

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

June 2010

- 
- ▶ Chic office styles for the Summer
 - ▶ Is your Email Culture strangling you?
 - ▶ Performance Evaluation
 - ▶ Innovation needs Communication

A publication of
Deskdemon.com



Experience fabulous colour with Data Copy and ColorLok®

Win with Data Copy and ColorLok

Data Copy and ColorLok Technology gives you the chance to get brilliant results on all your print jobs, whether you're in the office or at home. Check it out for your chance to win one of five HP ColorLok printer and Data Copy packs valued at over £200.00. [Click Here to enter](#)



What is ColorLok Technology?

It's simple. It's an exciting paper and printing development that delivers you bolder blacks, brighter colours and more reliable performance. It will help you make your images, graphics and documents come to life with vibrant colours and a professional look.

How do I get the ColorLok Technology effect?

You just need two things: Data Copy and a printer with ColorLok Technology. When you put these together you'll be amazed at the difference in the vibrancy of colour, the boldness of the blacks and the improved print quality.

What are the actual benefits of using Data Copy & printer with ColorLok Technology?

- Tests show that using Data Copy papers with ColorLok Technology printers deliver up to a 50% improvement in colour vividness, brilliance and density.
- Even better contrast between brilliant colours and the high whiteness of the paper adds impact to your documents.
- Up to 50% bolder blacks and greater contrast when printing black-and-white on inkjet printers for improved readability.
- Up to 36% faster drying time.
- Up to 92% less print or show through.

Data Copy. Simply Perfect Paper.

- Data Copy Everyday Printing is ideal for reports, internal jobs and volume printing.
- Data Copy Colour Printing is ideal for high profile communications, colour presentations, graphics and imagery.
- Made to the ColorLok standard.
- Guaranteed for archiving and for use on all office technologies.
- FSC certified for environmental peace of mind.
- Visit www.datacopy.com to find out where to buy your Data Copy paper.

Click here to enter now to win!

To experience the ColorLok difference, just answer three simple questions. You could win an HP Officejet Pro 8500 Wireless Inkjet Printer and a box of Data Copy Everyday Printing and a box of Data Copy Colour Printing package valued at over £200. There are five prize packages up for grabs. [Click Here to enter](#)

News 4,6,9

News Feature: 5

New hiring trends survey from Crone Corkill forecasts a good year ahead for office support staff

Events 7

News Feature: 8

The importance of effective Business Continuity Management

Venues 10

Workplace issues 12

- How to handle boredom in the office
- Why am I talking? Saying too much at work
- 5 strategies for Working Less and Accomplishing More

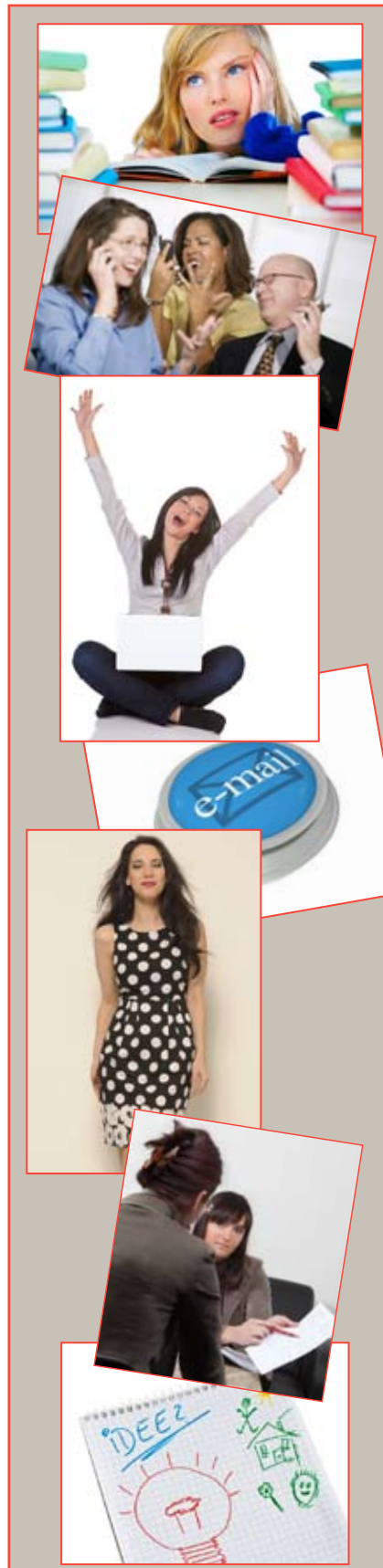
Keep your cool: 16

Chic office styles for the summer

Is your Email Culture strangling you? 20

Performance Evaluation 22

What does Communication have to do with Innovation? 24



PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

www.deskdemon.com

Terminal House, Station Approach, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8AS

Editorial

PR contact: Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Features Editor

Susan Silva

Advertising

Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Jane Olsen

Sales & Marketing Director
0870 410 4036
jane@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos
Graphic Design
janebigos@deskdemon.com
Kulasekaram Vimalarasa (Raj)
Web Developer
raj@deskdemon.com

Suresh Karupppannan
Website Designer
suresh@deskdemon.com

Publisher

Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani
Founder, CEO
mek@deskdemon.com



PA Enterprise is sent to DeskDemon UK e-newsletter, audited by ABCe (5th/6th July 2007) with a net distribution of 70,581 email addresses.

Copyright 2010 DeskDemon.com

All rights reserved. No part of this Publication (whether in hardcopy or electronic form) may be copied, transmitted, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written consent of DeskDemon.com. Whilst every care is taken in the compilation and publication of this publication, DeskDemon.com can not be held responsible for any consequences, mistakes or omissions. DeskDemon.com can not accept any responsibility for any inaccuracies or changes, or for consequential loss arising from such changes or inaccuracies, or for any other loss. Inclusion of any advertisements does not imply recommendations or endorsement by DeskDemon.com

Britain's hungover workforce

New Drinkaware research reveals that 520,000 people in Great Britain go to work with a hangover each day.

The average person goes to work suffering from the effects of too much alcohol three times a month, with almost one in five people (17%) admitting that they struggle to manage their workload and make mistakes as a direct result of being hungover.

As businesses prepare for the impact of the World Cup we have teamed up with healthcare provider Bupa to compile advice for employers on managing issues related to alcohol in the workplace, along with alcohol advice for employees.

Advice to employers

- **Recognise the risks**
Intoxicated or hungover employees can be disruptive and unproductive at work, cause accidents and upset others.
- **Set out a clear alcohol policy**
Work with HR, employees representatives and legal to build a policy and clearly communicate to all employees what is acceptable. See Alcohol and Drug Misuse in the Workplace (2006) by the Royal College of Physicians' Faculty of Occupational Medicine.
- **Care for staff**
If an employee appears to be intoxicated, employers have a duty of care to that employee as well as all other staff and can ask the person to go home. Any incident should be investigated thoroughly to address safety issues and potential underlying reasons for the behaviour.

