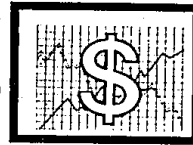


Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300

INCLUDES CLASSIFIED



Thursday, November 22, 1990 O&E

(F)1C



Alvie Smith: "Companies rise or fall based on how their employees do, how their em-

ployees think about the company, how committed they are to high-level performance."

Employees relish simple communication from top

By Ralph R. Echlinaw
staff writer

Sometimes the answer to a problem is just too simple and basic to be seen.

When the answer means changing our underlying philosophy or intellectual infrastructure, rather than external minutiae, brave men and women have been known to bury their heads deep in the sands of traditional methods.

Yet in the global world of competitive business, somebody always finds a way to do it better, leaving competitors to follow suit or atrophy and die, sunk heads and government aid notwithstanding.

In business, it has been amply demonstrated by the Japanese that simple communication, speaking and listening if you will, can produce blue-collar employees who feel necessary, wanted and important to their companies.

Faced with the threat of increasingly productive foreign competitors in the 1970s, American companies communicated with fervor of "unfair competition," but began to understand as well the deceptively simple philosophy of internal give and take with hourly employees, formerly looked upon as children. They should be seen, but not heard.

"More and more now, companies are saying, 'When it comes to disseminating news about this company, we must tell our employees first.' I like to say that the employee audience should never be second (to the media)," said Alvie Smith, a Birmingham resident whose book, "Innovative Employee Communication," has just been published by Prentice Hall.

"Companies rise or fall based on how their employees do," Smith continued, "how their employees think about the company, how committed they are to high-level performance. So if the company doesn't communicate with them on a regular basis, there is not that understanding, there is not that trust necessary for that kind of relationship."

A 1988 retiree, the 67-year-old Smith worked more than 40 years in public relations, including 32 years at General Motors.

"I had 17 years working in the field of employee communications in a pretty stodgy, autocratic company," he said. "It seemed to me this was a unique experience that I ought to make available to the profession."

THE BOOK is based on Smith's experience at General Motors, but he fleshed it out by including input from 40 experts of 30 major business firms, universities, consulting firms and professional organizations.

In the last decade, Smith said, he was involved in a General Motors program that tried to teach the importance of internal communications to plant managers. And it worked. "We got the toughest, meanest man-

agers we could find," he said. "(And pretty soon) we found we had ambassadors out there. When these managers went back to their shops, they took back with them something they could do right away."

In fact, employee surveys taken in 1982, 1984 and 1986 showed "definite improvement" in employee attitudes, Smith said.

But the old corporate structure wasn't easy to convince. Much of the opposition to enhanced internal communication, Smith said, has come surprisingly from public relations departments, traditionally dominated by media relations specialists.

"There ought to be an equality in the recognition of (media relations and internal communications) so the employees aren't left out or have to read information about their company in the newspaper or hear it on TV," Smith said. "They ought to hear it first themselves. No one who has their life interrupted wants to hear about it from an outside source. They want to hear it from the boss."

SMITH ALSO stresses the importance of seeing internal communications as more than just a few external changes. "Just to say, 'I like communication and we're going to do a newsletter and twice a year I'm going to talk to my employees,' that's not really enough," he said.

"The most important thing is for a manager to accept communication as a basic philosophy of his work. It's not just a program of a few activities. It's a philosophy. The Japanese have done this exceptionally well."

Smith holds Saturn Corp. up as an American example of what strong internal communication can accomplish. "From what I understand, the Saturn organization has tried to do a lot of things I talk about here," he said, tapping a copy of his book. "There's a lot of give and take discussion up and down the chute, which is extremely important."

The 35-year Birmingham resident and former B-17 bombardier has no publicity tours planned, but hopes to sell 50,000 books. "If we sell 50,000 in the next couple years, I'll be real happy," he said. "If we sell 100,000 I'll be ecstatic."

Although Smith's book is not the type that every bookstore will stock, interested buyers can have their favorite store order a copy. Or they can go to Borders Books in Southfield Township, where 15 copies were ordered.

