



What's New in the Literature?

by Terrance Malkinson

➤ **Most of us** have experienced pain in our lower back—particularly as we age. A new edition of a book by Stuart McGill of Canada's University of Waterloo, *Low Back Disorders: Evidence-Based Prevention and Rehabilitation* [3rd edition. Human Kinetics, 2016. www.humankinetics.com] will provide you with state-of-the-art information on scientifically based functional anatomy, and myths and realities, lowering risk, injury prevention, and effective treatment of back pain. The authoritative 400-page book concludes with information on an effective exercise program to build lower back strength and flexibility. Instructions and photographs are well-drafted. Additionally, upon purchase of the book you are provided with access to a web resource that offers video clips and other important information of value to prevent and treat back problems that invariably result as we age. This Canadian author is a world-renowned lecturer, and expert in spine function, injury prevention and rehabilitation.

➤ **The March 2017** issue of *Fast Company* [#213. www.fastcompany.com] provides its annual guide to companies leading the world in innovation. There are detailed profiles of each of the world's 50 most innovative companies. Leading the list is Amazon; followed by Google, Uber, and Apple. Profiles detail why each company is a leader in innovation and presents valuable insights on the organizational culture necessary to be a world leader in innovation. A common theme is talent and the ability of recruiters and managers to recognize natural individual creativity in an individual and then give the person the opportunity and freedom to blossom.

➤ **FORTUNE magazine provides** its annual list of "The World's Most Admired Companies" in its March 1, 2017 issue. [175(3):113-120. www.fortune.com]. Based upon the opinion of over 3,800 executives, analysts, directors and experts, Apple emerged as the leader in the overall "all-star" listing followed by Amazon and Starbucks. Companies are also ranked within 11 industry categories; profiles of some of the companies are provided for the reader. In the January 1 issue of the magazine the editors provide analysis of 10 new brands that are seen as remarkable breakthrough "superstars" from a survey of over 4,000 consumers in this competitive marketplace. ["Breakthrough Brands 2017" pp.64-69]. Included in the brands profile is information on why the brand was seen as significant. An interesting inset in the article provides the results of an additional query included with the survey on the top-fifteen existing brands and a short article by Jim Stengel on "How to Build a Break-through Brand."

The exponential growth of robotic technologies and artificial intelligence are causing researchers to identify and determine new ways to distinguish artificial from human intelligence.

➤ **In 1950 Alan Turing** devised a thought experiment (Turing Test – "Imitation Game") that has for many years been considered the ultimate test of machine intelligence. The exponential growth of robotic technologies and artificial intelligence are causing researchers to identify and determine new ways to distinguish artificial from human intelligence. "Am I Human?" is the intriguing title of an article by Gary Marcus in the March, 2017 issue of *Scientific American* [316(3):58-63. www.scientificamerican.com]. In this article four different approaches that researchers are developing to potentially replace the Turing test are described.

➤ **How does an organization** provide benefits in an age of freelance work, the sharing economy and contract employees? Sara Tatelman explores this topic in her article "The Gig is Up" [*Benefits Canada*. 41(2):10-12. February, 2017. www.benefitscanada.com]. A survey conducted by the Urban Worker Project revealed that the major concern of these "precarious" workers across Canada was access to extended health benefits. The author discusses the complexities of the issue, and provides case studies of some solutions. Additionally, the author provides information on issues related to the classification of a worker as an employee or as an independent contractor.

➤ **There has been** a substantial increase in the use of prescription opioids to treat pain in the past two decades and accompanying this the number of cases of opioid-related deaths from overdoses and misuse has regrettably risen. Interventions have generally failed to effectively address the root causes of the opioid crisis. Benedikt Fischer, Jurgen Rehm, and Mark Tyndall discuss in their research article what they believe would be an effective Canadian policy for tackling opioid overprescribing. ["Effective Canadian Policy to Reduce Harm from Prescription Opioids; Learning from Past Failures." *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 188(17/18):1240-1244. December 6, 2016. www.cmaj.ca]. Many

people who become addicted to opioids started out taking them for legitimate reasons. An increasing number of people are dying from non-prescription opioid and opioid-related products such as fentanyl.

➤ **The April 2017** issue of *Harvard Business Review* [95(2):50-63. www.hbr.org] focuses on the "New Science of Teamwork". Four articles provide information to help you understand how to combine different workstyles to help you manage your team and yourself better.

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Susan Johnson et al discuss how to get the best from the combination of team member personalities of: pioneer, driver, integrator, and guardian. Alison Bead summarizes research on five executives who discuss how understanding personality has helped them become better leaders. In a second article Alison Beard discusses the neurobiology of personality traits and how to identify and adjust productivity to personality style. In a final article Eben Harrell briefly discusses three personality tests that have been used to assess employees.

➤ **The January-February 2017** issue of *Entrepreneur* provides the entrepreneurial reader with many articles of interest. These include their annual ranking and state of the franchising industry ["Franchise 500". pp. 65-237. www.entrepreneur.com]. For anyone interested in franchising this indexed feature provides a wealth of information. Categorized by small, medium, and large companies, "The 153 Best Company Cultures in America" are discussed by the editors of *Entrepreneur*. In its March, 2017 issue [pp. 45-52], US employers were invited to complete a survey used to assess the company's strength across 10 core qualities of culture: collaboration, innovation, agility, communication, support, wellness, mission and value alignment, work environment, responsibility and performance focus. The top company in each category is profiled and insights on what makes the organizational culture of the winners outstanding are provided. ■

For Terrance Malkinson's biography please see page 7.