HICAPS Highlights
Providing a centralized approach to project management
Summer 2025

The "Flight to Quality": Redefining Workspaces for Employee Satisfaction and Business Success

At HICAPS, we recognize that today's workplaces must do more than simply house employees—they must inspire productivity, foster well-being, and reflect a company's values. The "flight to quality" movement goes beyond aesthetics; it represents a fundamental shift in how businesses approach office design, prioritizing employee experience, operational efficiency, and long-term growth.

The New Standard for Office Spaces

As organizations transition back to office-centric models, many are discovering that traditional workspaces no longer meet modern expectations. Employees now seek environments that actively support their performance, health, and collaboration—spaces designed not just for function, but for engagement and innovation.

While some commercial real estate markets still face high vacancy rates, demand is growing for premium office environments that blend thoughtful design with cutting-edge functionality. Companies are investing in features like biophilic elements (features that connect people with nature, promoting well-being and a sense of connection to the natural world), ergonomic workspaces, advanced acoustics, and smart technology—all of which contribute to a more dynamic and adaptable workplace.

Why Investing in Quality Pays Off

Studies consistently show that high-quality workspaces directly impact employee performance and satisfaction. A *Harvard Business Review* study found that employees in well-designed workspaces were 15% more productive due to better lighting, ergonomics, and layout, and according to CBRE, 78% of companies investing in premium office designs reported an easier time recruiting top talent, with candidates prioritizing workplace quality over salary in some cases.

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Employees in well-designed offices report higher engagement, greater productivity, and stronger loyalty to their organizations. They're also more likely to advocate for their company as a great place to work—a critical advantage in today's competitive talent market.

For businesses, this translates into tangible returns: reduced turnover, enhanced employer branding, and a workplace that fosters creativity and collaboration. In an era where hybrid work remains prevalent, offices must offer something irreplaceable—an environment that employees want to return to, not just have to.

continued on page 4

HICAPS
HOOD INFORMATION CONTROL AND PLANNING SYSTEMS
P.O. Box 35165 | 600 N. Regional Road | Greensboro, NC 27425
TEL: 336.665.1234 | FAX: 336.665.1855 | WEBSITE: www.hicaps.com

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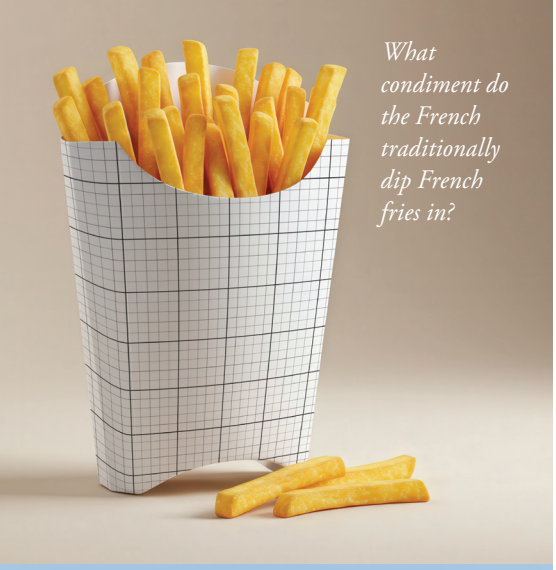


What condiment do the French traditionally dip French fries in?

Trivial Pursuits

1) What condiment do the French traditionally dip French fries in?
a) mustard
b) mayonnaise
c) chutney
d) ketchup

2) Which famous person coined the Maxwell House slogan "good to the last drop"?
a) Annie Oakley
b) Ed Muskie
c) Teddy Roosevelt
d) Leo Burnett

3) Where on a horse would you find the body part called a "frog"?
a) neck
b) hoof
c) mane
d) tail

4) What laundry additive was the sponsor of the TV series *Death Valley Days*?
a) 20 Mule Team Borax
b) Purex
c) Downy
d) Mrs. Stewart's Liquid Bluing

5) What former Brat Pack-er portrayed Bill Gates in the 1999 TV movie *Pirates of Silicon Valley*?
a) Emilio Estevez
b) Andrew McCarthy
c) Judd Nelson
d) Anthony Michael Hall

—mentalfloss.com

Answers: 1) b; 2) c (Strangely, Coca-Cola was also using the slogan at the time); 3) b (It's the triangular indentation on the underside of a horse's hoof); 4) a; 5) d

Here's Why Squinting Helps You See Better

We've all been there: You're struggling to see something properly, so you narrow your eyes and somehow bring the object into clarity. But when you really think about it, there's something counterintuitive about squinting. Why does using less of your eye help you see something more clearly?