The sole obstacle between Smith and the New York Times Best Seller List, it would seem, is his subject matter. While he takes pride in a smooth conversational writing style, Smith admits he won't exactly be competitive with Jackie Collins.

"This doesn't have any violence. It doesn't have any sex in it. So consequently, I don't expect it to be featured on the front page of newspapers."

Pre-paid legal 'insurance' attractive to some clients

By Ralph R. Echlinaw
staff writer

If clients don't come to the law firm, then bring the law firm to the clients.

Herein lies a potential source of revenue for My Lawyer Inc., a new Detroit-based company, and its provider law firms, including one in Southfield.

Incorporated last August, the company contracts with employers to provide legal services to their employees in much the same way that medical health maintenance organizations work.

Although such prepaid legal plans are not new, My Lawyer provides more extensive coverage than most, according to those involved.

For instance, My Lawyer will pay the cost of a client's defense should he or she be sued, audited by the Internal Revenue Service, or even wish to contest a speeding ticket.

My Lawyer insurance providers draw up wills for clients, give legal advice when a client buys a home

and tell clients how to use Michigan's so-called lemon law if they buy a defective new car.

While more law firms may be added later, My Lawyer now uses two to act as providers: Moran, Bladen and Winckler of Southfield and Lansing, and Bell and Gardner of Detroit.

Edwin Bladen, a senior partner at Moran, Bladen and Winckler, said many people who could use legal service go without because they're confused and the service costs a lot of money.

"There's a large multitude of people who frankly have little access because of what they perceive as the cost," he said. "Lawyers aren't necessarily cheap in their view. (But) there's a wide range of preventative legal services that people ought to be thinking about."

FOLKS SHOULD view lawyers the way they do doctors, Bladen added. "Everybody feels sick and they want to see a doctor. Unfortunately, they don't see a lawyer in the same way."

So far, My Lawyer has signed up the Detroit Board of Education, Southeast Michigan Area Rapid Transit, and the city of Detroit. A program for state employees is expected to begin Jan. 1.

"It's our feeling that this is the new benefit to come for all Americans," My Lawyer spokeswoman Karen Zuleger said. "We feel that eventually this is going to be a negotiated benefit. We're doing a lot of unique things that no other provider does."

"Seventy percent of Americans don't have access to attorneys," she continued. "They're scared to death it's going to cost them an arm and a leg. We feel that everybody has legal problems."

My Lawyer president Joseph Spisler agreed. "We almost need to educate people to use lawyers," he said. "They're intimidated by (lawyers), really."

Spisler reports good interest in his new company and said he expects to

Please turn to Page 2

Economists at U-M more upbeat than consumers

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Michigan's economy has diversified and is less likely to gyrate during the business cycle, say University of Michigan economists.

But it's still more cyclical than other states, they add.

"We have less cyclical sensitivity in the last decade — relative to where we were," researcher George Fulton told the annual Conference on the Economic Outlook Friday in Ann Arbor.

"But relative to other areas, we are still more sensitive. We'll need another recession to test that out, and we're not going to get one."

THE U-M OUTLOOK for 1990-91 was considerably more optimistic — or less pessimistic — than eastern seaboard economists or consumers, whose confidence has "plunged," according to U-M survey results.

"A mild recession or a near miss" was the phrase Fulton, Saul Hyman and Joan Crary used to describe the outlook for the end of 1990 and 1991.

Crary said Michigan's economic performance "has stalled out" and will show "weaker growth" in the year ahead, with unemployment rising from the current 7.6 percent to 8.1 next and down again to 7.7 in 1992.

In an interview, Crary said counties such as Oakland, Washtenaw (Ann Arbor) and Kent (Grand Rapids) will continue to prosper.

Crary gave three reasons for the group's view that Michigan's economy is less cyclical:

- There is less dependence on auto manufacturing, more on services and other kinds of manufacturing.

- American auto companies have become more competitive with Asian and European imports.

American auto companies are keeping production in line with sales, adjusting more rapidly, avoiding inventory buildups.