- **Watch for warning signals**
If you suspect someone is regularly coming into work with a hangover, it might be a sign of alcohol or mental health problems. Employers are advised to consult their alcohol policy and work with their HR department to address the situation.

- **Know the limits**
In some industries, alcohol can put lives at risk – e.g. train and bus drivers. There are legal limits on the acceptable levels of alcohol, which are often well below the level of any feeling of intoxication. Employers are legally responsible for ensuring employees are regularly tested for alcohol and drug consumption.

Advice to employees

- While some people drink alcohol to help them relax, long-term drinking can lead to a range of health and social problems including addiction, obesity and relationship problems. Drinking every day will affect your concentration and ability to work. This is likely to make you feel more stressed in the long run. Have at least two alcohol-free days a week.
- Alcohol is a depressant and calms certain parts of the brain. So, while alcohol may help you to temporarily forget what is troubling you, it doesn't make your problems go away. If you are regularly feeling stressed at work, talk to your manager, he or she has a



duty to take reasonable steps to try to resolve the problem.

- There are many alternatives to drinking to help reduce your stress levels. Try to exercise every day if possible. Exercise helps to use up the stress hormones that cause your symptoms, giving you a sense of wellbeing and helping your muscles to relax. Even a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day will help combat stress.
- You can still enjoy a drink after work with colleagues or when you get home. Just stick to the guidelines that recommend men don't regularly exceed more than 3-4 units of alcohol per day and women to stay within 2-3 units per day. A pint of strong beer or a large glass of wine is 3 units.

www.drinkaware.co.uk

THE POST-IT BRAND RAMPS UP ITS CAMPAIGN TO CELEBRATE 30 YEARS

A workman installs a giant 5m x 5m Post-it Note near London's Liverpool Street station to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Post-it Brand from 3M. It announces the launch of a new innovative Facebook game 'Don't Forget Your Friends' - www.dontforgetyourfriends.com

'Don't Forget Your Friends' is an interactive game that celebrates the innovative products that help you to remember the things that matter. A holiday of a lifetime can be won if your memory is up to the challenge!

Don't forget, the on-pack anniversary promotion continues. From July to September the 'Surprises' promotion will feature on packs of Post-it Recycled Notes and Post-it Index Pens and Highlighters. Check out www.post-it.co.uk/surprises for more details.



New hiring trends survey from Crone Corkill forecasts a good year ahead for office support staff

A new market report and salary survey from executive PA and office support recruiter Crone Corkill has pointed to an optimistic start to 2010 with increases in vacancies across all industry sectors. The report, which questioned 420 employers, has revealed that salaries are improving after the flat times of the recession, with bidding wars for the very best candidates and even a return in some instances to the £50k PA!

Crone Corkill Director Lee Dempster commented: "While there is no doubt we're seeing an increase in the numbers of vacancies, there's still a perception among some employers that there are a large number of candidates on the market. Despite the belief that it will be easy for firms to recruit from a large pool of available talent, high quality support staff continue to be in short supply."

Particular areas of note include the banking and professional services sector which has seen a marked increase in hiring, with organisations such as banks, hedge funds, executive search firms and professional accounting practices all hiring both temporary and permanent business support staff. The legal sector also saw an increase in the number of available roles but with more fixed term contracts as firms wait to see whether an increase in workload will be sustained. Against the backdrop of redundancies during the recession, some legal firms have had to outsource work as they do not have the support resources in place to handle it. It's expected that this will translate into an increase in hiring in coming months. In terms of the Executive PA and



business support sector, the report reveals that during the recession staff took on more responsibilities and gained a wider level of experience, but suggests that some skills have suffered as a result. Typing speeds and keyboard skills have declined and the introduction of new technologies has led to the idea that skills such as audio typing, shorthand and minute taking are outdated.

"Demand for experience in these areas is, in fact, outstripping supply. This could mean that knowledge of the traditional tricks of the trade is a crucial factor in increasing employability," added Dempster.

The report also has good news for receptionists which are currently in very short supply. As the initial point of contact for businesses where first impressions count, they're in a critical role that's increasingly highly valued. The temporary sector is also increasingly busy. Again, the

perception is that there are a lot of people temping as a result of the squeeze on permanent jobs in the downturn, but as Dempster points out: "We've found that in many cases temps with the most in-demand skill sets can be placed within the day, with interest from four or five different employers."

The most sought after support staff in the past six months have been Executive Assistants, with nearly a quarter of respondents commenting that they found them the most difficult roles to fill. There is also increasing demand for experienced team secretaries and PAs and, after marketing budgets were slashed during the recession, there has been a re-emergence of events and roadshows in the banking sector driving demand for event planning, graphic design and advanced powerpoint skills.

The report also found that retention and engagement were key issues for employers. "While over a third of employers offered additional bonuses as a retention tool, many organisations are realising that money is not always the main motivator", said Dempster, "and it is encouraging that over a quarter of respondents are seeking to change the scope of roles to improve job satisfaction." One surprising finding is that only 3% are offering flexible or remote working options – a policy that is often key to retaining top talent.

To find out more about the report's findings and to download a full copy, which includes a salary survey, market updates and recruitment trends, go to: <http://candidates.cronecorkill.co.uk>

More than half of UK employees vow to watch the World Cup on their work computers

More than half of Britons risk causing computer chaos by logging on to watch World Cup games online while at work, according to survey by ISP Eclipse.

Millions are planning to tune into games when they are streamed live but experts warn this could play havoc by slowing down – or in extreme cases – crashing office computer systems.

Clodagh Murphy, director of Eclipse, said: "UK workers clearly want to watch World Cup matches live on their PCs. However, we advise all businesses to be mindful about the impact this could have on their day-to-day business operations. Streamed content uses a lot of bandwidth and this could seriously impact the performance of their business internet connection."

"It could take much longer to download important files or use business-critical applications such as e-commerce sites, email or online backup. It might even lead to office computer systems crashing," she said.

37% thought that watching World Cup matches would not affect their work productivity and a quarter thought



there would be no impact on the speed of applications if all employees watched games online at work via online streaming sites.

However, Clodagh warned that there could be a potentially disruptive surge in broadband traffic, especially on Wednesday, June 23, when England plays Slovenia at 3pm.

www.eclipse.net.uk

1 in 3 firms prioritise letters over emails

Fasthosts Internet Ltd has found in a recent study a worrying number of companies still prioritise letters over emails, and may be alienating customers by losing emails. A further survey of 1400 UK adults found that 69% expect an email to be valued equally to a letter. Whilst over half of consumers believe they would spend more with email-efficient firms, only 29% of businesses recognise this. Furthermore, 45% of Britons now expect firms to be able to email documents such as quotes and brochures, whilst 61% of companies still do not offer the option.

Data from Fasthosts' 'Business Email Attitudes' study finds that a significant number of UK businesses are out of step with consumer expectations for email communication. Whilst three quarters of business owners believe email is an important tool for them, one third admit to still prioritising replies to written letters when these are received.

Healthy rewards are available for UK companies willing to optimise their use of email.

Full details of the survey can be found at www.fasthosts.co.uk.

