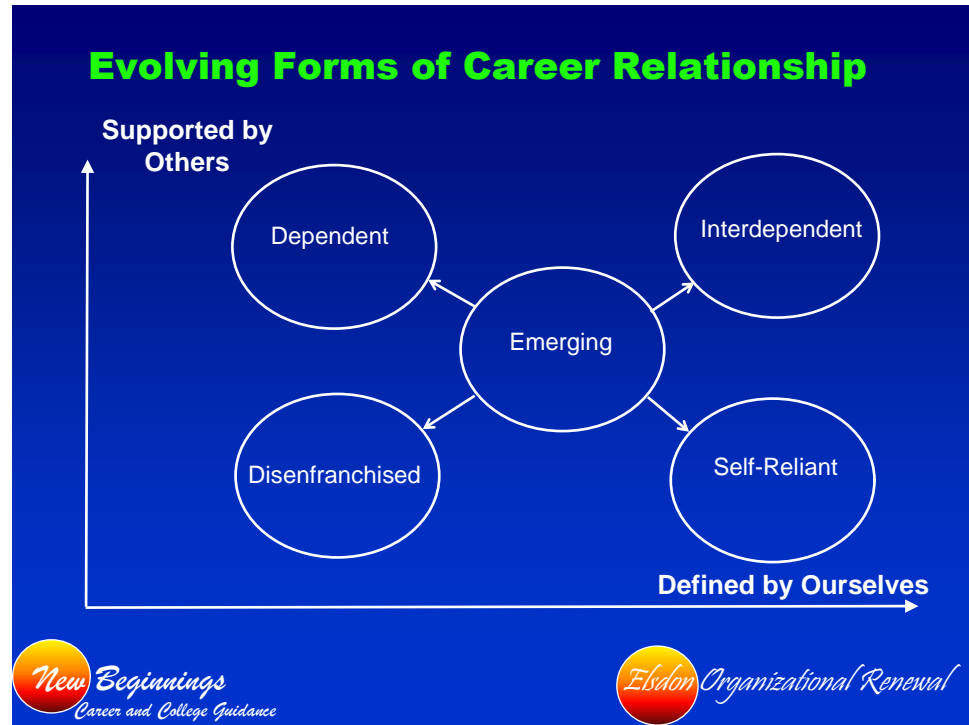
However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that an approach based on satisfying only parochial needs, whether on an individual or organizational level won't serve us well for the future. The parochial perspective leads either to tenuous or intractable relationships that suppress full expression of talents in individuals, and that limit organizational value creation. For example, on an organizational level self-reliance leads to the concept of retention, a one way relationship that stifles innovation and self-expression. On an individual level, self-reliance can limit opportunities to give to, and draw from, others for mutual benefit.

Which brings us to career interdependence. Career interdependence recognizes the strengths and benefits that come from integrating personal aspirations with communal resources. It is based upon a concept of abundance, where collaboration benefits all, rather than a zero-sum concept, where one person can only gain at the expense of others. On an organizational level it translates into the concept of

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.

affiliation, that of mutual partnership between individuals and organizations (described in depth in the book *Affiliation in the Workplace*).

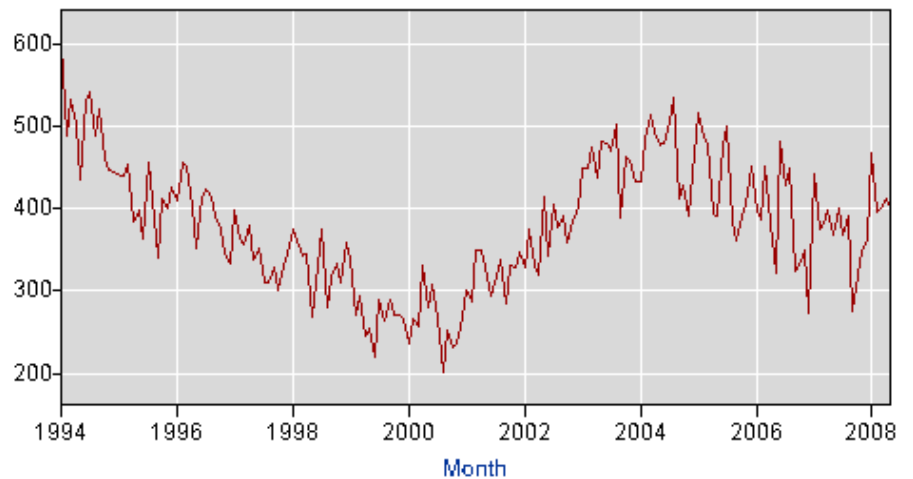
Let’s examine where Interdependence fits into evolving forms of career relationship on an individual level. To do this we can map forms of career relationship as shown in the following figure, based on the extent to which we define them ourselves and the extent to which they are supported by others:



