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Ralph Shreeve,
Group Managing Director

In the past month we have seen increased debate about the potential for wages increases, interest rate rises and upward inflationary pressures in a number of our operating locations. In addition, recent economic data out of China and some improving signs out of the United States continue to support forecasts of positive global growth rates. In this climate, business and consumer confidence in key markets appear to be stable and business profitability remains at high levels. We expect employment growth to remain healthy in all the markets we serve and accordingly, are currently working with a number of major clients on strategic initiatives to assist in managing their workforce optimisation, talent sourcing and talent retention programs. As experts in people and the factors that help them to perform better, Ross' systems for developing more sophisticated models of getting work done in your organisation will be increasingly relevant to our clients in the coming 12-24 months.

economic update

by Glenn Meekin, Chief Financial Officer

The Australian economy continues to perform well with business and consumer confidence indicators remaining at high levels.

Recent labour market indicators were softer than in previous months. The number of jobs in the Australian economy increased by only 2,500 in June 2007, however, this followed a very strong increase in April and May data, with the addition of 78,000 jobs in those months. Annual growth in employment is very healthy at 2.8% and economists such as Steven Milch of St George have forecast on-going growth of around 15,000 jobs per month. The unemployment rate increased to 4.3% in June, but remains just above the lowest unemployment rate in 32 years of 4.2%, reported in May 2007.

Commenting on the potential impact on wages of continued healthy jobs growth on Sky Business Report following the recent jobs data release, Ross and Julia Ross Group Managing Director Ralph Shreeve said "... larger organisations have learned to adapt to market conditions, being more strategic about how they source talent and applying increased discipline in their recruitment processes. This, together with an increased emphasis on retention initiatives such as learning and development programs and personal growth strategies, has assisted in restraining wages growth. Companies are learning how to look after their good people better, and this has lessened the likelihood of people just cashing out and moving solely for a higher salary."

The ANZ Bank Job Advertisement Series, an indicator of employment growth, fell marginally by 0.8% in June 2007. However, this should also be viewed as inconsequential in light of an exceptionally large increase of 10.3% in May. Demand for labour remains at record highs, with job advertisements up by 36% over the past year.

Source: ANZ Australian Economics Weekly - 13 July 2007

OH&S update

by Paula Spencer, OH&S Officer

Ross and Julia Ross are Workforce Partners for the Australian National Prescribing Services' upcoming common colds need commonsense, not antibiotics campaign. Some of you may have seen this campaign launched on television and in the press, and at some client worksites where Ross and Julia Ross have large groups of temporary and contract staff deployed you will see us implementing this initiative in your workplaces.

This is the campaign's seventh year and Ross and Julia Ross are on board as part of our focus on employee well-being, which also includes arranging and providing Influenza Vaccines every year to those in our in-house team.

It is commonly understood that over-use of antibiotics negatively affects our immune system and encourages the development of so-called "superbugs" which are antibiotic-resistant and can present a threat to workforces such as ours. The National Prescribing Service campaign this year is targeting working women, especially working mothers - a key interest group for many organisations. We look forward to working with our internal teams, our contractors and temporaries working on client sites, and where possible our client organisations, to support this excellent public health initiative.

HR update

A report from Britain's Equal Opportunities Commission says we are now moving into the third generation of flexible work. The first generation was about time flexibility and the growth of part-time work; the second generation featured not only time flexibility, but also workplace flexibility as working from home trends emerged. According to the report, we are now seeing the third generation where there is greater control and choice between employers and employees over how and where work is done.

The report says four types of flexible workers have emerged:

- **Timelords** - people such as writers, researchers and "mumtrepreneurs who" more or less control their hours and location of work. They can work anywhere, anytime.
- **Shift-shapers** - workers with less control over their place of work, but with more choice over time through self-rostering and negotiated shifts. Includes roles such as shiftworkers or 24x7 workers in areas such as hospitality and customer service.
- **Time-stretchers** - employees such as sales people or equipment-dependent workers who can control their hours but whose work depends on them meeting face-to-face with clients or accessing equipment on site.
- **Remote-controllers** - people who have set hours but with more choice over where they work. In some cases, they don't even have a central office. Even though they have set hours of work, they enjoy greater control over their time due to managing their place of work.

These are models and therefore do not reflect every situation, but what they do show is the shift in both organisational and workforce patterns. Given that for many organisations, one of the major challenges is to retain the employees that it wants to keep, we expect that successful organisations will continue to operate progressively in this regard as part of their workforce retention strategies into the future.

personal coach

Managing Conflict With Customers

No matter the role or organisation in which we work, we all have customers to service - some are internal, some are external. Therefore, finding effective ways to manage conflict with our customers is very important to the outcomes we deliver. Different customers will respond differently when perceived difficulties in service delivery occur. Some will be frustrated, others angry. Last month, BusinessWeek magazine provided a series of tips to assist in effectively handling these situations.

- Always acknowledge the customer's problem. Acknowledge that you would be feeling the same too.
- Ask the customer what you can do to make them feel better and fix the situation.
- Tell your customer you want to record all the details so you can pass it along in the company and ensure it doesn't happen again.
- If the customer feels they are getting the runaround, and you're not the person who has the answer, tell the customer that you will find out how to solve the problem and get back to them.
- If you can, provide your name and contact details to the customer so that they can call you back in the future if issues arise.
- Avoid saying: "It's our policy". That's the last thing the customer wants to hear.
- Don't blame your company or someone in the company. Instead, apologise, reassure them it's unusual and you'll do everything possible to make sure they leave happy.

training tips

by Mary Strain, National Learning & Development Manager

Preparation

The best way to learn is the simplest. The best presenters know this rule and design and deliver their material in simple, specific, chunks of information.

The key to achieving this success is to know your material and to be organised. To present your material in a simple way requires an understanding of the six-step process. This six-step process can be used anywhere, anytime, any place, for anything.

Think through your topic and subtopic and develop a visual map of events, sequencing the material and creating interactions:

- Analyse the task to be learned
- Set the climate for the learning
- Tell the learners how to do the task
- Show the learners how to do the task
- Let the learners do the task themselves
- Review their work in ways that reinforce their achievements and set goals for their improvement.

Source: "Delivering Effective Training Sessions" McArdel, Geri

hot topic

by Philip Crowe, Group Sales Director

Telstra, G9, FTTN

As one of Telstra's largest people providers, Ross and Julia Ross were proud sponsors of the recent Australian-British Chamber of Commerce luncheon featuring Dr. Phil Burgess, Group Managing Director Public Policy and Communications, with Telstra. As an Australian owned and operated global firm, Ross and Julia Ross are privileged to support another Australian-owned global company whose brand is indeed an Australian icon.

A regular on all our prime time business and news programs, Phil Burgess has developed a reputation for telling it like it is - even when it's not popular. The timing of our luncheon was excellent as it occurred the day immediately following G9's release of its broadband roll out proposal. This is a hot topic currently because lifting Australia's broadband capability is critical to our international competitiveness moving forward.

We appreciated the opportunity to invite a number of our clients to attend this interesting and informative event, and we look forward to seeing more of you at such events in the future.

If you require any further information on the articles in this issue, please email the Marketing Department, marketing@rossjuliaross.com