



Going Social

BY STEPHANIE CASTELLANO

Internal social networks serve as gateways to informal learning.

Social networking doesn't just happen on vast public networks like Facebook and Twitter. It's also happening inside organizations. According to a 2014 report by MarketsandMarkets, the global enterprise social software market is forecast to grow from \$4.8 billion in 2014 to \$8.1 billion in 2019.

These private, internal platforms are designed to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and informal learning among employees. They share many of the same functionalities as public social networks, such as activity streams, discussion forums, user groups, private messaging, file sharing, tagging, and search.

"We expect to see more growth with enterprise social networks and more organizations implementing them in the coming year," says Amy Franko, founder and CEO of the Impact Instruction Group. According to her company's annual trends survey, 50 percent of organizations have launched an enterprise social network (ESN). These organizations use them primarily for sharing knowledge—often through forums where employees pose questions that are then answered by their peers—as well as for searching for information on work-related issues. Twenty-six percent of organizations who use an ESN

say that they use it to push out learning, and 11 percent say they analyze the information being shared on their ESNs to identify learning needs.

ESNs can be designed internally or provided by a software supplier. Many suppliers can provide a mobile version of their product and integrate it with an organization's document management system. ESNs can be cloud-based or installed behind an organization's firewall.

ESNs are especially valuable for organizations with global, distributed workforces, where up to 80 percent of learning happens through informal channels.

There are two main challenges with implementing ESNs: user adoption and tracking their return on investment. However, these are factors training professionals are most able to influence, says Franko. The report from Impact Instruction Group recommends defining specific goals for the ESN and determining methods for measuring whether it has met those goals. To increase user adoption, provide training on (and an incentive for) using ESNs.

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COOL TOOL

A New Kind of Reality TV

Ready for some professional development? Turn on your TV (or your desktop computer, tablet, or smartphone). LearningNow.tv is an Internet television channel that live streams interviews, debates, and roundtable discussions on important issues in the learning and development industry. It's free to access the programs—just register at <http://learningnow.tv> and begin watching. Members will be sent a link to a monthly live broadcast, and can access archived recordings at any time. The videos can be streamed to any device.

Experts featured on LNTv include such industry luminaries as Nigel Paine, Elliott Masie, Nick Shackleton-Jones, Mar-

tin Couzins, and Colin Steed (who is the founder and executive producer). These thought leaders and trendsetters provide advice and guidance on industry issues.

The programs also feature talent development leaders from organizations around the globe, talking about their latest successes and challenges. Previous programs have covered case studies from Tesco, Mind Gym, and FirstGroup; as well as real-world applications of personalized learning, compliance training, and informal learning.

Even when the discussions are not centered on case studies, they tend to be practitioner-focused. The regular presenters include Jon Kennard, editor of the online

magazine *Training-Zone*; Kim George, learning and development manager at Getty Images; and Marco Faccini, co-inventor of el-box, the world's first mobile learning platform.

Viewers can interact with presenters during the live stream via the site's social channel. And if you'd ever like to see a topic covered or a problem addressed, simply send your request through the website's contact form. Happy viewing.



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

FAST FACT

Succession Planning Significantly Increases Employee Engagement

Succession planning is not easy. The process is defined as identifying and developing employees for current and future leadership roles. But there are many moving parts: performance levels, training and development opportunities customized to employees' needs, shifting competencies needed for leadership roles, and of course, employees themselves, moving in and out of roles in a given company. Yet the benefits of succession planning are too substantial to ignore: According to a recent survey by the consulting firm Software Advice, the vast majority (94 percent) of employers say their succession plans have improved engagement at their companies. Forty-five percent say it has improved engagement significantly.

Well-executed succession plans serve as incentives for employees to remain at their company. It shows them their op-

portunities for growth within the company, and the various paths their career can take. "The more an employee feels ... they're managing their own career, the more engaged and efficient and productive they are in their day-to-day work," explains Ashish Chauhan, a manager at Halogen Software, a company that designs performance management solutions. The employees surveyed appear to agree—62 percent said they would be "significantly more engaged" if their company implemented succession planning.

Software Advice also reports that more companies are implementing succession plans for employees at lower levels of the organization, proving that they're not just used for leadership positions anymore. In fact, 79 percent of companies surveyed said they had succession plans in place for their midlevel managers.