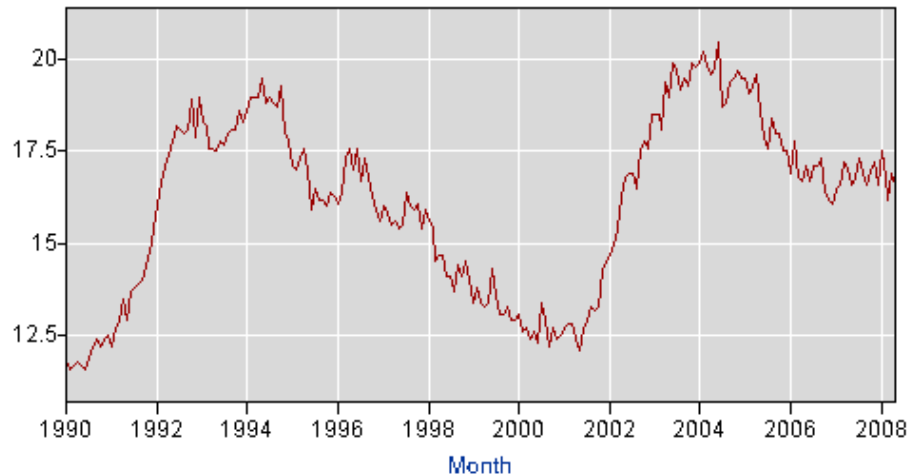
Entry to the work world is shown by the “Emerging” oval in the center of the figure. This may come many times during our lives as we explore different phases. From this entry we can potentially move in four primary directions:

- Disenfranchised
- Dependent
- Self-Reliant
- Interdependent

Let’s look at each direction. The following figure shows the number of discouraged workers (in thousands), those who feel that no job is available in the U.S. This discouraged group is currently about 400,000 people, having risen dramatically since 2000; during years of economic prosperity for only the wealthiest 1% or less of our population.



The Disenfranchised population is also reflected in average weeks unemployed, which have risen dramatically since 2000 as shown in the following figure:



Those who are Disenfranchised, neither own their own career direction, nor feel supported by others. Some rural and urban communities have poverty rates exceeding 25%, college participation rates below 5%, and lack of access to effective medical care. Not surprisingly, in the absence of developed skills and effective community support, and while living in the reality of poverty and ill-health, this Disenfranchised domain can become a black hole in the career relationship realm with a clear entry point but few exit opportunities.

Conversely when we have much support from others but limited opportunity to define our own career relationship, we enter the Dependent relationship, shown in the upper left of the figure. This describes the organizational world of the 1950s through the 1980s. And there are vestiges of this relationship in the public sector in the U.S. today, where the overall separations rate is only 39% of that in the private sector.

The lower right of the figure captures the self-reliant relationship driven by self definition and independence. These quotes that followed a dot com failure in the

early 2000s capture some of this:

- “if I say that I really love your company and your corporate culture, and that I’ll do whatever it takes, including giving up my life, and the pursuit of my own goals for your bottom line: I’m lying.”
- “You may now only borrow 40 hours of my life a week – that’s all I’m gonna give.”

Such observations speak to lack of engagement, lack of fulfillment and constrained organizational value creation.

What other option is available? This brings us to career Interdependence in the top right of the figure. Interdependence speaks to:

- Individual success and aspirations being interwoven with the success and aspirations of others, so that individual and communal benefits ensue.
- Progress and development for one person contributing to the progress and development of many. An early example of this is given in a 1992 paper by Barnett and Miner (*Administration Science Quarterly*, June 1992, 37, 2 p. 262) which examines the influence of hiring temporary employees on the progress of permanent staff.
- Mutuality in connecting with others, both giving to, and receiving from others according to the situation. This may mean, for example, giving and receiving mentoring, knowledge, resources and contacts.
- The contribution of partnerships as a means to create value so that specialized expertise and capability is developed individually and pooled collectively for the benefit of all.
- The opportunity to connect different components of a work portfolio, such that each reinforces and strengthens the other. For example in delivering consulting and providing teaching.