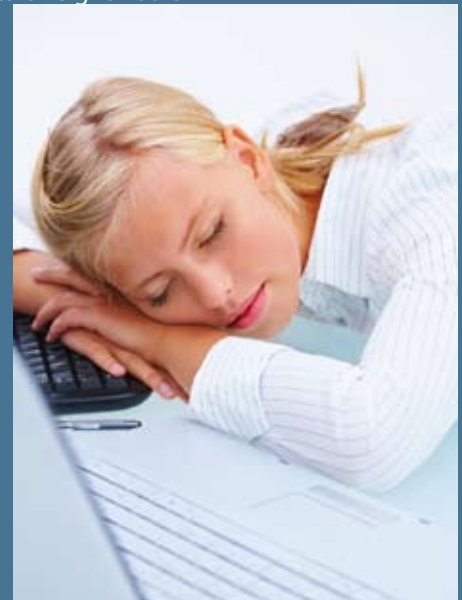
'Sleep debt' costs the economy £1 billion

The 'Travelodge Sleep Index', based on the sleep patterns of 6,000 adults, revealed the average Briton is getting just six hours and twenty one minutes sleep per night - well below the recommended sleep quota of eight hours.

The current sleep shortfall is estimated to be costing employers around £1 billion per year, as 8 million sick days are taken as result of a bad night's sleep compared to 3.4 million sick days in 2008.

Other findings showed that 54% blame a lack of sleep for their inability to concentrate at work, nearly half admitted to taking longer to complete tasks at work, and seven out of 10 admitted they are a 'horrible person' to be around when they have not had enough sleep and difficult to work with.

The desire to catch up on much-needed sleep is so great that a quarter of adults admitted to taking a sneaky catnap at work, with 16% dozing at their desk and 10% even retreating to the toilets for forty winks.



Travelodge's Sleep Director's top tips to get a good night's sleep:

- 1 Write down everything that is worrying you before you go to bed, in order to clear your mind
- 2 Stick to a regular bed time every night. For every late night try and go to bed earlier the following evening
- 3 Avoid eating after 7pm. Your body needs a couple of hours to digest food, if you go to bed on a full stomach, your brain and body are too busy digesting the food and you will find it more difficult to fall asleep

Best Parties Ever announces five new venues

The UK's leading Christmas party specialist Best Parties Ever is starting its second decade in style with the announcement of five new venues for this year. The company is expanding its portfolio into Cheltenham, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Sheffield and Weybridge, offering sole use and mixed group parties for local companies. Themes and dates for existing sites have also been revealed, along with a number of special offers.



Red Hot in Rio

Many sites are already booking up, showing that even though the country may still be in the grips of a recession, companies are recognising the importance of rewarding staff. Tim Stevens, managing director of Best Parties Ever, believes a Christmas party is a big factor in building company morale: "Each year, we cater for corporates of all sizes and they all agree on one point - the parties have a positive effect on staff. Our events offer businesses an

opportunity to say thank you - boosting team morale and making employees feel valued - while delivering considerable value for money."

The 2010 season runs from Friday 26 November until Wednesday 22 December, with prices starting from as little as £34.50 (+VAT) per person and early booking is recommended to secure the best seats in the house. The company is also offering half price dodgems on pre-purchased tokens and two for one on photographs:

The themes and locations for this year's festivities are:

Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, Sheffield: *Midnight in Monte Carlo*

Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh: *Hot in Havana*

Times Square, Newcastle: *Midnight in Monte Carlo*

Mercedes Benz World, Weybridge, Surrey: *Magical Montmartre... A Can Can Christmas*

Cheltenham Racecourse, Gloucestershire: *Midnight in Monte Carlo*

Kent County Showground, Maidstone: *Red Hot in Rio*

Legoland, Windsor: *To Russia with Love*

Syon House, West London: *Party at the Pyramids*

Kings Meadow, Reading: *Moonlit in Marrakech*

Towcester Racecourse, Northants: *Hot in Havana*

Aldenham Country Park, Watford: *Atlantis: Party Under The Sea*

FIVE Venue, Farnborough: *Chicago ... The Roaring Twenties*
North Weald, Epping: *One Night in Bangkok*

Barleylands, Billericay: *Moonlit in Marrakech*

Stoneham Park, Southampton: *To Russia with Love*

Willen Lake, Milton Keynes: *Party at the Pyramids*

Old Trafford, Manchester: *Midnight in Monte Carlo*



Chicago ... The Roaring Twenties



Magical Montmartre... A Can Can Christmas



Do you know someone who could be The Next Big Thing?

Following the success of last year's The Next Big Thing competition, Event UK are again searching for new and exceptionally talented acts looking to break into the corporate entertainment and party scene.

The search is on for a wide range of acts including vocalists, bands, musicians, comedians, dance acts, acrobats, magicians and the unusual - anyone who can bring something fresh, fun and innovative to corporate entertainment.



The winner will receive:

- £1000 prize money
- A contract with entertainment agent Sternberg Clarke
- A free stand at International Confex in March 2011
- Free marketing and promotional consultancy

Regional heats will be held around the UK throughout the summer and 12 shortlisted acts will battle it out at The Next Big Thing semi finals at Event UK on 21-22 September 2010, NEC Birmingham.

For more information and details on how to enter, visit www.event-uk.com

The Seven Deadly Sins of Exhibiting

If your company has booked space at an exhibition or trade show, the pressure is on to deliver a first-class environment with successful results. Sometimes the best results cannot be achieved alone. Lincoln West Consultants understand exhibitions and know that when done well, face to face marketing is the most powerful tool for driving increased sales & revenues.

They are offering a free copy of their white paper 'The Seven Deadly Sins of Exhibiting' as an additional guide to getting the most out of exhibitions, and a free consultation to help you get the most from your show presence.

Visit www.lincolnwest.co.uk for more information

The importance of effective **Business Continuity Management**

By Bryan Taylor, Sitehelpdesk.co.uk

We all understand the ongoing concerns of keeping your business afloat when disaster strikes. Whether this is the affect of the adverse weather conditions or the impact of global warming over the next few years, most businesses are aware of the need to safeguard the operational element of the company. Having said that it's the same old story for most of us, we believe business continuity in the event of disaster is important but we only do something about it when disaster strikes (often when the damage is done and it is too late). System process documentation usually occurs after system or network outages and after disasters strike. This is simply too late for a business that is serious about ensuring its continuity.

This years' abundance of snow meant that many people could not get to work. Companies had to either cease operation for the duration of the cold spell or take advantage of home working facilities where possible – this is most certainly not doable for all industry sectors. Those that were unprepared will have most certainly lost a lot of money in the process – The Sun reported around £1bn lost revenue during the cold snap this year.

Using web browser accessible systems that are ideally suited for remote and home working means that service and support operations continue, unhindered by travel problems, which is vital for effective business continuity.

Dealing with Natural Disasters

With the expected rise in the impact of global warming, flooding is certainly one disaster that is increasingly likely to affect more businesses. As a result damage to businesses caused by flooding is becoming more common place. As well as water damage it affects communications and power so disaster recovery planning for replacement equipment, remote working and for office relocation needs to be considered by all low-lying businesses.

