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Musings

#194: Musing October 1, 2022

Starbucks has a major problem if our local store is indicative. The staff exudes misery as it tries to keep up with the onslaught of online orders. Frustrated customers impatiently stand watching the sloppy production activity of the 4 or 5 discontented workers. Not much of the romantic third-place Schultz envisioned on his trip to Italy. The shift to online ordering and labor shortages have disrupted the whole business.

I worry that our workforce is losing its grit. Our young people are growing up with everything at their digital fingertips. They can customize their food anyway they want and have it delivered to their door. Streaming and DVR allow them to watch what they want, when they want. God forbid they be asked to do household chores. Tim Wu wrote a famous opinion piece called “The Tyranny of Convenience.” [tyranny-convenience](#).

Now coming out of Covid, it is an open question how hard folks want to work. Andy Kessler had a new opinion piece in the WSJ calling us a nation of quitters and questioning why no one wants to work. *“Too many got a taste of not working and liked it. A lot. Until recently, many people could make more money by not working and became glued to screens, Insta-Tok-ing and living the easy life by sponging off the rest of us. What’s not to like? Parisians called those with unconventional lifestyles “bohemians.” Now we have unemployed, perpetually plugged-in, dopamine-addled Cyber Bohemians—let’s call them Cy-Bos.”* [a-nation-of-quitters-great-enabling-exodus-working-age-men-parents-stimulus-covid-quit-retirement-bohemian-videogame](#) *“It is cultural malaise, motivational submission. Society now promotes mediocrity and calls it equity—witness the scarcity of SAT test-score requirements for college. Sadly, once you get a taste of the easy life, it is difficult to pull up your socks and try hard again—self-induced avolition.”*

The employer is starting to strike back. Employers were overly patient with suboptimal worker behavior due to the tightness of the labor market but as the economy weakens and companies are looking to trim costs, the power in the relationship is shifting. Enter “quiet firing” where employers are lining up to let people go who are not leaning in. [quiet-quitting-firing-productivity-paranoia](#).

One area we specifically need more employees is teaching. Many schools are operating with open positions this Fall. From Encoura: *“Over the 2008-09 to 2019-20 period, total enrollment in teacher preparation programs fell from 719,081 to 448,967 while total teacher preparation program completions fell from 221,439 to 152,853—declines of 38% and 31% respectively.”*

Teachers are having to deal with more anxious kids. According to a recent survey by Stanford, 77% of middle and high school students experience stress-related health symptoms (thanks Jackie Miller).

I think job titles are overrated. Everyone wants to be a chief. It started with CEO and CFO but now includes Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Revenue Officer (CRO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). Give me someone who delivers and doesn't care about title; rather, they let their work and contributions do the talking. Ryan Holmes once wrote about the five traits of a superstar employee:

1. **Not limited by job title:** Flexible and intellectually curious
2. **Thinks big AND small:** Sees big picture of market but also in the details
3. **True grit:** Dogged persistence even during choppy times
4. **Respectful by nature:** Ability to work with others at all levels
5. **Gets shit done:** Produces actual results

More government incompetence. An audit revealed that the IRS sent \$1.1 billion in child tax credits to people who shouldn't have received it and did not send \$3.7 billion to people who did qualify.

Surprising stat: according to Rasmussen Reports, 33% of Americans have a tattoo.

I am not a tattoo supporter but count me in on the nascent move towards authenticity and being genuine in reaction the perfect Insta / "fakebook" world. A new popular app called BeReal gives you no warning on the time of your daily post so you can only snap what is truly happening in your world (thanks John McWeeny). Women are growingly embracing their grey hair and curls in the workplace. [gray-hair-is-a-new-power-move-for-women-at-work](#).

Great quote from higher education executive: "Today's Business student is just a more socially-accepted undecided student."

Another stat: 92% of content consumed on YouTube is education / skill based (ex. How to).

One more stat: "87% of survey respondents say their organization will be more successful when frontline workers are empowered to make important decisions in the moment."

Some of the Covid coverage prompted me to try and remember what blood type I was. Maybe others are better than me, but I didn't know (turns out I am B+). An interesting table on blood type:

| WHAT'S YOUR BLOOD TYPE? | PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WITH IT | FUN FACTS ABOUT YOUR BLOOD TYPE <small>You can donate a single unit or double unit of blood.*</small> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| O+ | 37.4% | As the most common blood type, most patients require O+ blood. FUN FACT: People with O+ blood can be athletic, ambitious and robust. |
| A+ | 35.7% | FUN FACT: People with A+ blood can be conservative, reserved and shy. *People with type A+ blood are a good fit for platelet donation. |
| B+ | 8.5% | FUN FACT: People with B+ blood can be creative, passionate and animal loving. *People with type B+ blood are a good fit for platelet donation. |
| O- | 6.6% | UNIVERSAL DONOR AND CRITICALLY NEEDED - CAN BE TRANSFUSED TO ANY PATIENT IN AN EMERGENCY FUN FACT: People with O- blood can be self-confident and a natural leader. |
| A- | 6.3% | FUN FACT: People with A- blood can be patient, punctual and perfectionists. |
| AB+ | 3.4% | UNIVERSAL PLATELET DONOR; MOST NEEDED FOR CANCER PATIENTS FUN FACT: People with AB+ blood can be cool, controlled and logical. |
| B- | 1.5% | FUN FACT: People with B- blood can be optimistic, flexible and individualistic. |
| AB- | 0.6% | ENCOURAGED TO DONATE PLATELETS; MOST NEEDED BY NEWBORNS IN CRISIS. FUN FACT: People with AB- blood can be rational, bashful and empathetic. |



Prayers for all of those suffering from the destruction of Hurricane Ian. I had a crash course in hurricanes as our little piece of paradise in Boca Grande took the direct landfall hit of the eye. Turns out that is better than being on the eastern edge (think 3 o'clock) where the winds and torque on the outside whip the highest speeds and storm surge. This is why Fort Myers had worst impact which is an hour south. [right-side-hurricane-dangerous](#).

RIP: *"As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I take a look at my life and realize there's not much left, 'Cause I've been blastin' and laughin' so long, that even my mama thinks that my mind is gone."*

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