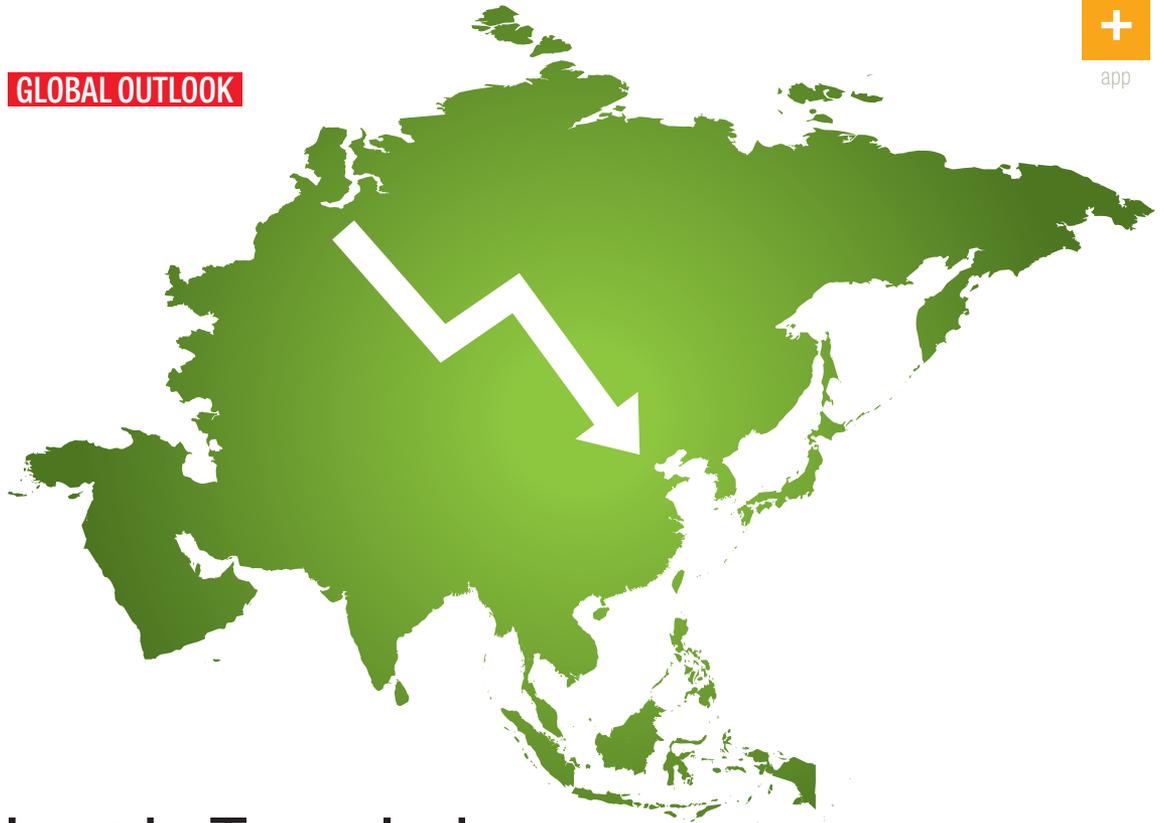
94%

of employers report that having a succession plan positively affects their employees' engagement levels.

62%

of employees say they would be "significantly more engaged" at work if their company had a succession plan.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK



Lost in Translation

BY VANESSA FLUDD

“Asia to HQ.
Come in, HQ.”

Successful leaders of multinational businesses are highly competent people managers who use cultural differences to maintain organizational effectiveness and drive business growth. However, recent research from the Corporate Executive Board and Russell Reynolds Associates reveals that executives in Western multinational corporations (WMNCs) are missing that mark, particularly in Asia, where the low retention rates for senior leaders present a risk to growth in most industries.

A survey of more than 1,000 Asia-based leaders in WMNCs shows that the high rate of turnover among Asian executives stems from the failure of their Western-based counterparts to properly address and manage cultural differences. The research uncovered Asian executives' strong skepticism of their Western headquarters. Overall, only 14 percent of Asian leaders believe their cultural differences are considered when headquarters makes decisions, and even fewer trust that headquarters understands Asian business practices.

In mainland China and Hong Kong, for example, only 10 percent of Asian leaders expressed confidence that their Western offices understand corporate realities in these regions.

Singaporean executives showed even less faith in headquarters, with just 8 percent revealing a favorable view of their Western counterparts' understanding of Asian operations on the ground.

By contrast, 25 percent of Indian leaders think headquarters grasps organizational realities in the East. However, Indian executives appear to be an outlier in this study, giving a relatively more positive appraisal of headquarters across all survey items than their regional counterparts.

Data gathered in this study also suggest that Asian executives feel devalued. Only 29 percent overall believe headquarters listens to their opinions. This issue seems more serious in three countries that show a dramatic drop in the percentage of executives who feel heard: Hong Kong (8 percent), China (5 percent), and Singapore (4 percent).