Business Continuity record keeping

One thing I like to ask IT Managers when we meet away from their office



is whether they have their Disaster Recovery (DR) pack to hand - I've never met one that has. Businesses can ensure that their company operates consistently whatever happens by taking some simple steps. Disasters rarely strike when you are in the office so make sure you have a reliable and up-to-date DR pack that you keep outside the office. Using a system that has a comprehensive inventory of all of the IT infrastructure components and server recovery procedures is paramount. This should be constantly maintained as part of day to day operations instead of relying on a periodic audit, destined to become immediately out of date. In addition to this, having backup and restore registers and off site media archive registers will help to ensure that data is properly protected.

One of the main areas of risk is getting a service back online quickly after a disaster has struck. Adequate records of the equipment type, its role, the configuration, who is responsible for rebuilding and restoring data onto it and the priority that things need to be done in are all essential elements of any disaster recovery system.

Using a service desk system that includes full audit trails of any asset changes via user request call logs and changes of the allocation, location and direct changes to the configuration is important. This can be achieved by using a system even without other

formal documentation controls which are prone to be avoided and regarded as tedious paperwork.

Business continuity is still high priority for many organisations today but the fact is that too many companies act to plug the holes after the event of a disaster resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of lost earnings. A re-education and a real shift in the way we manage the whole disaster recovery process is needed if business are to survive the possible hurdles to come.

About sitehelpdesk.com

Sitehelpdesk is a web browser-based support software solution designed to help internal support departments, such as IT, HR or Facilities to operate more efficiently. The software provides instant access from anywhere on the network to support requests that may be logged and tracked by staff themselves. The intuitive design of the software makes it easy to use and customise to blend with the corporate style and image. Calls logged into the sitehelpdesk system can be answered simply through FAQ prompts, or routed depending on the level of help needed, ensuring that the calls are managed by the most relevant consultant. Sitehelpdesk-IT includes a built in disaster Recovery Pack.

www.sitehelpdesk.com

WORKED UP – THE DEATH OF THE NINE TO FIVE WORKING DAY

Research conducted by food brand Merchant Gourmet, found that the average Brit slogs it out for more than nine hours a day with just a 33 minute lunch break.

Heavier workloads mean that the typical employee is now sat at their desk by 8.28am and won't leave the office until 5.29pm. One in five blame this on pressure from bosses or the fear of looking bad in front of colleagues.

Clive Moxham, Sales and Marketing Director for Merchant Gourmet, said: "It appears that Brits are working harder than ever. Overtime is now a part of our daily routine, working through breaks is commonplace and by the time we've travelled home and settled down for the evening we're exhausted.

"We're spending almost 12 hours a day in 'work mode' and this is affecting our diets, our health and our ability to unwind."

One in three workers are regularly at their desk before 8am in order to keep on top of their work and half of those surveyed said that they simply wouldn't get the work done if they stuck to 'normal' hours. Meanwhile, a quarter of workers sweat it out hoping for a pay rise or promotion.

In fact, Brits are so hard at work that one in five end up having breakfast in front of their computer and one in six plod on with daily tasks while munching through their lunch – one in 14 don't stop for lunch time at all.



Continued Clive: "We were shocked to see how much our eating habits had changed as a result of the longer working day.

"Almost half of us don't sit down for breakfast at home anymore. 62 per cent won't leave the office during lunchtime and over half of us admit to having skipped an evening meal altogether because it's too late to cook by the time we get home.

"However, it was encouraging to see that as many as 57% of respondents still cooked the majority of their evening meals from scratch. And, despite the demands of their working day, consumers still manage to find 25

minutes each night to prepare food.

The survey also revealed that it can be as late as 8.05pm before the nation's workforce settle down for dinner, a full hour and a half later compared to the average mealtime two years ago.

This could be attributed to the fact that a quarter of those surveyed said they take work home with them – such as reading emails, sorting paperwork and preparing themselves for the next day. And, after household chores, looking after kids and cooking dinner, the average Brit won't properly switch off from work until 7.18pm.

Women missing out on money saving opportunities online

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT has launched the commerce section of its Savvy Citizens site (<http://savvycitizens.bcs.org>), with some research findings which suggest that women are lagging behind men when it comes to saving money online.



While 65% of respondents to the survey had bought or sold products online, those that had were more likely to be men. Just 59% of women had bought or sold products online, compared to 73% of men. Last month, a report by the price comparison website, PriceRunner, found that 95% of high street prices could be beaten online, with shoppers on the high street paying almost a third more.

One of the most popular online resources for money savvy Brits are price comparison websites, which over three in five respondents have used. However, men lead the way here too, with 68% of men using them, compared to 58% of women.

Elizabeth Sparrow, President, BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT said: 'The research suggests that men are more likely to use free online tools to get the best deals. We hope that women will make use of the Savvy Citizens commerce pages and embrace the full range of resources available online to make sure that they get the best value for their money.'

Women aren't just losing out on saving money online. The research also found that they are also less likely to use the services available to manage their money more conveniently. Just 40% of women had an online bank account, compared to 52% of men.

If you want to test how commercially savvy you are, check out the quiz on Facebook: <http://apps.facebook.com/savvycitizensquiz/>

New owner for Old Swan & Minster Mill in the Cotswolds

Lana de Savary, wife of the international entrepreneur, yachtsman and philanthropist Peter de Savary has acquired the Old Swan & Minster Mill on the River Windrush in the Cotswolds.

The celebrated Old Swan was built in the 15th Century as a traditional coaching inn. The adjoining 18th Century Mill was a traditional working woollen mill. In recent years, the properties have operated as a meetings and weddings venue.

Romantically set in over 60 acres of gardens, orchards and surrounded by what remains of the ancient Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood, the Old Swan & Minster Mill have been at the centre of village life for nearly 600 years and are quintessentially English.

The Old Swan will benefit from a restoration programme of its 16 historic guestrooms, bar and dining rooms. The 18th Century Mill will also be fully restored and the adjoining 40 contemporary mill-race guest rooms will be refurbished.

A number of additional facilities and services will be added including an outstanding destination spa with indoor and outdoor pool. An architecturally stunning Great Hall will be created that will historically fit with the village and surrounds. New formal gardens, a traditional vegetable garden and one of the country's largest wild flower meadows (40 acres) will also be created alongside the River Windrush.

The de Savary's plan to redefine the Old Swan as a traditional coaching inn with luxurious and comfortable furnishings and a gastro-pub dining experience. This theme will run through all their boutique inns in the future taking inspiration from their location in terms of food and ambiance.

www.oldswanandminstermill.com



Turnberry Scotland unveils a new corporate event suite

The Turnberry Suite combines a five-star venue for up to 200 people with direct access to a large private outdoor terrace offering space for groups to enjoy summer barbecues and evening drinks as well as elevated views over the legendary Ailsa golf course, Irish Sea and island of Ailsa Craig.

The Turnberry suite is spacious and well suited for corporate dinners and social events. Up to 200 guests can be catered for in banqueting style, with staging and a dance floor easily accommodated if required.