It's because your lens, on the front of your eye, is constantly changing shape in order to focus on objects both near and far. Squinting temporarily reshapes the lens further to help focus light where it needs to go and to reduce the amount of light going into your eye. To see well, we need light to be focused by the lens to hit the retina—which is located at the back of the eye—as precisely as possible. There are limits to how well we can do this, particularly in challenging light conditions, or when our lenses aren't in great shape. This applies to a lot of us, as our lenses change as we age.

According to the Cornell Center for Materials Research, "By squinting people are actually changing the shape of their eye, just ever so little, so that the light focuses correctly on the retina."

Like narrowing the aperture on a camera, narrowing your eyes with your eyelids reduces this interference and only allows light to come in nearer the center of the lens, allowing for a more focused concentration of light on the retina. This is sometimes called the pinhole effect.

Winning People Over

You've got a great proposal to make your workplace more efficient and effective. But getting your co-workers' support is going to be tough. Here are a few tips that will smooth the way:

- **Know the sticking points.** Never walk into a presentation without considering which issues will come up. Try to anticipate others' concerns and reactions, and draw up a game plan to handle them.
- **Focus on the issues.** Don't take objections personally. Stick to the issues and your goals.
- **Gain understanding.** Listen carefully to get to the bottom of objections and differences of opinion so you can move toward resolving the issues.
- **Ask for help.** Seek the advice of mentors and people you respect. You'll need the backup when you face resistance from colleagues.
- **Choose your battles.** Remember that not all issues carry the same weight or importance. Select your battles; put your energies into the ones that count.

The Importance Of Training

Training is important to the development of your staff and your company's success. But training sessions are often met with boredom or skepticism by employees who see them as a waste of time. These tips can help encourage participation:

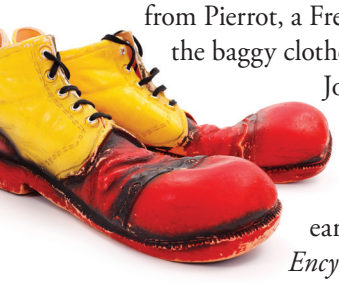
- **Get input from the trainees.** Before you plan a training session, find out what employees think of the proposed training. What do they think they can get out of it? What would they like to accomplish?
- **Explain how the training will help them do their job better.** Make sure they see how the training will let them become more effective, and how it will benefit them personally and professionally.
- **Emphasize that training is meant to improve skills.** Sometimes employees interpret training as a message that they're not good at something. Acknowledge what people already do well, and shift the focus to what they can do even better.
- **Be an active participant.** Don't just observe. Take part in training. This way, you reaffirm the message that everyone can benefit from the training.

Why Do Clowns Wear Big Shoes?

A clown starts his or her clowning from the ground up, which is why their big, floppy shoes are so recognizable. But what's behind this funny business?

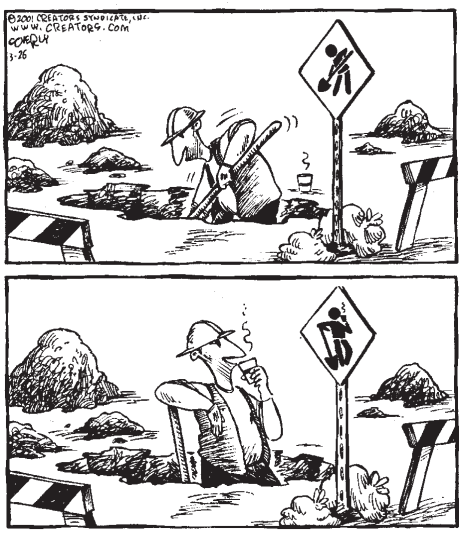
Clown user "Tickles and Trouble" posed this question to *Clown Forum*, an online message board for clowns. One of the clown responses included, "To make sure everyone in the audience gets a big kick out the show!"

