

# The Mulvaney Pipeline



## New workforce sorely lacking in much needed workplace skills

As the baby boom generation slowly exits the U.S. workplace, a new survey of leaders from a consortium of business research organizations finds the incoming generation sorely lacking in much needed workplace skills — both basic academic and more advanced “applied” skills. The study’s objective was to examine employers’ views on the readiness of new workforce entrants recently hired from high schools, two-year colleges or technical schools, and four-year colleges. “The future workforce is here, and it is ill-prepared,” concludes the report. Employers expect young people to arrive with a core set of basic knowledge and the ability to apply their skills in the workplace — and the reality is not matching the expectation.

### A VULNERABLE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Less than intense preparation in critical skills can lead to unsuccessful futures for America’s youth, as well as a less competitive U.S. workforce. This ultimately makes the U.S. economy more vulnerable in the global marketplace.” Business leaders report that while the three “R’s” are still fundamental to every employee’s ability to do the job, applied skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and communication are essential for success at work. In fact, at all educational levels, these applied skills trump basic knowledge skills such as reading and mathematics in importance in the view of employers. In order to succeed in the workplace of the 21st Century, high school and college graduates need to master basic academic skills as well as a complement of applied skills. Nearly three-quarters of survey participants cite deficiencies among incoming high school graduates in “applied” skills, such as professionalism and work ethic, defined as “demonstrating personal accountability, effective work habits, e.g. punctuality, working productively with others, time and workload management.” More than 40 percent of surveyed employers say incoming high school graduates hired are deficiently prepared for the entry-level jobs they fill. The report finds that recent high school graduates lack the basic skills in reading comprehension, writing and math, which many respondents say were needed for successful job performance.

### HOW FUTURE HIRING PRACTICES WILL CHANGE

28 percent of employers project that their companies will reduce hiring of new entrants with only a high school diploma over the next five years. 49.5 percent said the percentages of two-year college graduates they hire would increase, almost 60 percent said their hires of four-year college graduates would increase. 42 percent said their hires of post-graduates would increase over the next five years. “This study should serve as an alert to educators, policy makers and those concerned with U.S. economic competitiveness that we may be facing a skills shortage. Communication and critical thinking skills is necessary for organizations and the U.S. to be successful.”

### WRITING SINGLED OUT

The findings show an especially big gap in writing skills. Nearly three-quarter of incoming high school graduates are viewed as deficient in basic English writing skills, including grammar and spelling. And, when asked about readiness with regard to applied skills related to the workplace, the greatest deficiency was reported in written communications (memos, letters, complex technical reports), and in professionalism and work ethic. Eighty-one percent of survey participants say their high school graduate hires were deficient in written communications. Poor writing skills also continued to be a problem right up through and including the four-year college graduates.



## I Think I Can...!



The following message was posted on the wall of an aerospace plant...

According to the theory of aerodynamics, and as may be readily demonstrated through wind tunnel experiments, the common bumblebee is unable to fly. This is because the size, weight, and shape of its body in relation to its total wing span makes flying impossible. Yet the bumblebee, being ignorant of these scientific truths, goes right ahead and flies anyway.

So the next time someone in your department comes to you with what seems to be rather farfetched idea, don’t be too quick to dismiss it. Instead remember the success of the bumblebee and give the idea further thought.. It just might work.

## Things that took me 50 years to learn

- Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
- If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
- There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
- People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
- You should not confuse your career with your life.
- Nobody cares if you can’t dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Never lick a steak knife.
- The most destructive force in the universe is gossip.
- You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
- You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she’s pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
- There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.
- The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above-average drivers.
- A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person. (This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)
- Your friends love you anyway.

**Thought for the day:** Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic.

## "Silence is Golden"

Got a noisy machine space next to an office area, or just want to ensure that private office is really private? A company called Quiet Solution has been granted its first patent in the field of soundproof drywall. The patent, issued in February 2007, is titled “Acoustical sound proofing material and methods for manufacturing same”.

In general terms, the patent describes methods of producing internally damped construction panels typically used for walls, floors, and ceilings. Such technology is presently included in the QuietRock family of products from the company.

The company explains that this first patent, filed in 2003, is a result of its large and continuing investment in fundamental research. There are 22 more patent applications filed or underway, covering a variety of solutions, material, and products relating to soundproofing and other technologies.

A division of Serious Materials, Quiet Solution points to the high level of noise reduction combined with ease of installation, citing this example: A single sheet of QuietRock 525 delivers noise reduction equivalent to eight sheets of standard drywall, at lower cost.

## You could WIN Dinner for Two

Take a GUESS!



Tell us what this is and you could WIN DINNER for TWO

**SIMPLE TRUTHS**  
A good scientist is a person with original ideas. A good engineer is a person who makes a design that works with as few original ideas as possible.

E-mail or FAX your answer to our office. If more than one correct answer is received, a winner will be selected at random. If you e-mail your entry, you must write “NEWSLETTER CONTEST” in the subject line to avoid our SPAM filter. Please mail to [janette@mulvaneyinc.com](mailto:janette@mulvaneyinc.com)

The answer to the Jumble from last time was “Internal Revenue Service”

The following 2 people submitted the correct answer.

Beck Swanson Charles Beckman Swanson Architects  
Christiana Petrescu Dumitru T. Petrescu, Consulting Engineering

## What's Goin' On?

- Apr 2 -3, 2007- 2007 Plant Engineering Manufacturers Summit Chicago, IL
- Apr 1-4, 2007 - 2007 Plumbing Manufacturers Institute Meeting Nashville, TN
- May 3-5, 2007 - AIA Convention & Design Expo. San Antonio, Texas
- May 15-17, 2007 . Commercial Construction Conf & Show Rosemont, Illinois
- Jul 21-24, 2007 The BOMA Congress and The Office Building Show New York, NY
- Oct 24-26, 2007 IFMA World WorkPlace New Orleans, LA

## TAX TIME HUMOR



**quotable Yogi**  
“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you are going because you might not get there”.  
Yogi Berra

### Believe It.... or Not!

A recent unofficial survey of high school graduates underscores the educational problems we face today. When asked, 75% were unable to find IRAQ on a world map. 68% could not name the current vice president and a shocking 78% of those asked did not know what event occurred in 1776.

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