



## Just in case it matters to you:

- CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM DELIVERED IN A TIMELY AND CANDID MANNER "IS A CRUCIAL TOOL in gloomy economic times" – especially for company leaders "whose positions tend to isolate them" from feedback about their performance or behavior. The principal obstacle to presenting effective feedback involves the 'process' – who, how, and the framework for measurement. "It may seem counterintuitive, but one of the best ways to ease the sting of criticism" is to have a structured process for continuous and consistent feedback, based on parameters including clarity in standards and expectations. DCG has decades of experience in establishing performance evaluation programs which are effectively correlated to management results & compensation, which are respected by executives and managers. We can help. [BUSINESSWEEK – May 4, 09]
- 'LOW-SKILLED' JOBS ARE GROWING DISPROPORTIONATELY as a percentage of the American workforce, as older, college-educated workers "are less likely to retrain or re-educate for different careers once their occupations have become automated" or their positions get eliminated by downsizing or company shutdown. Many who "devoted decades to white-collar, middle-skilled work" have no other option in a job market which is 'hollowing out' – their only income replacements being "manual jobs that are hard to automate and not highly-skilled: sweeping floors, driving trucks, mowing lawns, cleaning houses, flipping burgers." At the start of this recession, there were some 1.7 workers for each job opening; in January, it was up to 4; today well above that. At least, the Dep't of Labor now estimates that millions of service position jobs will be expanding over the next five years in an accelerating trend. Low-skilled, low-pay, but better than nothing!?! [US NEWS & WORLD REPT – May 09]
- BEYOND TODAY'S FINANCIAL MELTDOWN, AMERICA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE IS FURTHER THREATENED BY A FAILING PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM. International testing now ranks the U.S. 15<sup>th</sup> in Reading, 18<sup>th</sup> in graduation rates, and 25<sup>th</sup> in Math scores (proudly still ahead of Turkey and Mexico). Our K – 12 system is "burdened by an incoherent jumble of state and local curriculum standards, assessment tools, tests, texts and teaching materials. Even worse, many states have bumbled into a *race to the bottom* as they define local standards downward, in order to pretend to satisfy federal demands by showing their students are proficient." California, for example, claims 48% proficiency according to State testing, while the Nat'l Assessment of Educational Progress test ranks it at 21%. "Everyone agrees that the existing standards aren't working; what has been lacking so far, on all sides of the ideological divide, is the political will to do anything about them." Since building an internationally competitive economy for the next century requires a workforce that is "educated well enough to produce more value per capita than other countries, based foremost on knowledge," the challenge is huge. [TIME - Apr 27, 09]
- MEANWHILE, OUR DEP'T OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES: "The economic downturn and election of the first African American president present unique drivers for rightwing extremism... Chatter on the Internet continues to focus on the economy, the perceived loss of U.S. jobs in manufacturing and construction sectors and home foreclosures. Anti-Semitic extremists attribute these losses to a deliberate conspiracy conducted by a cabal of Jewish 'financial elites... This trend is likely to accelerate if the economy is perceived to worsen... The consequences of a prolonged economic downturn – including real estate foreclosures, unemployment, and inability to obtain credit – could create a fertile recruiting environment for extremists and even result in confrontations with government authorities... The threat posed by lone wolves and small terrorist cells is more pronounced than in past years... since the advent of the Internet and other information-age technologies has given domestic extremists greater access to information related to bomb-making, weapons training and tactics, as well as targeting of individuals, organizations and facilities, potentially making extremist individuals and groups more dangerous and the consequences of their violence more severe... as well as permitting domestic extremists to send and receive encrypted communications and to network with others throughout the country and abroad, making it much more difficult for law enforcement to deter, prevent, or preempt a violent attack." [DHS OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS ASSESSMENT – Apr 7, 09]
- THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK: ***"The problem in my life and other people's lives is not the absence of knowing what to do, but the absence of doing it."*** - Management Consultant, Peter Drucker

***"The only thing that's 'guaranteed' these days is that a lot of uncertainty is now a fact of life."*** – Jack Welch