**Work Hours and Location**

If the most important thing that a person does on the job is show up on time and leave on time, then this is a job dealing with the public or an assembly line mentality. I do not consider this a promising intellectual environment in the computer field. I was talking to my friend, Saul, who worked with me in the past. He is an excellent programmer and creative problem solver. He was working for a research company in the mid 1990’s and was dealing with some computer intensive problems. He had to stay until 11 PM many nights to get the adequate computer time to get the job done. There were some mornings that he just could not get up in time to make the 1 hour commute to work. His manager, at that time, laid him off, citing the company regulation that everyone had to show up at 8 AM each day. He was surprised, since he had worked many extra hours to get the project work done. Since he was a senior employee, the manager hired two people from college in an attempt to get the work done. The project foundered, and soon the manager was reassigned. The two new people who were blamed for the failure left the company. Saul decided to work as an independent contractor on other jobs so he could have better control over completing the work. The parable in employment is that people take the job because they are interested in the product and the company and they leave the job because they do not get along with the manager.

During my work career, I managed to avoid the hours police and arrive at work whenever it was feasible. Unfortunately, most of my assignments were in the classified area, so working from home was not an option. Frequently, I had long commutes like from Calabasas to Seal Beach. Such work was only remotely feasible by adjusting work hours to avoid the Los Angeles rush hour jams on the freeway. It was also necessary in bad weather to stay at a hotel near work or just not show up on those days. Fortunately, work hours were computed on a biweekly basis, so as long as I got my 80 hours in during a two-week period, taking vacation time was not required, and extra time spent on the job counted during a given period.

I learned about the theory of meetings: 1. Meetings are called with at least 24 hours notice. 2. Any meeting worth having should have a published agenda. 3. Meetings should start and end on schedule. 4. Call-ins from remote locations should be available if possible. 5. All meetings should have a written distributed summary and assigned action items. 6. Remember Rosie’s Rule: Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an automatic emergency on my part.

Vacation: I was just reading that the average American full-time worker loses three days of vacation each year. Failure to take vacation has a cost for the country, as this money is not used to improve the economy. Retiring with accrued days of vacation is also a loss since vacation taken accrues even more vacation, sometimes at a rate approaching 10% of the hours. Accumulation of vacation is also not good for the company since the vacation pay rate of most employees goes up over time, while increasing the payment liability of the company. Payment of excess vacation hours prevents loss and liability, but one issue is that employees who do not take vacation are not as productive or imaginative as those who do. After my first five years on the job, I have been fortunate to have taken 4 weeks of vacation each year.

With the advent of personal computers and portable digital devices, the computing power available to most people is adequate to do most forms of computer interactive work. It should not be necessary to waste time and effort in commuting to work or meetings. Besides, commute time is vastly underestimated since the actual time is from leaving your desk at home to arriving at your desk at work. Going out to lunch at work is another waste of time, even if it is just a trip to the nearest food location. Why should people live in a metropolitan area, rather than a location that is more isolated? In my opinion, an island in Lake of the Woods is a perfectly reasonable work location. There are some desirable side effects for employees that are physically disabled or have appearance issues. For the company, many employees can be available for consultation over a larger period of time each day. The industrial age concept of a fixed-time eight hour work day with a one hour lunch needs to be altered for more efficient resource use in a computer world.