

# METRO Newsletter



Editor: Julie M. Weintraub

Winter 2012

# METRO NEWSLETTER

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January 1, 2012

## PROFILES OF CURRENT RESEARCH

### Social Networking and the Selection Process

The use of social networking sites for making hiring decisions continues to grow but the research still lags behind (Davison, Maraist, & Bing, 2011). A review of the psychological literature reveals limited empirical data regarding the use of such sites for recruitment or selection purposes. The limited empirical research has primarily focused on information presented on Facebook, a networking site that is primarily social in nature. Other sites like LinkedIn present information that is more professional in nature. Dr. Comila Shahani-Denning, Associate Professor of Psychology and Co-Director of the M.A. program in I/O Psychology at Hofstra University, and her students are currently engaged in an interesting program of research aimed at addressing some of the shortcomings in the literature regarding the use of social media – specifically LinkedIn – in the selection process.

While there is abundant anecdotal evidence regarding the use of social networking sites, there has been no empirical research examining how employers use the information gleaned from sites like LinkedIn. The use of this publicly available information for making hiring decisions is fraught with legal challenges and using the information on these websites to make job-related decisions has not been validated (Davison, Maraist, & Bing, 2011). LinkedIn profiles often include pictures, recommendations, and events, which present the opportunity for various non-job related information to be present. The legality of this information continues to be problematic particularly when employers might use information posted that reflects non-job related characteristics, such as race, age, gender, parental status, etc. There has been research documenting different call back rates for resumes with prototypical Caucasian vs. African-American names (Brown & Vaugn, 2011). One can only imagine the potential for discrimination using publicly available online information.

Recently Dr. Shahani-Denning has sponsored two studies using fictitious LinkedIn profiles to assess the impact of information presented by applicants on LinkedIn. Again, while LinkedIn is a professional site, the use of pictures, recommendations, and events present the opportunity for non-job related information to be present.

First, in her doctoral dissertation, Indre Staninaite (an active METRO member!) examined motherhood bias and hypothesized that a key variable in minimizing motherhood bias is perceived job commitment. They had 184 LinkedIn users employed as managers and executives at U.S. companies evaluate a fictitious profile in which motherhood status and job commitment were manipulated. Job commitment turned out to be a better predictor of job-relevant criteria than motherhood status. In her Master's thesis, Lisa Paik examined the attractiveness of the applicant as presented on their LinkedIn profile picture. She hypothesized that one could mitigate the attractiveness bias by increasing the amount of job relevant information presented on the profile. She recruited participants via LinkedIn and randomly assigned them to one of six

conditions in which attractiveness and the amount of information were varied but all applicants were presented as qualified. Her results indicated a lack of effects for both attractiveness and amount of information. These studies are promising for organizations using LinkedIn as a hiring tool because it would mean that job relevant factors hold more weight than certain non-job relevant factors such as attractiveness and parental status.

Currently, Dr. Shahani-Denning and her team are continuing this program of research. Some of the questions they plan to investigate are: What does a typical LinkedIn profile actually look like? How do profiles vary across job levels? How does the size and quality of a person's network vary across job level and what impact does it have on recruiting and selection? What impact do LinkedIn recommendations have? The team is planning several qualitative and experimental studies to address these issues, which will certainly make a practical and scientific contribution to the field.

Reported by: Terri Shapiro

## **A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS**

The faculty of iCoachNewYork are now scheduling interviews for people interested in our Spring 2012 Professional Coaching Program (PCP).

This is our highly-respected 3-month program providing a certificate for executive coaches. It is our ninth year presenting PCP for participants who want to make executive coaching a part of their professional lives.

The Program begins on Friday, March 2, 2012 and meets each Friday thereafter through May 25 with one exception: there will not be class on Friday, April 6. Meetings are at Baruch College, CUNY, 24th Street and Lexington Avenue. Baruch College is our partner in PCP. Please refer to <http://www.icoachnewyork.com> for details and specific schedule, or call us at 212-279-0009 to schedule an interview.