For larger events, there are the Turnberry Suite and The Caledonia, each boasting natural daylight, ample break-out space and catering up to 200 guests for a dinner.

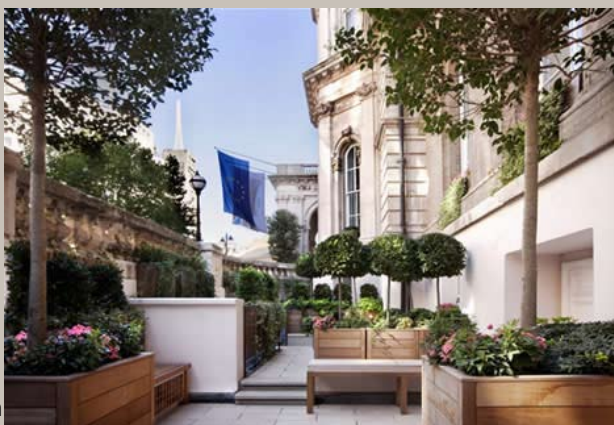
Specialising in bespoke boardroom experiences, delegates can choose from a variety of smaller meeting rooms and private dining spaces throughout the resort.

www.turnberryresort.co.uk/meetings

London's newest al fresco summer venue

The latest venue to check-out this summer is the new exterior courtyard garden at the front of The Langham, which provides a fabulous outdoor cocktail venue in the heart of London.

Raised beds and planters are filled with box hedges, topiary bay trees and seasonal summer flowers, giving the feel of a classic English courtyard garden.



Stepping back into the hotel, The Terrace Garden also has a dedicated lounge and bar for guests wishing to be indoors and watch the summer sporting events on a large flat screen plasma television, such as the FIFA World Cup or the Wimbledon Finals.

This seasonal bar will open on Monday 14 June, for the start of Royal Ascot week and run through August. Open Monday to Saturday from 4.00pm to 11.00pm.

Visit Chester & Cheshire's venue boom

Cheshire has seen a number of high profile venue openings in May, according to the tourism management organisation for the destination.

Fiona Brown, Business Tourism Account Manager at Visit Chester & Cheshire comments: "The multimillion pound investments taking place in Cheshire's meetings, conferences and events venues demonstrates how, as a destination, we are working to attract business tourism by consistently improving and developing our facilities. It is a very exciting time for us and we have already had a number of enquiries relating to the new facilities we now boast".

The new openings in Cheshire include:

Abode Chester

The 85 bedroom Abode Chester, with magnificent views overlooking



Chester Racecourse, offers luxury accommodation, a Michael Caines restaurant and Champagne Bar that can be booked exclusively for 240.

Carden Park Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa

Following a £350,000 refurbishment, Carden Park has unveiled a new state of the art business and conference facility. The self contained Carden Suite, which has its own entrance and car park, can accommodate up to 400 delegates and offers a Bose sound system, a 6,000 starlight optical fibre lighting system, nine 60inch plasma TVs and a complete refurbishment of the adjoining breakout area and bar.

Cottons Hotel & Spa

The Cottons Hotel's Verandah Suite opens following a £1m remodelling and development programme. Coinciding



with the venue's 25 anniversary, the suite can accommodate up to 180 delegates and features a spectacular glass fronted balcony with views of the surrounding countryside.

Peckforton Castle

Nearing the final stages of its £1.7million renovation, Peckforton Castle is soon to open 11 new executive bedrooms, a Servant pantry brasserie, and two beauty treatment rooms.

Quay Hotel & Spa, Wales

The Quay Hotel in Wales has opened its largest meetings and conference area. The Castle Suite can hold up to 240 delegates, can be divided into two soundproof sections and boasts floor to ceiling windows overlooking the Conwy Estuary. The hotel has also opened a new Grill Room Restaurant available for corporate hire.



Design Hotel in London offers 50% discounted rates

Town Hall Hotel & Apartments is the dream pied à terre; a special place in London's vibrant East End where the luxuries of a five-star hotel are combined with the space, convenience and chic of a designer apartment. Whether you're working out in the pool, enjoying a lemongrass martini in Viajante bar or relaxing in your spacious apartment, no-one who's tried Town Hall living will ever go back to a standard hotel again.

Combining avant-garde design with all the imposing grandeur of Edwardian architecture and art-deco interiors, this is an unforgettable venue. No wonder so many film makers have chosen to film here; you might recognise some of the rooms from Atonement, Brideshead Revisited and even Poirot.

To celebrate the opening all new bookings between up to 15 June receives a 50% discount off the normal published rates. For full details email reservations@townhallhotel.com.

Sex & the City 2 at The Levin Hotel, Knightsbridge

Sometimes you just have to get away with the girls...and where better to go than The Levin Hotel in stylish Knightsbridge. They have put together a special offer for the release of Sex and the City 2, including an overnight stay in



one of their sexy double rooms, a delicious Cosmopolitan at The Capital bar next door and a guide to the nearest cinemas, Prada, Manolo Blahnik and La Perla stores. After a good night out you'll be treated to a refreshing Continental breakfast in the trendy Le Metro brasserie the next morning. The only thing you have to do yourself...Have Fun!

www.thelevinhotel.co.uk/specialoffers.html

Workplace issues

How to handle boredom in the office

By DeskDemon

While we all want jobs that stimulate our interest, fuel our passions and inspire us to improve ourselves and the world around us in ways that we cannot presently even imagine, sometimes we end up in jobs that are, well, let's just say a little more mundane. Sometimes we take these employment opportunities because we need the money, while other times they are stepping stones on the way to the career that we want. Sometimes, we do not even know that the path we are choosing is going to be quite so insufferably dull until we have already gotten started in the job. However, regardless of why we are in a position in which we are bored in the office, the fact remains that boredom at work not only impacts the way that you view yourself and your job, but also directly affects your job performance, your workplace attitude and how quickly you are able to advance yourself to a better position.

When an employee is bored in the workplace, it usually shows. That employee might find themselves devoting an inordinate amount of time to online Scrabble or other computer games or devoting hours of the day to keeping up with Facebook or other social networking activities. Some fall prey to gossip and excessive small talk. While these activities may be perfectly justifiable given that you have nothing else to do, the odds are good that your employer will not find your fascination (even if it is born of necessity thanks to your boredom) with online diversions



particularly understandable or reason for advancement. Furthermore, you, yourself, will start to find that you are increasingly dissatisfied with work if you are not actually putting your talents and abilities to productive use. Over time, you will likely discover that you are dreading heading into the office each morning thanks to the complete waste of your time and talents that occurs there.

So, this is a pretty dismal situation. Now that we've established that boredom at the office is a problem, though, it is time to develop some active, intelligent, rewarding ways to get around this problem and, ultimately, resolve it permanently before you find yourself stuck in a position that you find untenable.