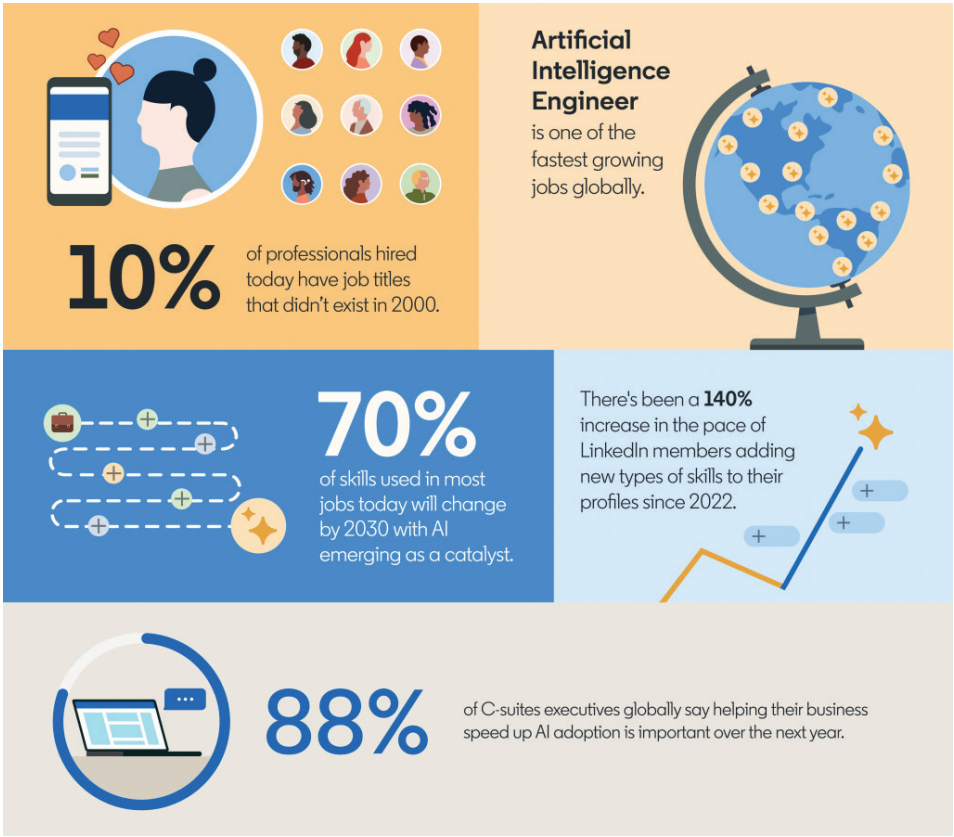
Here's the real reason: The tradition originates from early clowns, upon whom modern iterations have based their look. The white face paint is said to come from Pierrot, a French clown, while the baggy clothes are inspired by Joseph Grimaldi's "Joey," who first appeared in England in the early 1800s and who *Encyclopedia Britannica* credits as being "the earliest of the true circus clowns."



Joey himself was likely inspired by even earlier characters from English touring theaters. The main three—Pickelherring, John Posset, and Stockfish—rose to popularity in the 17th century when these companies played throughout Germany, and their buffoonery was exemplified by the absurd clothing the actors wore—big shoes included.

SPEED BUMP **Dave Coverly**





The Impact of AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing work, and businesses and professionals are having to adapt. LinkedIn's inaugural *Work Change Report: AI Is Coming to Work*, reveals how AI is creating new jobs and skills, transforming careers, and spurring productivity and innovation. Some top findings include:

- Professionals entering the workforce today are on pace to hold twice as many jobs over their careers compared to 15 years ago.
- By 2030, we expect 70% of the skills used in most jobs will change, with AI emerging as a catalyst.
- 88% of C-suite executives globally say helping their business speed up AI adoption over the next year is important, and 80% believe it will foster a more innovative workplace culture.
- 51% of the businesses that have adopted Generative AI (GAI) reported a revenue increase of 10% or more.

Fun Facts About Coffee

- Coffee beans are actually the seeds from the coffee plant's berry-like fruits.
- Coffee beans are green when they are picked.
- The world's first coffee house opened in Turkey in 1475.
- Brazil is the largest coffee producer in the world.
- Light roasts have more caffeine than dark roasts.
- The first home espresso machine was invented in 1938.
- The most expensive coffee in the world is called Kopi Luwak and will cost you $600 per pound.

Flight to Quality… *continued from page 1*

Transforming Workspaces with HICAPS

Our Commercial Interiors, Construction, and Construction Management teams specialize in helping businesses evolve from functional to exceptional. We work closely with clients to create spaces that align with their culture, enhance employee experience, and integrate sustainability, flexibility, and technology.

Whether redesigning an existing office or building a new one from the ground up, we ensure every detail—from layout to lighting—supports both business objectives and employee well-being. The result? A workplace that doesn't just meet expectations but exceeds them, driving success for years to come.

Invest in Your Workplace—Invest in Your Future

The "flight to quality" isn't slowing down—it's becoming the standard. Companies that act now will future-proof their workplaces, ensuring they remain competitive, desirable, and productive for years to come.

Are you ready to elevate your office space? Contact HICAPS today to discuss how we can bring your vision to life. Connect with our team:

- Kelly Holcomb – Director of Commercial Interiors
- Jennifer Moore – Director of Construction
- Dave Smith – VP, Construction Management

Exceptional workplaces start with exceptional design. Let's build yours together.

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Greensboro, NC 27425

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