

Learn product-development techniques online

The Product Development and Management Association (PDMA) has developed a series of Webcasts on product development. Those who attend earn one product development hour (PDH) towards New Product Development Professionals (NPPD) recertification.

The Webcasts can be attended live or listeners can tune in for recordings of past events. Among the available topics are "The Current State of Product Portfolio Management: Issues, Risks, Tools, and Takeaways" covering the results of a benchmark study on common pain points felt in product-driven organizations and the benefits that can be gained by implementing product-portfolio management.

Another Webcast, called "Smooth Sailing through Recessionary Waters: Achieving Innovation Success in the Next Decade," explores practical ways to innovate through business slowdowns. The discussion will highlight strategic and tactical measures senior and midlevel managers can take to ensure their businesses emerge stronger in the future. A session called "Ten Ways to Screw Up Your Voice of the Customer" demonstrates how to identify common pitfalls in implementing Voice of the Customer studies so development budgets are spent on the features and benefits that customers really want.

Finally, "The 10 Most Common (and Deadly) Innovation Traps," covers how to avoid common mistakes teams make in their innovation processes: misdefining innovation; lack of attention to process and best practices; ineffective incentive systems; choosing the wrong team; letting politics control the process; short-circuiting innovation; and choosing the wrong ideas for follow-up. **MD**

PDMA Webcasts, <https://tinyurl.com/668hr>



"You can't cut it." How career dreams die

A new study shows just what it takes to convince someone they have no hope of achieving the career of their dreams. Ohio State University researchers found it's not enough to tell people they lack the skills or the grades to make their goal a reality. People won't change their mind until they're clearly shown what bad things can happen if they pursue their goals and fail.

"Most people have to be given a graphic picture of what failure will look like if they don't make it," said Patrick Carroll, coauthor of the study and OSU assistant professor of psychology.

The research involved students who signed up to meet with a career advisor and learn about a supposedly new master's degree program in business psychology that would train them for "high-paying consulting positions as business psychologists." The program didn't actually exist.

Among some students, a "career advisor" — who actually worked with the researchers — simply pointed out that the students' GPA was lower than the requirement. In another group, the advisor told participants they were unlikely to be admitted, but encouraged them to apply and hope for a lenient admissions committee.

The only students who gave up on the idea were those told they'd probably struggle with the program and ultimately end up with no job prospects even if they somehow managed to graduate. The advisor also mentioned cases at other schools where unqualified students couldn't get placed in jobs after graduation and often ended up in low-paying office jobs.

Carroll said those who received the strongest threat began with high levels of doubt about their abilities. Anxiety mounted as they considered the vivid prospects of failure. This led them to lower expectations about getting into the program, and finally to less anxiety when tested later as they accepted the fact they would not become business psychologists. **MD**

Manufacturing employment still heading down

In September, manufacturing employment continued to trend downward, with a decline of 51,000, according to the latest report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The BLS adds that over the past three months, job losses in manufacturing have averaged 53,000/month, compared with an average monthly loss of 161,000 from October to June. Employment in manufacturing has contracted by 2.1 million since the onset of the recession. The manufacturing workweek and factory overtime also dropped by 0.1 hr over the month (at 39.8 and 2.8 hr, respectively). Average hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory workers rose by 1¢, or 0.1%, to \$18.65. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 2.5%, while average weekly earnings have risen by only 0.7% because of declines in the average workweek.

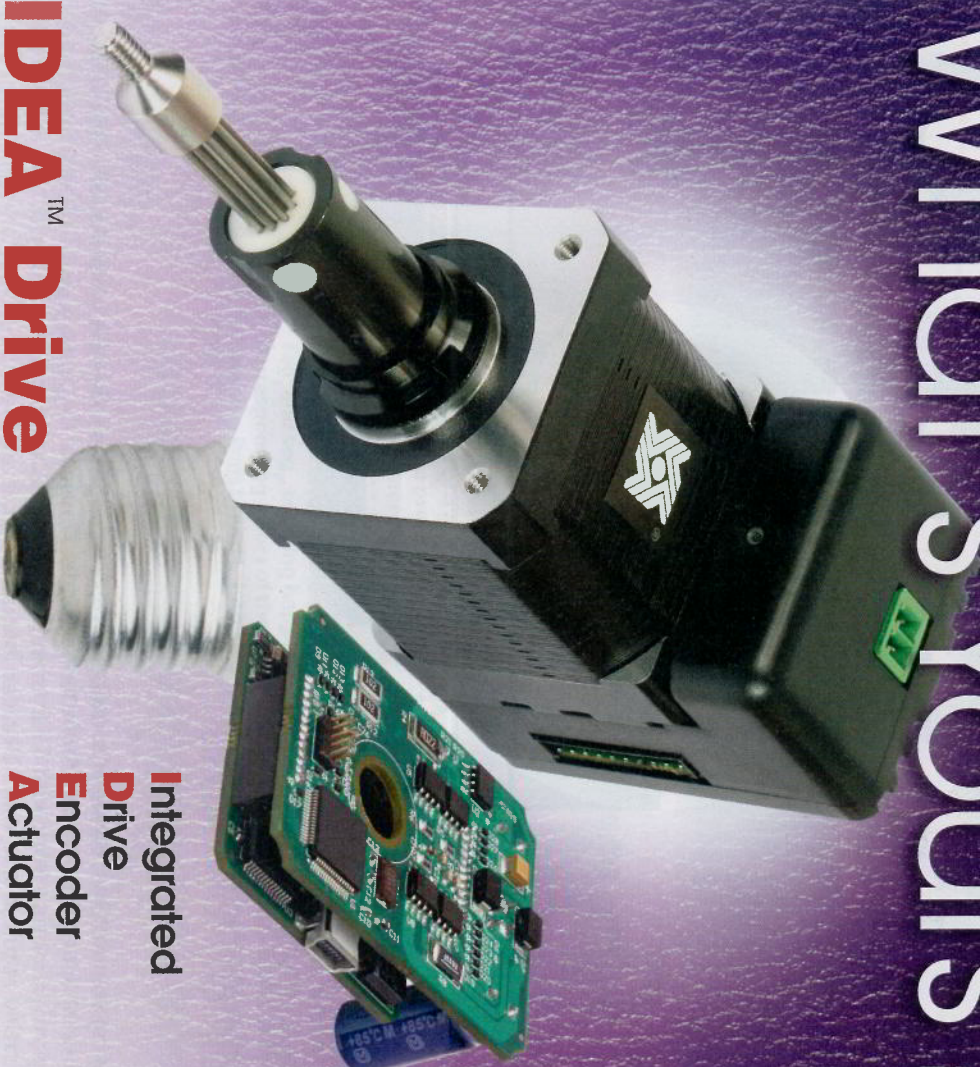
Nonfarm payroll employment continued to decline in September (-263,000), and the unemployment rate rose to 9.8%. Although job losses continued in many of the major industry sectors, the declines have moderated in recent months. **MD**



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