Invest in Some Education

If you are having trouble filling your days at work, or if the work

you are doing is not very exciting to you, then adding some expertise to your resume is a great way to resolve both issues at once. Even better, many employers will fund learning activities as long as they can see a way that your new abilities will help further the interests of the company. Choose an area at your job that you believe would be interesting and fulfilling to work in, and then determine what types of experience and knowledge you need in order to work in that area. If possible, select a niche that is currently not being filled so that your employer will be able to see immediately benefits when you start filling that void and so that you will have the opportunity to start working in a new field immediately upon completion of your continuing education. Not only will your efforts result in more responsibilities and things to

do at work, but it also can result in a higher pay rate and a more marketable resume. Even better, you can get your studying done at work.

Look for Things to Do

Offer to help colleagues or supervisors with tasks that they are trying to get done. This is an informal learning opportunity, and it shows that you are actively trying to expand your role in the office, which makes you more likely to come to mind when employers are thinking about advancement and pay raises. Additionally, once you have done some work together, you will have a stronger rapport with the people around you and a better overall reputation for hard work in the office. Like it or not, this will not come naturally if you stick to online Scrabble.

Clean Up

If you are not usually bored at the office, but are experiencing a few slow days, then you may need to try something on a smaller scale to help you pass the time. Cleaning out your desk or straightening up your office is an ideal way to help you use up some time at work while establishing a more productive work environment in the process. Rearranging files, throwing out trash and getting your work space clear and ready for action will make you feel like you have accomplished a great deal at work, even if it was not the fullest day you have ever had. And even better: the next day when things are back to normal, you will have a clear desk space that is ready for action.

Boredom at the office is something that cannot be allowed to spiral out of control. If you allow yourself to be sucked into the quicksand of simply filling time, you will soon discover that your job is not rewarding and your efforts at work are less likely to be rewarded at work.

Why am I talking?

Saying too much at work

by Jane Cranston

I learned the W-A-I-T acronym in my graduate school training. I've always posted a small note on my wall, out of the client's view, as a reminder. The letters stand for "Why Am I Talking?"

Why do people talk too much in business situations?

- They're anxious. Maybe the gathering is about a difficult subject or has important leaders present. Most people don't want to be the center of attention, yet they're afraid they'll be ignored or negated. So they talk and talk. This is the anxiety speaking and it often isn't pretty or welcome.
- All of us need some sense of control but a few of us want a huge amount. One way people act on the need is to take charge and dominate the conversation. We're all capable of this risky behaviour.
- You're surrounded by some of the best and the brightest and want to show them your brainpower—so, you speak up, maybe too often. Not a bad strategy as long

as what you say is well thought out and in synch with the topic at hand. Beware of the impulse to make a statement just to prove you're in the game.

- People are very competitive in obvious or subtle ways. Don't be sucked into a winless battle or feel forced to make a comment or commitments you're really not ready to live up to just because you want to win or beat out a colleague.
- Clients often laugh when I warn them "never write down the first thing I say, because it's not what I mean." I have to process information, sometimes out loud, to get to its essence. When sitting with a coaching client, I'll often do this very openly. Now, if I was to use my convoluted way of getting to a point among strangers or in a business development meeting, it might get me into some trouble or at least shown the door. If you tend to think out loud, keep it down and warn your public.



Workplace issues

How Do You Know You're Talking too Much?

When the listeners begin to roll their eyes, look out the window or to the floor, play with their handheld devices, or show no reaction whatsoever—you've lost them. Most helpful is the colleague who gently interrupts in an attempt to stop your forward progress. I had a boss who kicked us under the table, sometimes very hard, to relay the same message "be quiet." However your audience reacts, it's usually pretty obvious to tell people are not listening, assuming you're open to the feedback.

Tips and Techniques:

- Monitor yourself by using WAIT, asking yourself "Why Am I Talking?"
- Count to ten before piping up. Take time to think about

what and how you want to say something before it crosses your lips.

- Don't be the first to talk. Let the discussion get going, assuring you're on topic and tone.
- Make sure you're in the right place with the right people before being argumentative, controversial, or discussing confidential information. Take the temperature of the room and the pulse of the participants. Does your content fit?
- Write down points you want to make. Put them in logical order so your delivery is concise and easy to understand.
- Stay on topic. Is there anything more annoying than someone who's off on a tangent while everyone is trying to make a decision?

Making your point, selling yourself in an interview, leading a discussion, or presenting to peers, colleagues, or supervisors are just some of the areas we cover in executive coaching sessions. Some very smart people can find themselves pretty tongue-tied or off topic without some practicing with a pro.

About the Author

Jane Cranston is an executive coach, career coach and "The Job Search Expert" based in New York City. She shares with success driven executives and professionals techniques, skills and goal setting strategies that advance their careers, increase people management skills and assists them in career change or job search. Receive Jane's free "Competitive Edge Report" at www.executivecoachny.com.

5 strategies for Working Less and Accomplishing More

by Barbara Hemphill

- ***Do you work late nights and weekends?***
- ***Do you feel guilty that you're not spending more time with your family?***
- ***Are you frequently overwhelmed or discouraged with your progress?***
- ***Do you find "to do's" in your office when the time to do them is long gone?***
- ***Are you frequently starting new things, but not finishing them?***
- ***Do you spend the majority of your time doing things you dislike?***

I've always said that what I teach my clients I've learned from experience. What I want to share with you here certainly comes from that category. I've recently gone through a major restructuring of my company - to a large extent because I answered "Yes" to the questions above! Based on my experiences, here are five simple (Notice I didn't say "easy!") steps to help you significantly increase your productivity and decrease your stress:

- 1 Set aside time to identify what really matters to you in life. As the old saying goes, "If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting." Many of us are like ducks swimming across the water - we look calm, but underneath we're paddling like crazy - and going in circles! It takes real courage to stop long enough to assess your current situation. In my current situation, a very important priority in my life is health - but you certainly

couldn't tell it by the way I've been living my life. I started exercising several years ago, but now I have reserved time out for educating myself about natural healing, and I am taking advantage of services offered by natural health providers.

2 Figure out what it is you do best and spend the majority of your time doing it. There are a variety of companies that offer services to help you identify your strengths. I've taken most of them - and many just left me more confused. One I found particularly helpful can be found at www.kolbe.com or check out the free assessment available at www.GetMotivatedBook.com. With websites, a world economy, and virtual technology, the possibilities for hiring or subcontracting people to do the things that you don't do best is limitless. Sure it takes time to train someone else, but if you don't, you'll be limiting the time you have for the things that you want to do. As a child I remember seeing an old Burma Shave sign that said: "Choose your rut carefully. You'll be in it for next 30 miles."

3 Make your home and office a place where you can accomplish your work and enjoy your day. My passion is helping people create and sustain what I call a "productive environment" -- an intentional setting in which everything

around you supports who you are and who you want to be. Look around your environment; how does it make you feel? If it's anything negative, you can't afford it! Here's my mantra: Have nothing which you do not know to be useful, think to be beautiful, or love. In your office, does everything support serving your customers or increasing your income? If not, you can't afford it!