Here are some initial questions to consider on a path to career interdependence:

- How is my work situation enabling expression of my gifts both through giving and receiving? What, if anything, needs to change?
- What steps do I need to take to more fully understand my gifts, and options for giving to, and receiving from, others through work?
- What connections with others do I need to build and nurture?
- What skills do I need to develop to foster interdependence?

What does it take to navigate in an interdependent world? Here are some suggestions:

- Build clarity about your personal attributes and aspirations, using assessments as needed (see the October 2005 issue of *Bringing Work to Life*).
- Listen to others to understand their needs, and the potential for joint contributions.
- Stay open to engaging with others.

- Maintain flexibility in exploring multiple approaches to work, be prepared to change course as needed (see the July/August 2006 issue of *Bringing Work to Life*).

In considering both a personal path forward and guiding and supporting others, interdependence as a foundation principle can lead to enhanced individual fulfillment and organizational and community prosperity. Interdependence offers another lens through which to view our personal work life journey. A lens that can strengthen our contributions, relationships, organizations and communities.

Income Inequality

Evidence continues to emerge that corporate and social policies in the US are leading to dramatic and disturbing increases in income inequality. The following three figures are from a March 15, 2008 paper by Emmanuel Saez, "Striking It Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States." The first figure shows the share of income going to the top 10% of our population now accounts for almost 50% of our entire national income. This is a level of inequality that even exceeds that which immediately preceded the great depression in the late 1920s.

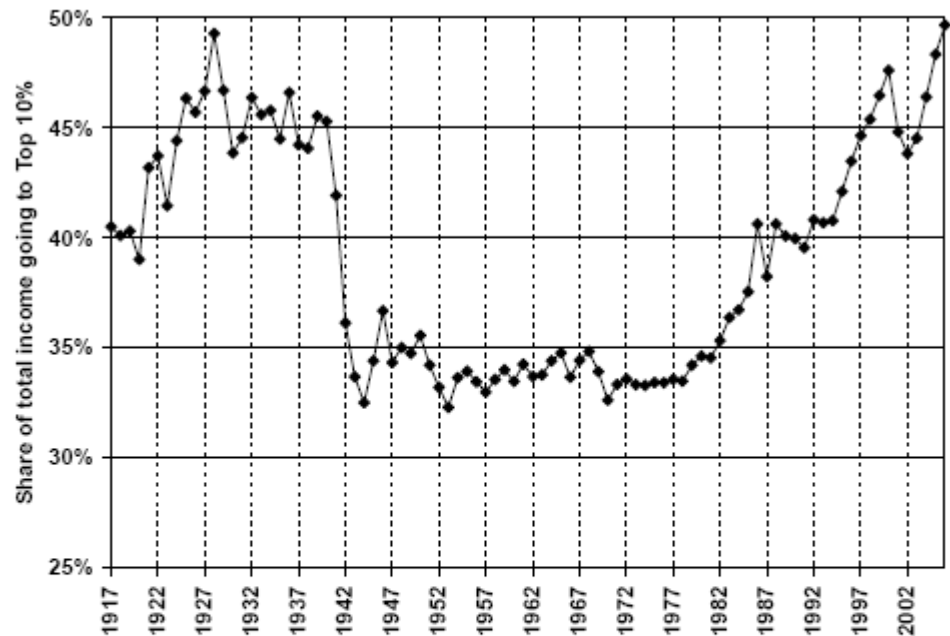


FIGURE 1

The Top Decile Income Share in the United States, 1917-2006

Source: Piketty and Saez (2003), series updated to 2006.

Income is defined as market income including capital gains.

In 2006, top decile includes all families with more than \$104,700 of annual income.

On further examination it turns out that this inequality is ever more pronounced residing primarily in the top 1% of the population, which now accounts for almost 25% of our entire national income as shown in the following figure:

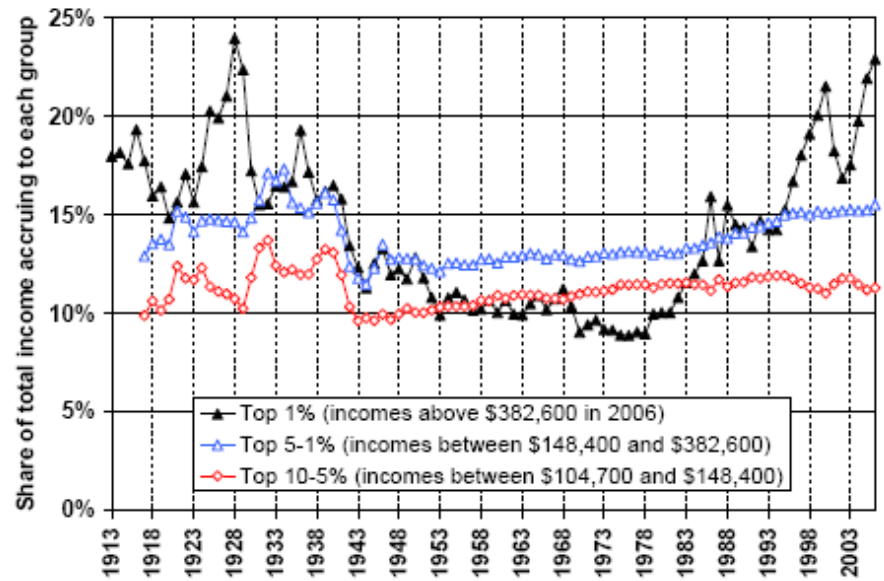


FIGURE 2
Decomposing the Top Decile US Income Share into 3 Groups, 1913-2006

Source: Piketty and Saez (2003), series updated to 2006.
 Income is defined as market income including capital gains.
 Top 1% denotes the top percentile (families with annual income above \$382,600 in 2006)
 Top 5-1% denotes the next 4% (families with annual income between \$148,400 and \$382,600 in 2006)
 Top 10-5% denotes the next 5% (bottom half of the top decile, families with annual income between \$104,700 and \$148,400 in 2006).

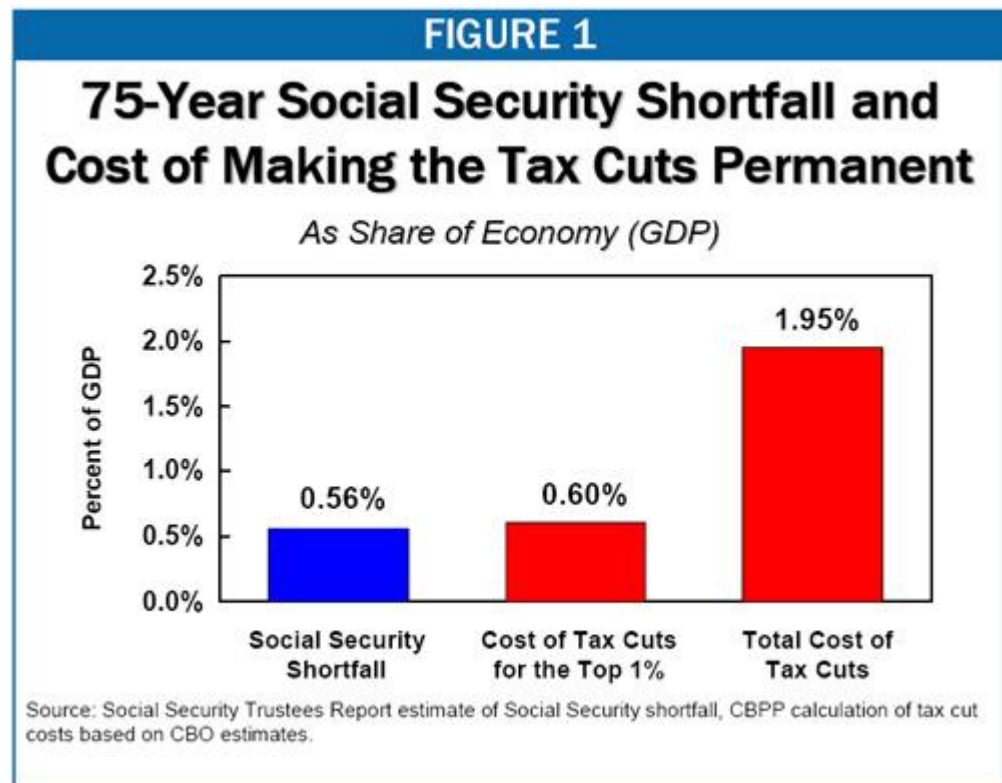
The excessive gains of this privileged group, particularly since 2002, are underlined in the following table.