They forecast a loss of 29,000 manufacturing jobs over 1990-91, underscored by the closing of Flint's GM truck and bus plant (1,700) and Pontiac's central truck plant (1,200) followed in 1992 by Pontiac's CPC plant (2,000). These will be offset by van production in Flint and reopening of Chrysler's Jefferson plant in Detroit in '92.

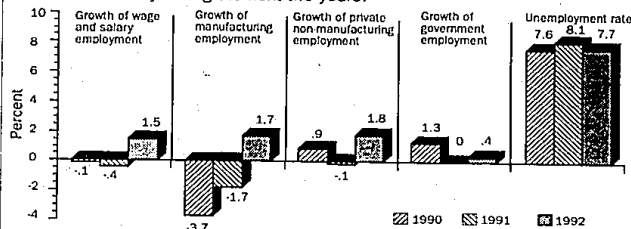
Non-manufacturing private employment will rise by 16,000 in the same period. In the '92 recovery, total employment will top 3.9 million, a shade ahead of the current level, they predicted.

And personal income will grow by 5 percent in '90, 5 percent in '91 and 6.1 percent in '92.

Please turn to Page 2

Looking at the future

Economists at the University of Michigan make their forecast for the health of the economy during the next two years.



Source: The University of Michigan

Presenting an offer on a truly grand scale.

We have an offer that carries a lot of weight. When you buy a selected IBM® PS/2® computer and an operating system during the "Grand Sale Sale," we're offering big rebates, over \$600* worth of free software, even quick credit and deferred payments.

CASH REBATES? Buy a selected IBM Personal System 2, like the PS/2 Model 55SX or Model 65SX, and you get up to \$1000 in rebates.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

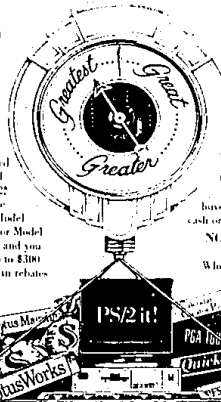
FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your

back. You can also get up to \$1200 in rebates on selected IBM desktop printers, including the high-speed IBM LaserPrinter.

FREE SOFTWARE? Buy selected PS/2s, from Model 25 to 65SX, and you'll get over \$1000 worth of software designed to help increase your productivity. For work at office or home, there's LotusWorks®, a powerful program that integrates spreadsheets, graphics, communications, word processing, spell checking, and a data base all in one.

"PS Fast Publisher," a popular desktop publishing package, lets you create top-quality reports, news letters and more. With "QuickKey," rated Best of 1989 by PC Magazine, you'll save hours of time and effort managing your



Business and personal finances. To keep track of meetings, deadlines and birthdays, and to manage multiple schedules, "Calendar Creator Plus™" lets you create customized calendars. Just for fun, you can play on the courses the pros play on with "PGA TOUR Golf™" and "Lotus® Magellan™" ties all this free software together, which helps make it easy to install and use.

QUICK CREDIT. The IBM credit card provides quick credit to all qualified buyers. So you can buy a PS/2 without using cash or any of your own credit cards.

NO PAYMENT UNTIL FEBRUARY 1991. When you purchase your

PS/2 with an IBM credit card you can walk away with your PS/2 without any payments until next year.

THE SCALES. How're you going to do it? PS/2 it!

ComputerLand

FARMINGTON
34435 Grand River Ave.
Next to Dunwoody St.
476-2500

SOUTHFIELD
Corporate Sales
21238 Bridge St.
353-8510

BIRMINGHAM
1650 Woodward Ave.
At 14 Mile
540-7933

*Maximum cash rebate of \$1200 on selected IBM PS/2 computers. Software value based on suggested retail price. Software value based on suggested retail price. IBM PS/2, Personal System 2 and PS/2 are registered trademarks and IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. LotusWorks, QuickKey, PS Fast Publisher, and PS Fast Publisher are trademarks of Lotus Development Corporation. Magellan is a registered trademark of Lotus Development Corporation. IBM LaserPrinter is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. © 1990 IBM Corp.