



## Learning the new playbook

There is a man I have respected for many years. To help him remain anonymous, I'll refer to him as James.

For most of his career, James held various maintenance and engineering positions at a worldwide chemical company. Much of his career was spent working at the same plant site, but he occasionally traveled to other corporate sites. Last year, after 30 years of service, James took an early retirement package. Like many before him, our company welcomed him into our contingent labor pool. We like career professionals who want to continue to give to the industry.

James' first assignment fit his skills set perfectly. A major chemical plant was staffing up for multiple turnarounds scheduled over the next 36 months. They needed all the expertise and man-hours James could provide; this is just what he envisioned when he took the retirement package. Much to his surprise, once he finished the first turnaround, the company asked us to replace him. James was deflated. The client was disappointed. We were surprised, but not shocked.

We know change does not come easily. James spent 30 years with one team and was part of helping that team develop their playbook. Suddenly, he is a free agent who is picked up by another team in a support role. James has to learn their playbook within the short pre-turnaround period. Or, as they say in the NFL, James was now a seasoned veteran free agent who must back up and transfer his skills to the young guns. Sadly, not only did James carry his skills to the new team but he also took too much of his previous company's culture with him. The culture at the new assignment was different. James' intentions were good. He wanted to share his experience with his new teammates and help them. But the new team saw him as being stuck in the past and not willing to adapt.

Of all of the problems we face in life, "people problems" are the most difficult to solve. As long as we live we will have some unwelcome and unproductive friction with others. Behavioral science research says 75 percent of the population is significantly different from James, you

and me — not necessarily worse or better but simply different. Behaviorally speaking, each of us is uniquely in the minority at any given time on any given issue. Additionally, what "authority" would have accomplished in times past must be accomplished by "influence" today. This multiplies the difficulty of working effectively with colleagues on large, intense and short duration projects like turnarounds.

People are crucial to our success, well-being and even happiness. In this information age and knowledge society, work today is people intensive. Our ability to relate well with people is critical to our success in the management of complex projects like turnarounds. Learning to work with the other 75 percent is not just a competitive advantage but it is imperative. We all have different gifts and our combined differences actually form the strength of the team — provided we get our egos out of the way.

The NFL has a planning and preparation phase just as we do in turnarounds. At the start of training camp the veterans

of the team welcome the free agents and rookies. They are all given a playbook. The playbook is a model for them to use, or as Francis Bacon said it is a "tool for the mind." It enables them to focus on what counts and ignore the irrelevant or less relevant issues. They are expected to commit the plays to memory and also must execute each play according to the team playbook. It is the playbook that provides order and structure. Ironically it is that very order and structure that gives them the freedom to add their skills and improvise within the boundaries of the system.

James is moving on to his next assignment and he is carrying the lesson learned with him. He is using his skills and experience to help his new teammates succeed. Change doesn't come easy, but he is providing what is needed in a way that is in line with the rules and boundaries of the new team's standards and playbook.

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### NEWS UPDATE

## China becomes largest energy consumer

PARIS — International Energy Agency (IEA) calculations based on preliminary data show China has now overtaken the United States to become the world's largest energy user. China's rise to the top ranking was faster than expected as it was much less affected by the global financial crisis than the United States.

IEA said China's 2009 consumption of energy sources ranging from oil and coal to wind and solar power was equal to 2.26 billion tons of oil, compared to 2.16 billion tons used that year by the United States. China's energy consumption has more than doubled in less than a decade, from 1.107 billion tons in 2000 — driven by its burgeoning population and economic growth that hit 11.9 percent in the first quarter of this year. Yet, IEA said, on a per capita basis it is still only around one-third of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development average. Prospects for further growth are very strong considering the country's low per-capita consumption level and

the fact China is the most populous nation on the planet, with more than 1.3 billion people.

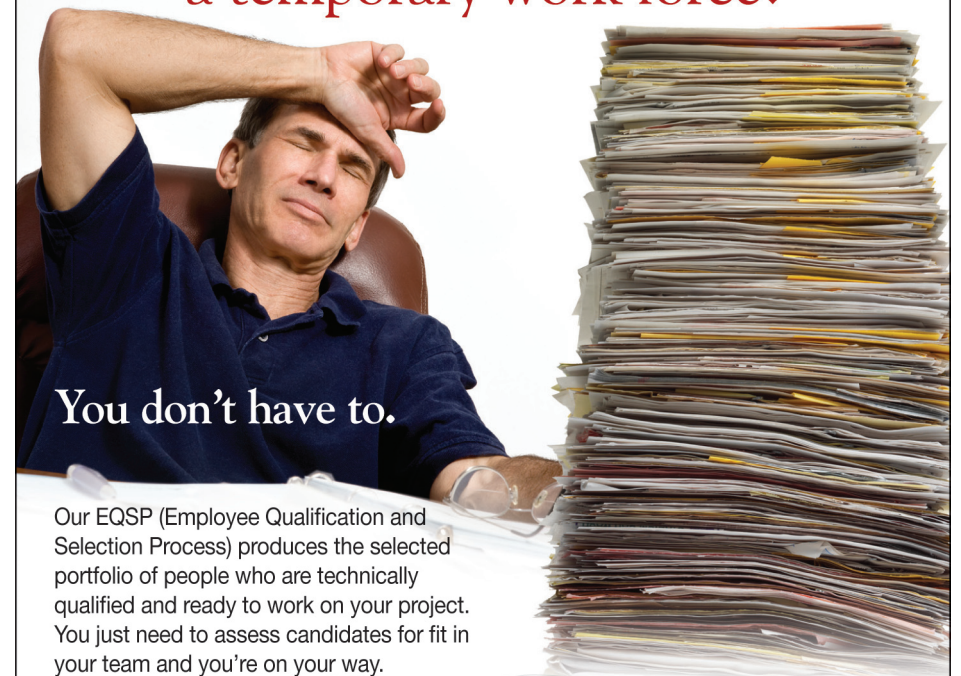
According to the IEA statistics, in 2009, more than half of China's total energy came from coal, which accounts for less than a quarter of U.S. consumption. Oil — the No. 1 energy source in the United States — made up less than one-fifth of the Chinese energy total.

China's demand today would be even higher still if the government had not made such progress in reducing the energy intensity (the energy input per dollar of output) of its economy, IEA said. It has also very quickly become one of the world's leaders in renewable energy, particularly wind power and solar energy, and paved the way for a big expansion of nuclear power.

The worldwide implications of these new trends will be assessed in the upcoming "World Energy Outlook 2010" to be released Nov. 9.

**For more information, visit [www.iea.org](http://www.iea.org) or call (+33 1) 40 57 65 00/01.** ●

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