However, there is an interesting contradiction in this study: Thirty-one percent of Asian executives have a relatively high level of trust in the leaders at headquarters. This dichotomy suggests that there is hope for retaining Asian executive talent, after all.

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WORD WIZ

Chief Storytelling Officer

Corporate storytelling is a trend with staying power, probably because stories themselves have staying power. Companies are recognizing and tapping into stories as a means of engaging and inspiring loyalty in their employees and customers. As a result, the title “chief storytelling officer” is becoming more prevalent (do a search on LinkedIn and you’ll find an ever-increasing number of people with this title). But instead of de-

veloping compelling narratives to promote their company’s products and services (otherwise known as marketing), these executives are frequently tasked with shaping and telling an organization’s “story” to its own employees.

Ideally, the story articulates the organization’s vision and mission, and the strategy it has for accomplishing it. “Creating the story is about reshaping a strategy,” said Mohsin Hamid in

an interview for *Forbes*. Hamid is a world-renowned novelist and chief storytelling officer for the consulting firm Wolff Olins.

So, while the title may sound a bit frivolous, chief storytelling officers essentially are responsible for their organization’s core purpose and strategy—making it inspiring and memorable, and attracting the kind of employees eager to create a happy ending.



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HOT TOPIC

Happiness and work-life balance trump all other career aspirations.



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

Employees Just Want to Have Fun

BY STEPHANIE CASTELLANO

What are employees' top career aspirations? It turns out they don't actually have to do with work.

The majority of employees (45 percent) rank work-life balance as their top career aspiration, according to a survey by Right Management of 1,225 employees worldwide. Europeans and Millennials in particular aspire to a good work-life balance, more so than other geographic regions and age groups.

Only 17 percent of employees rank being the best at what they do as their top career aspiration, and 13 percent said earning a lot of money is essential. And it turns out that the idea of climbing the career ladder is exciting to almost no one: Just 3 percent of employees surveyed said they aspire to be in a prominent position.

Asked how they would define a successful career, most employees said it is doing something they enjoy and that makes them happy. Making a good salary came in second. Employees said that their top two motivators for taking another job are better work-life balance and higher pay.

Interestingly, the fewest employees (10 percent) defined a successful career as one in which they perform well.

Even though high performance doesn't figure into many employees' ideas of a successful career, the majority of employees (53 percent) still say their top expectation of leaders is that they respect employees' knowledge and experience. Mutual trust is another expectation employees said they have of leadership, and the same two qualities—respect and trust—are the most important in their relationships with co-workers. Employees also indicated that transparency and equality are important to them.

These results—and the scarcity of employees saying they aspire to a top position—suggest that the hierarchical structure of corporations is more and more at odds with employees' ideas of a career worth having.

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TIPS + TRICKS

Strategic Foresight Enables Leaders to Prepare for the Future

In today's business environment—one filled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—using strategic foresight will help leaders to better navigate uncharted waters. In "The Futurist Leader," Yvette Montero Salvatico writes, "In this era of rapid and accelerating change, it is impossible to achieve true innovation without developing long-term thinking and uncovering alternative future possibilities."

A good futurist has several key attributes, and should do the following.

Crave curiosity. As a futurist leader, it is more important to ask "Why?" than to ask "What?" This allows a leader to dive into the root cause of an issue and understand the value shifts driving today's trends.

