

# GrayMatterz

THE ZIMMERMAN GROUP, INC.

*Marketing/Consulting*

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### **HOT TOPIC: EMPLOYEES**

Every year, 1,600 members of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) come together — from the far reaches of the earth — to exchange ideas and the latest wisdom.

In recent years, the Internet has overshadowed other topics. And while we continued our exploration of e-commerce, banner advertising, and permission marketing, for the first time in nearly a decade, speakers focused on hiring and retaining employees.

### **THE WORLD IN 2020**

London-based economic journalist Hamish McRae shared his vision of the world in 2020. He had these thoughts for communicators and marketers:

- Because of our aging society, we'll live in a world where older people will call the shots.
- In fact, to run businesses, we'll need to figure out how to keep 70-year-olds on staff.
- Work will become more an activity, less a place.
- Entrepreneurship will be highly prized.
- People involved in creating brands will become more important.
- There will be an increasing democratization of information, so information flow will be more bottom-up, less top-down.



*Brains for hire.*

- Employees will increasingly want to blend family life, education, work, and leisure; companies that encourage this balance will be successful.

## **RETENTION AND PROFITABILITY**

Jeannie Duisenberg, Lockheed Martin executive, added these thoughts in her seminar called, "Keeping the Keepers in Your Company."

- Unemployment is at its lowest levels in 30 years.
- Attrition rates are the highest in years, with dramatic numbers of IT and high-tech jobs unfilled.
- Replacement costs for an employee can run one or two times annual salary.
- When employees leave, the loss of critical skills affects both customers and quality, putting corporate reputation at risk.
- Treating employees right has been shown to correlate with higher stock performance.

## **YOUR ROLE?**

Jeannie suggests that we, as communicators, must understand the valuable roles that we play within our organizations: inside sales person, educator, partner to HR, consultant to leadership.

We're thrilled to be taking a lead in this trend with some of our clients. Let us know if you'd like to discuss ways to use communications to build trust and confidence in your company's leadership, encourage two-way dialogue, and create opportunities to break down silos.

It's a changing world and the (real) millennium is about to dawn.