The success of our Program remains predicated on individual attention. We provide actual coaching cases and faculty supervision in an apprentice-like environment to ensure that each participant enjoys a personalized professional development experience.

Please share this email with friends or colleagues who might be interested in exploring or possibly attending the iCoachNewYork Professional Coaching Program this spring.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that in Summer 2011 AMACOM published our book [Becoming An Exceptional Executive Coach: Use Your Knowledge, Experience and Intuition to Help Leaders Excel.](#)

## **PROFILES FROM THE FIELD**



**Johanna Seppalainen, M.S.**  
**Independent Consultant and Coach**

### **About Johanna:**

Johanna is originally from Finland and has been living in the U.S. for around 15 years. She has been in the New York metropolitan area for approximately five years, and prior to that lived in the San Francisco Bay area for over ten years. While in California, Johanna received her undergraduate degree, and Master's in Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from San Francisco State University. Johanna is married with a four and a half year old son.

### **Current Role:**

Johanna is currently an independent consultant and coach, working on various talent management and performance management projects. A recent assignment Johanna found very rewarding was one in which she worked with a team of consultants to develop a performance management system for an organization. Johanna and her team studied the organization and the staff and managers at all levels to understand its mission, values, and goals. The team then created customized performance management tools to reflect exactly those. Johanna and her team communicated to all stakeholders how the performance management system was designed and its purpose to take the organization forward and establish a system for managers to truly coach employees "to be all that they can be".

In addition to working on various talent and performance management projects, Johanna has a passion for coaching. Helping people move forward in their careers and effectively solve problems has been very satisfying for Johanna. Often, employees may have a different picture of themselves than others may have; Johanna helps individuals "see the forest for the trees."

### **Career Progression:**

After completing her Master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Johanna worked in internal Human Resources roles for several years. In one of her previous roles as an HR Manager, Johanna was responsible for creating a diversity and inclusion plan for an organization. This project involved collecting and analyzing confidential data, and making strategic decisions for the company based on that data. Johanna formed a team including staff from various levels in the organization to draft the diversity and inclusion plan. Once the plan was approved by the CEO of the organization, Johanna communicated the current and future state of diversity and inclusion to all staff in an interactive presentation. She found this to be a very satisfying project.

While Johanna enjoyed her HR roles, in an effort to seek more flexibility, she decided to enter the world of independent consulting and coaching. Johanna has found consulting to be both exciting and challenging. She secures projects through networking and "being in the right place at the right time." Johanna ultimately sees herself returning to an internal role. She is very passionate about people's success and helping others reach their goals.

In addition to working as a consultant and coach, Johanna is very active in METRO. She previously acted as the "food czar" for two years, organizing the appetizers for the monthly meetings. Johanna now has the role of sponsorship chair. She welcomes anyone to speak with her about the benefits of METRO sponsorship. Johanna has also worked with METRO career day and plans on continuing to do so.

### **Advice**

Johanna shared some advice for current graduate students:

She encourages students to build strong support systems and networks. It's important to take advantage of internships and develop relationships now that will help to serve as your career foundation.

Johanna also emphasized the importance of understanding the value of "soft skills." She believes that in addition to focusing on the more tangible competencies, directly relating to one's skills at work, and that while organizations like to see numbers and statistics, we should remember the benefit of developing well-rounded employees.

Reported by: Julie Weintraub

## Become a 2012 Metro Sponsor Today!

### About the Sponsorship Program

Metro launched our Sponsorship Program to increase the Association's visibility and enable individuals and organizations with a vested interest in the advancement of applied psychology to enjoy certain benefits as described in the table below.

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To renew or acquire sponsorship, contact:

Johanna Seppalainen, M.S.

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## **SPEAKERS' CORNER**

**October 13, 2011**

### **Employee Engagement Seen Through the Lens of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) William H. Macey, Ph.D. (Valtera)**

The choices people make identifies their values. Because each choice implies a trade-off, people will reveal what they truly want when they choose one option over another. What specific attributes did Option A have and not have, and why was Option A chosen over Option B? This type of research not only helps in understanding the values of individuals, but it can also help in predicting behavior, such as what will make a person leave a position, join a union, or choose a particular benefit plan.