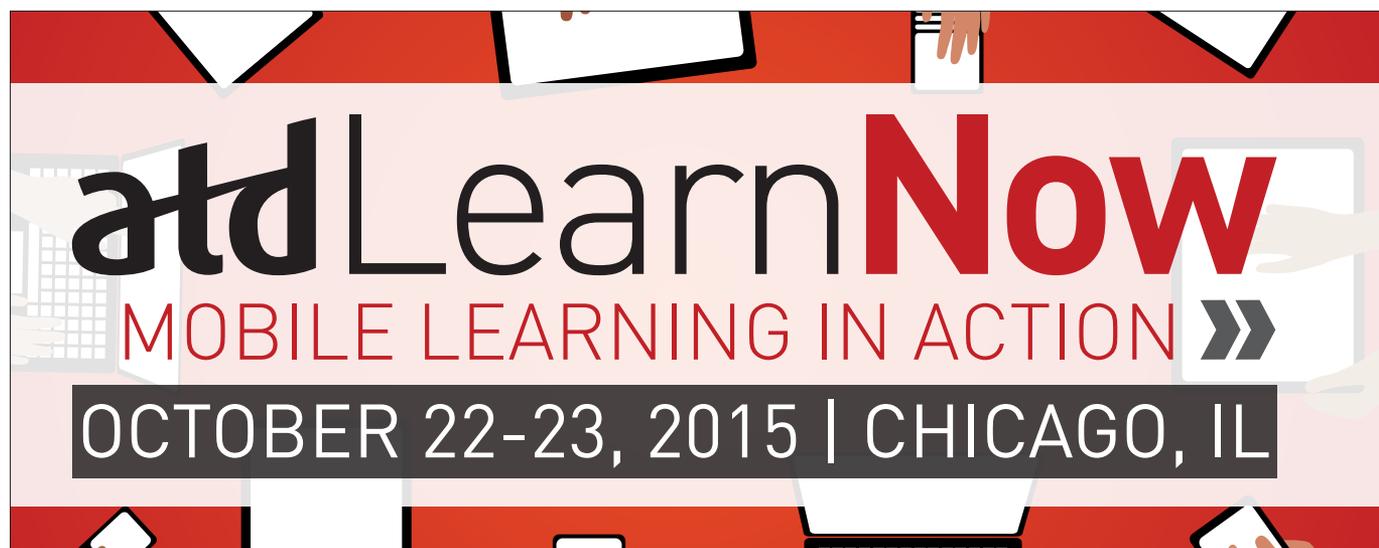
Think outrageously. Stretching beyond one's comfort zone will allow today's leaders to go beyond their pre-foresight state and to think provocatively.

Welcome diversity. We all have our biases that result from our worldviews. Working as a team with diverse peers

gives us a chance to challenge our information filters.

Think in multiples. As a good futurist, you must be able to think in simultaneous, multiple futures rather than the traditional, single, linear forecast. Doing so enables us to create strategies for whatever version of the future comes to be.

These tips were adapted from the July 2015 TD at Work, "The Futurist Leader." Visit www.td.org/TDatWork.



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NOW YOU KNOW

A survey finds that many interviewers are on the wrong side of the law.



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

You Can't Ask That

BY SHANA CAMPBELL

Have you ever been in a job interview and thought to yourself, “Is that an appropriate question to ask?” If so, your instinct was probably correct. According to a recent CareerBuilder survey, 20 percent of hiring managers have asked illegal hiring questions. The survey garnered more than 2,100 responses from hiring and human resources managers across various industries nationwide.

“It’s important for both interviewer and interviewee to understand what employers do and don’t have a legal right to ask in a job interview—for both parties’ protection,” says Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer at CareerBuilder. “Though their intentions may be harmless, hiring managers could unknowingly be putting themselves at risk for legal action, as a job candidate could argue that certain questions were used to discriminate against him or her.”

At least one in three employers surveyed admitted they are unsure about the legality of questions.

The legality of a question sometimes lies in

how it’s asked. So, let’s test your knowledge with some questions shared in the survey. Are these questions permissible?

- Have you ever been arrested?
- What was the nature of your military discharge?
- Are you a U.S. citizen?

If you answered no, you’re correct. You can, however, ask if a candidate has been convicted of a crime, or if they are eligible to work in the United States. You also can ask about the training and work experience a veteran gained in the military.