4 Use technology tools to streamline your life. Growing up on the farm in Nebraska, my daddy always said "Half of any job is having the right tool." Sometimes

it can be something quite simple -- I recently threw out a can opener that caused me to spill something every time I used it. Other times it's more major. A few months ago I converted to a MacBook Air. I have admired Apple products for years, but didn't purchase one because most of my clients were Windows-based users. With the advent of cloud-computer and a change in my role in the company, that was no longer a problem. My productivity has increased and my stress level has decreased significantly!

5 Every time you think "I need (or want) to ..." continue on by asking "What is the NEXT action?" and "When?" If it is just one task, make an appointment with yourself to do it. (Isn't it amazing how great we are at doing what other people ask of us, and keep procrastinating about what we need or want to do for ourselves?) What tool do you use? Your calendar is certainly an option. I like to use my SwiftFile which sits on my desk, and when I travel I carry the individual folders for the days I am on the road with me. It ensures that nothing falls through the cracks because I forgot! If it is a major project, break it down into tasks which you can track. If the project has a deadline, start at the end and work backwards.

And here's a bonus tip:

6 Continually ask yourself, "Is this the best use of my time right now?" and encourage everyone around you to do the same.

About the Author

Barbara Hemphill is a leading productivity expert, author and speaker who is dedicated to helping you accomplish your work and enjoy your life. She is the author of the bestselling books, *Taming the Paper Tiger at Work* and *Taming the Paper Tiger at Home*. Visit Barbara's website at www.barbarahemphill.com and take her free Productivity Scorecard For Individuals and see how you can successfully accomplish your work.

Keep your cool:

chic office styles for the summer

Dressing for the office can be tricky when the temperature rises. Keep your cool while maintaining a professional look in your workplace with our summer office outfit tips.

Do's & Don'ts

Dress the part

The levels of formality will vary by corporate culture. The best indication for what to wear is by looking at how the executives, managers and authority figures are dressing where you work and follow their lead. The cliché counts year-round; 'Dress for the job you want, not the job you have'.

A polished look

The dress code during summer months may be slightly more relaxed, however, it doesn't mean you can be a slob. Make sure your clothes are clean and pressed. If a suit is expected to be worn, opt for a lightweight suit, with a smart top underneath, when you step out of the office, you can remove your jacket, yet still look business-like.

The Shoe situation:

Flip-flops are a definite no-go in any business, however, where to draw the line is not always easy. Image Consultant and Executive Assistant Linda Pitts warns: "be cautious when wearing peep toe or open shoes – not always appropriate for office wear, however in any event when showing your feet please, please make sure they have been pedicured, or have them in tip top condition!"

Risky Business

Women in all professions should know they're not advancing their careers when they wear revealing clothing. This may get you attention, but not necessarily the raise or promotion you want. Linda advises:

"Shift dresses are a polished and professional look for the summer and easy to take you from the office to the evening by changing your jewelry or shoes. Avoid anything too short or exposing too much flesh. If it's right for the beach it isn't right for the office!"

Main picture right and inset right: The summer shift dress is one of the best sellers at online clothing boutique www.wearittowork.co.uk. Women love the classic silhouette, which is ideal for the season. With short sleeves, it's easy to wear with a jacket, but cool when on its own. Choosing a fun colour gets you in the summer spirit, while still looking perfectly professional.



Love the layers

The difference between outside temperatures and the indoor office air-conditioning can be 10 degrees or more. Wear layers, which you can strip off when outside, and layer up in the cool of the office.

When shopping for your summer work wardrobe opt for lightweight materials such as silk, cotton, linen, or summer-weight wool and cotton blends.

"If the office air-con gets you down, why not keep a stylish pashmina in your best colours in the office? You can easily use this at your desk either around your neck or to wrap around your shoulders"...Linda suggests.

It's also not a bad idea to keep a neutral coloured suit jacket near your desk, as a back-up, in case you have an important client or company executive come in.

Shapes & Fabrics

If you have a full bust try to avoid dresses or tops with a high or round neck. A scoop/v-neck will always look better. With a curvy



figure avoid stiff fabrics. These can be warm and uncomfortable in the summer heat. Rather look for flowing or drapey fabrics instead.

Barely there

Tights may not be demanded by your office dress code, but our image consultant presses that they are always favoured over bare legs.

"If wearing a classic summer dress or suit avoid the white pasty leg look. Summer tights are available in all shades and deniers and not only make the legs look better, they also feel better in the heat than bare legs."

Continued ►



Above and right: Polka dots were abundant on the catwalks for this summer season. As inspiring as the latest fashions are, they are not always easy to translate to the work wardrobe, especially when it comes to the summer trends, which often bare plenty of skin. The silhouette is key to keeping it professional. This dress is a cotton and linen mix, which can be trusted to keep you cool. Dress it up with a black blazer, and you're in business.





Make-it work

Surveys show that women who wear makeup earn more money. Summarize your makeup look with a tinted moisturiser instead of a foundation. As with clothing, makeup needs to compliment your unique colouring and face shape. A polished look will always give the impression that you care about your appearance.

Summer is a great time to ditch the heavy make-up and opt for a softer and lighter look.

Right: Linen materials are expected to wrinkle, as long as they are well pressed before wear, you should be fine. Beige is often a safer bet than white, as they are not likely to be see-through (always check the mirrors before you leave the house).

Often you can use many of your staple winter wardrobe pieces year-round by combining them accordingly, and vice-versa. This lovely pencil skirt is fully lined, and combines equally well with a light beige top, as well as darker materials. Invest in key quality pieces, and pick up summer or winter styles to bring them up-to-date.

Right: A light coloured suit is ideal for your summer look. It combines well with lovely pastels, or darker shades if desired. You'll feel much cooler if you stick to light colors in the summer. White, off-white, pastels and light neutrals won't draw heat to you the way darker colors will.

Ruffle blouses are on trend this summer. Opt for colour rather than print, and keep all other items simple and sleek. This fuchsia number is fun yet professional.

Linda Pitts is an Image Consultant (*Colour me Beautiful*) and the Executive assistant to the chairman of Cable & Wireless. www.lindapitts.com

Michele Ferron-Leckie is the founder of online boutique www.wearittowork.co.uk, which specialises in stylish clothing for the office.

wearittowork.co.uk



Kenco

Since 1923



WIN THE ULTIMATE COFFEE BREAK!



OVER £300,000 PRIZE FUND – LUXURY HOLIDAYS – SPA & ADVENTURE BREAKS

And Claim Your Exclusive
Kenco Travel Mug*



Buy a tin today to be in with a chance of winning!*

What would your 'Ultimate Coffee Break' be?

Whether it's relaxing on a pure white beach, charging down a freshly powdered piste or adventuring on an African Safari, we can help it become a reality.

At Kenco we now source all of our beans for our Kenco freeze dried coffee from Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms and to celebrate we are offering you the chance to **WIN** your very own Ultimate Coffee Break.