Because values differ from person to person, it is beneficial to classify people into sub-groups based on their common preferences. Dr. Macey showed an example where he surveyed preferences for two job options, which varied in the attributes: union status and dues, pay, management quality, and voice. Based on preferences, using a Multinomial (Conditional) Logit Model, there were seven segments of people, which all varied in attribute preferences. For example, individuals that fell in segment two showed pay and good management to be most important; segments three and five showed pay to be most important with variations in the other attributes; and segment six showed non-union status to be highly important. As an organization, it is possible to target groups of individuals based on their preferences.

#### Attributes of the Employee Value Proposition

Since Jurgensen's pioneering work in the 1940s, the attributes we value as an employee have not changed much (e.g., advancement, benefits, coworkers, hours, pay, security, supervisors). Attributes such as fairness, autonomy, teamwork, and participation in decisions are also important to the modern-day worker. When comparing major demographic groups using the clustering tools mentioned above, there are a few differences. For instance, the only major gender differences found is that women value flexibility more than men. In regard to age, younger people most value advancement, and older people care most value retirement. National differences show U.S. workers valuing flexibility much more than other countries (e.g., Canada, China, Hong Kong, Netherlands). U.S. workers differ significantly from the other countries because we hold little value in empowerment and commitment to the community.

To understand what employees value, whether it is pay, security, or advancement, is a key step in facilitating engagement. No organization can have everything, but targeting those that value what your organization can offer is a good strategy to ensure an engaged workforce. Engaged employees are those who are getting what they want and expect out of the organization.

Reported by: Ashley Busing

**November 9, 2011**

**Mindful Leadership: Focusing to Perform**

**Joshua Ehrlich, Ph.D. (Global Leadership Council)**

Dr. Josh Ehrlich had three messages for the audience, conceptualized by Mindful Leadership:

- More & faster information is not better
- Insight drives learning & performance
- You can learn to focus and reflect to be more effective

*“Life blows a deluge of information at us and technology scatters our attention. Most of us add to the chaotic whirlwind by stepping on the accelerator and cramming more into each day. The result is that your mind becomes full and we lose our way.”*

We’ve become habituated to distraction and overload. Recent statistics indicate:

- We consume 3X the data we did in 1960
- Send/receive 178 messages per day (texts or emails)
- Surf 40 websites per day
- Keep 8 computer windows open & switch 37 times per hour
- Interruptions in work occur 7-10 times an hour, 10-15 minutes to get back to task
- 47% of the time our mind is wandering = unhappy & unproductive

*“We have overestimated our multitasking ability, and underestimated its’ detrimental ability. The result is that our work tasks are taking approximately 30% longer, and we’re making twice as many errors.”*

By applying focus and mindfulness to coaching and developing leadership, we can address these issues.

Mindfulness Research – leadership factors:

- Increased ability to focus and tolerate anxiety, ambiguity and uncertainty
- Increase clarity, learning, creative thinking & IQ
- Enhanced empathy, positivity, emotional stability, psychological and moral maturity
- Enhanced communication and relationships
- Decreased stress, fatigue and burnout
- Increased immune response and life expectancy
- Safe container to increase coaching impact; ‘how are you’ mentoring story—judging to inquiring

How do we teach Emotional Intelligence? Build EI by teaching people to use mindfulness to manage stress and track internal (gut) & external (nonverbal) cues. EI can be demonstrated by: 1) expressing & managing your emotions, 2) understanding others’ emotional signals, and 3) using emotions to build relationships, choose leadership style & reach goals. Stress drags EI down, while mindfulness drives EI up.