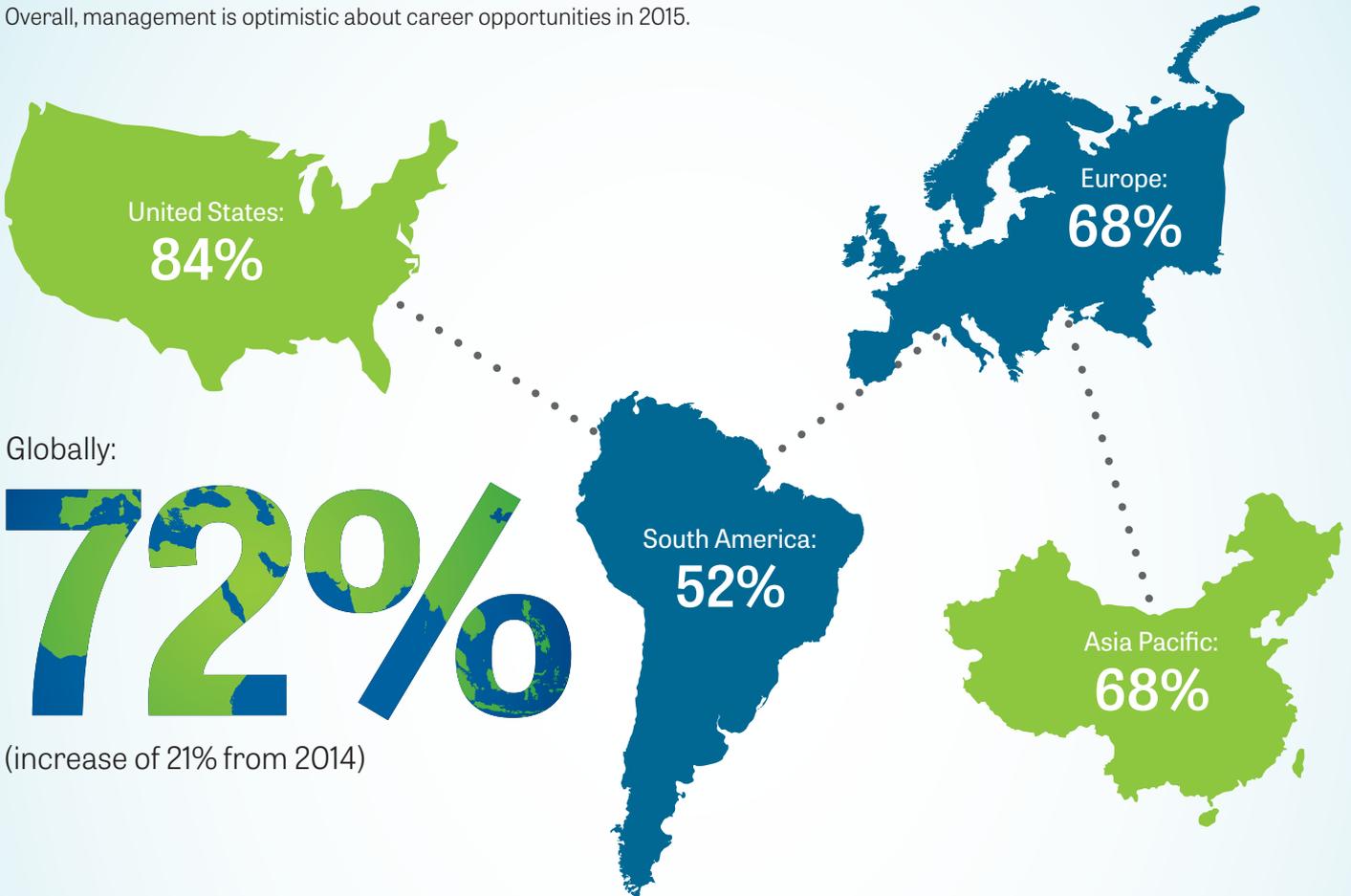
Ultimately, when you deal with matters of legality, it’s better to err on the side of caution. Prepare your interview questions in advance to reduce the risk of accidentally asking an illegal question. And when in doubt, leave it out.

■ **Shana Campbell** is a senior project manager in the Association for Talent Development’s (ATD) education department; scampbell@td.org.

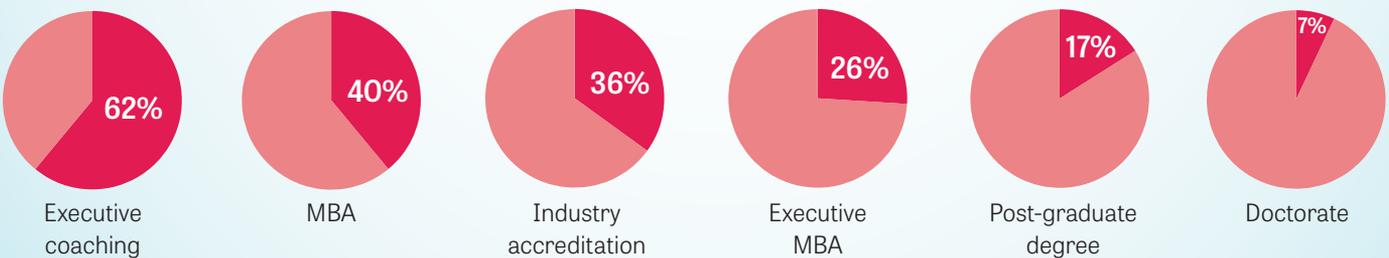
INFOGRAPH

Managers Feeling Upbeat About Career Opportunities

Overall, management is optimistic about career opportunities in 2015.



What additional training or education do you think helps management-level professionals stay current in today's job market?



Source: Data from the Association of Executive Search and Leadership Consultants, 2015 BlueSteps Job Outlook Report. The survey was conducted from January to February 2015; nearly 660 management professionals responded.



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