Table 1. Real Annual Income Growth by Groups, 1993-2006

	Average Income Real Annual Growth (1)	Top 1% Incomes Real Annual Growth (2)	Bottom 99% Incomes Real Annual Growth (3)
Full period 1993-2006	1.9%	5.7%	1.1%
Clinton Expansion 1993-2000	3.7%	10.1%	2.4%
Bush Expansion 2002-2006	2.8%	11.0%	0.9%

Computations based on family market income including realized capital gains (before individual taxes).
 Incomes are deflated using the official Consumer Price Index.
 Source: Piketty and Saez (2003), series updated to 2006

And as we hear more about looming shortfalls in social security, the following figure shows that the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts provided to the top 1%, which contribute to the gross inequities we have just seen, are more than the projected social security shortfall as shown in the following figure:



Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 31, 2008

We face a major challenge in funding Social Security; indeed current projections of needs are based on the recent tax cuts expiring in 2010. This underlines the important choices we face in ensuring an equitable distribution of our resources. We have a long and important journey to a just and compassionate society.

Quote

“I hold my face in my two hands
No, I am not crying
I hold my face in my two hands
to keep the loneliness warm –
two hands protecting
two hands nourishing
two hands preventing
my soul from leaving me
in anger.”

For Warmth, Thich Nhat Hanh, quoted in *Leading from Within*, edited by Sam Intrator and Megan Scribner

Eldson Organizational Renewal (EOR) Recent Mentions

- Reviews of “Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New

Organization.” Ron Elsdon. Praeger, Westport, CT (2003)

- Harvard Business School
 - [HBS Working Knowledge: Organizations](#)
- Global Diversity Institute
 - [Global Diversity Institute - The Journal of Diversity Praxis](#)
- Journal of Asian Economics
 - [ScienceDirect - Journal of Asian Economics : Ron Elsdon, Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT \(2003\) 280 pp. \(hardcover\), ISBN 1-56720-436-8, \\$49.95.](#)
- Greenwood Publishing Group
 - [Affiliation in the Workplace — www.greenwood.com](#)
- Chapter titled “How Can You Grow Your Practice with Purpose?” in National Career Development Association Monograph, “Starting and Growing a Business in the New Economy” Edited by Sally Gelardin, 2007
- Webcast for Human Capital Institute (and associated white paper)
 - Building Workforce Affiliation to Keep Your Best and Brightest Talent
 - http://www.humancapitalinstitute.org/hci/research_community_product.guid;jsessionid=8C417EAC34880D6A38E82D4FBE2598C4?_webcastID=74366
- Recorded Webinar for Project Management Institute
 - “Becoming Career Fit in Turbulent Times”
 - <http://pmi-issig.org/Default.aspx?tabid=319>
- “Building a Strong Workforce Through Affiliation.” Chapter 26 in “On Staffing: Advice and Perspectives from HR Leaders.” Eds. Nicholas Burkholder et al, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken NJ (2004)
 - <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471410691,descCd-tableOfContents.html>
- “The Growing Divide Calls for Advocacy.”
 - Article in March, 2007, NCDA Career Convergence magazine
 - <http://209.235.208.145/cgi-bin/WebSuite/tcsAssnWebSuite.pl?Action=DisplayNewsDetails&RecordID=947&Sections=&IncludeDropped=1&AssnID=NCDA&DBCCode=130285>
- “Reaching for Our Deep Gladness”
 - Article in May, 2005, NCDA Career Convergence magazine
 - <http://209.235.208.145/cgi-bin/WebSuite/tcsAssnWebSuite.pl?Action=DisplayNewsDetails&RecordID=625&Sections=6&IncludeDropped=&AssnID>

=NCD&DBCode=130285

- Mention in article on cost of turnover
 - East Bay Business Times, April 2005
 - [Turnover costs exceed employers' estimates - 2005-04-25](#)
- “Worklife Survival: Finding a Fit”
 - Article for HR West, February 2005 (Northern California Human Resource Association)
 - <http://www.nchra.org/StaticContent/Download/EXT0205007.pdf>
- Interview in the education field “Affiliation as a Unifying Principle in Education”
 - Career Pro News
 - [Affiliation and Education](#)
- MBTI Step II workshop
 - CCDA News, April 2005
 - [Local Chapter News](#)
- Review of ICDC Global Issues Forum
 - CCDA, January 2005
 - [ICDC Global Issues Forum](#)

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:

- On-site career services that support the development of your workforce, build strength in depth, increase individual fulfillment and affiliation, and accelerate productivity growth
 - On site career counseling
 - Individual and group delivery
 - Metrics to guide on-going system enhancement
 - Integrated with the needs of your organization
- 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 and 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