There are six types of Intelligence that impact our Mindful Leadership effectiveness:

- Mindful—using open, present attention to increase learning and impact
- Cognitive—Focused, Open, Flexible vs. black/white, absolute and negative thinking

- Emotional—Aware & accepting feelings
- Social—Give and get support by building lasting, intimate network of relationships
- Physical—Establish healthy diet, exercise and sleep habits to take care of yourself
- Spiritual—Clarify values and find meaning and purpose outside materialism

### Mindful Coaching Practice

Kolb's Model helps us learn from "reflection." Focusing mindfully is different from reflecting. Reflection looks retrospectively at your thoughts and actions, their impact and your learning process. Mindfulness turns attention to your ongoing stream of thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and attitudes. Reflection is *intentional and goal-directed*—there is something you are trying to accomplish, solve or improve. Mindfulness is *attentional and neutral*—rather than focusing on problems, you objectively observe yourself, your reactions and external stimuli without judgment – you learn through reflection by looking backward and then forward. Looking back at your experiences enables you give new meaning to experience, and when you reflect with others, you will see new perspectives. Coaching must incorporate more developed communication skills and the use of Mindful Dialogue, Negotiation, and Relationship Building.

*“Coaching only happens when we can connect on a personal level.”*

Mindfulness becomes a tool that can help people become more aware, more self-accepting, and better equipped to face reality. Building a sense of self, developing leadership skills, and learning from experience by reflecting back on ourselves – strengthens our emotional stability, and enhances our communication. Making a conscious effort to be mindful instead of mindless in your daily interactions, whether personal or work related, will enrich your strengths as a leader and coach.

Reported by: Kelly Switzer

**December 14, 2011**

**The Science of Meetings: Opportunities for Consultants to Promote Organizational Success**

**Steven Rogelberg, Ph.D. (UNC)**

Meetings are a begrudgingly accepted as a necessary evil of the working world. Everyone complains about them, but do people really hate meetings, and why are there so many? Surprisingly, there is a dearth of scientific research about meetings.

**Meeting Statistics:**

- Employees spend approximately 6 hours a week in meetings, while senior managers spend nearly 23 hours in meetings
- Larger organizations spend far more of their time in preparation, conducting, and concluding meetings than their smaller counterparts, 75% compared to 10%
- Professionals average 61.8 meetings a month

**Research findings:**

There is a curvilinear relationship between feelings of productivity and the number of meetings a day. A few meetings can help workers feel more productive, but too many meetings can drag them down.

The interpretation of meetings as either interruptions or welcome events in the work day is moderated by accomplishment striving. For those workers who are high in conscientiousness and goal-oriented, spending more time in meetings was linked to lower job satisfaction.

**Meeting lateness is relative, determined by a number of factors including:**

- The actual meeting start time
- When the last person arrives
- When the group starts working

A large percentage of meetings do not start on time (44%), leading to employee frustration. Lateness to meetings may be determined by overall job satisfaction, conscientiousness, and overall satisfaction with meetings.

An interesting finding reported by Dr. Rogelberg was that satisfaction with meetings accounts for unique variance beyond traditional determinants of job satisfaction. This indicates meeting satisfaction as a unique employee attitude.

Aspects of meetings are linked to the three psychological states underlying employee engagement: meeting relevance, freedom of speech, and time management. Meeting relevance is related to psychological meaningfulness, the feeling of worth and value of an employee within the workplace. Freedom of speech is related to psychological safety, the confidence of an employee to express him or herself without negative consequences. Time management is related to psychological availability, the employee's sense of support and resources from the organization to perform his or her job.

Consultants have an opportunity to help improve meetings, saving organizations both time and money. Meetings can be broken down into the organization's monetary investment in them;

these are relatively conservative estimates if they fail to take into account ineffectual meetings, and pre- and post-meeting time. Assessing the return on investment is key to breaking down the costs of meeting overage and ineffectiveness. Only then can strategies be created and implemented in order to improve meetings with greater feedback and accountability via inclusion in performance management systems, developing effective meeting leadership, talent management, and changing the organization's meeting culture.

Meetings are not going away, nor should they. They should be crafted to be more relevant and productive for those who attend them, and to reduce the number of bad meetings. Meetings can change, and we can help foster that change.

Reported by: Vivian Woo

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