

San Francisco Chronicle

Corporations scale back on perks

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San Francisco Chronicle

March 2002

In the Bay Area, where consumers pride themselves on their well-educated palates, good coffee became de rigueur at offices during the tech boom. Some dot-coms famously splurged on \$3,000 cappuccino machines as a recruitment lure.

"Gourmet coffee is a cheap, high-profile perk that will show not only the company's employees but their vendors and business partners that they're a professionally run company," said Valerie Frederickson, chief executive of Valerie Frederickson & Co., a Menlo Park consulting firm.