- ☛ Simply purchase a special pack and text in for your chance to **WIN** a luxury holiday or a fantastic spa or adventure break* (NI only No Purchase Necessary)
- ☛ All text to win stage non-winning entries will be entered into a prize draw to **WIN** a £2,000 holiday
- ☛ Also, collect just three special labels and you can claim your **FREE** Kenco travel mug*



*See packs or www.kencocoffeecompany.com for full details and Terms and Conditions.
UK residents only aged 18 or over. No purchase necessary for NI residents. Persons connected to promotion excluded – see website.
Excludes ROI. 1. Text to win: Text in from 7am-8pm between 14/03/10 to 21/06/10 inclusive. Maximum one text per mobile number per day.
Your standard network rates apply. Keep tin label and receipt to validate claim. 2. Collect for Mugs: Entries close 31/12/10. 3. Extra prize draw: Entries close 11:59pm on 30/09/10. Prize draw will take place on 01/10/10.

The Promoter is: Kraft Foods UK Ltd, St George's House, Bayshill Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3AE. Registered No 203663.

Is your **Email Culture** strangling you?

by Marsha Egan

Email. Our lives wouldn't be the same without it. It is a tool that has revolutionized the workplace, improved communication, and allowed employees to accomplish more in less time. However, if mismanaged, it can have a devastating effect on productivity and profits.

Have you ever stopped to think of what your organisation's email culture is? How do your employees use email? How do they manage it? How do they send it? How do they save it? The habits they adopt, whether they are positive or negative, can be contagious and suddenly your business has its own email culture.

Here is just one example of how an email culture can evolve. A boss realizes that he needs to call an urgent meeting with 3 of his managers. He sends an email needing a response in the next 15 minutes. Two of the three see the email and respond. The third, who was working on an important project, did not have his email on, missed the request, and angered his boss.

Number three has just now learned that he can never turn his email off for fear of missing an important email. But it doesn't stop here. It rolls downhill. The three managers have now been given "permission" to use email as an URGENT delivery system. They use it in their departments, and very quickly, the entire organisation is infected with this virus. No one can turn off his or her email for fear of missing something vital. Employees become slaves to the "brinng" and stop productive work anytime an email comes in, even if it's just spam. And that's just one example.

Think of the practices of copying everyone under the sun, just so you don't miss someone. Or how about using email as a chat room with multiple recipients to resolve dilemmas? Or how about using email to critique someone's performance? One person does it, others do it. Culture is changed.

Email can also be extremely costly if not used effectively. When you consider the average recovery time from any interruption is about 4 minutes, you can imagine the cost to your organisation when people look up every time an email is received. Do the math. If you stop what you're doing every time you receive an email and get 30 emails in one day, that equals 120 minutes of recovery time—two hours of waste! And that doesn't include the time spent handling the email. Now multiply that by every employee, everyday, and you can see how profitability can seriously begin to drop.

In order to instantly combat this loss, give everyone in your organisation "permission" to turn off auto-receive, and instead schedule email deliveries every 90 to 120 minutes. This can shorten recovery time to about 30 minutes—a saving of 90 minutes added right back to your bottom line.

Here are a few other tips to help you create a positive office email culture excerpted from my new

eBook, *Reclaim Your Workplace Email Productivity: Add BIG BUCKS to Your Bottom Line*:

- 1 NEVER use email as an urgent delivery system.** If there is an urgent matter, pick up the phone or walk down the hall.
- 2 Move everything OUT OF your inbox.** Your inbox should not be a holding tank and your employees can manage their time better by putting emails appropriate folders so that no important information is ever lost or hard to find.
- 3 Make Subject Lines VERY specific.** By including details in subject lines, you will help others sort and prioritize their work. Instead of having a subject read, "Wednesday Meeting," have it read "Please bring the attached handout to the Wednesday 2:00 Staff Meeting."
- 4 Copy only the people who REALLY need to receive the email.** Each "extra/nice to copy" person you add will have to open and read the email, adding unnecessary tasks to their already full days. Multiply this times the number of unnecessary copies, and the productivity drain adds up.

About the Author

Marsha Egan is CEO of The Egan Group, Inc. a PA based professional coaching firm. She is an executive coach and professional speaker, specialising in leadership development. www.marshaegan.com



Simplify your shipping with DHL.
Register to open an account today.

Click [here](#) to register and we will enter you
into a prize draw to win an **Apple iPad**

REGISTER NOW

Exporting & importing with DHL Express

Discover what the rest of the world already knows: DHL is your specialist in international express deliveries. Complete the form to get started with DHL Express Services today!

Global Coverage

Including door-to-door delivery to 80% of Europe and 65 countries worldwide before 12:00.

Money Back Guarantee

Shipments scheduled before 9:00 or 12:00 comes with a full money back guarantee. Terms and conditions apply. See www.dhl.co.uk for details.

Upfront Pricing

Our secure upfront pricing for door-to-door delivery makes your cost predictable and easy to manage.

Third Party Billing

Need to ship from one country to another and receive the invoice in the UK, in pounds?
No problem.

Performance Evaluation

By John Slimp

“We need to discuss your performance.” These words often bring discomfort to managers at every level. However, when conducted well, performance discussions create stronger working relationships, highlight priorities, and identify developmental needs of individuals to meet either short-term or long-term goals.

There is always a great deal of conversation and debate around performance evaluations and the employee appraisal process. What is the real purpose? Does it serve a purpose? What does anyone get out of them? Why should we even bother to waste our time? If a supervisor or the leadership team sees no value in the performance evaluation process then either

- **They don't understand the process**
- **They don't know how to effectively conduct the process**
- **They shouldn't be part of the leadership team.**

Employee appraisals are critical and crucial for the growth and development of not only the employee but for the company as well. The evaluation should really consist of three parts:

- **A recap of areas where the associate performed well**
- **A recap of areas where the associate fell short of expectations**
- **A clear and concise roadmap and plan for success.**

First please note that for the first two above I used the word recap. If the supervisor has been doing their job all along it is just a recap.



It should be nothing the associate hasn't heard before. It's called feedback folks and I addressed this in a previous post about Employee Engagement.

The United States Department of Agriculture has a policy that reads "A formal appraisal may not be given unless a performance plan (elements and standards) was established and communicated to the employee and the employee has served under this plan for 90 days or more." This is something that I think all companies should follow and that unfortunately most companies fail to do. We hire the person and put them in place, hopefully with training, but we fail to give the employee a clear and concise written plan including standards and expectations. Companies don't follow up with feedback and then whack the associate upside the head with a poor review.

How much time do supervisors actually put into writing a performance evaluation? Not nearly enough! In a survey of H.R. Professionals from LinkedIn 15 to 60 minutes was the average time spent on writing an evaluation. For an entire year? Are you kidding me? I think part of this is because the supervisor doesn't really know the associate and doesn't really know what they actually do or how they do it. In a previous post, Assessing Your Employees I discuss the importance of getting to know your associates in order to be able to evaluate their performance. I have heard of Leadership Teams who suggest:

- **Everyone is automatically getting a 3% cost of living increase so we don't need to do evaluations**
- **No one is getting an increase this year so we don't need to do evaluations**
- **We will only give evaluations to our top performers**
- **We will only give evaluations to our bottom performers**

Wow, these are all bad ideas in my opinion!

Even if everyone is getting the same monetary increase or no increase at all you still need to let the associates know how they are doing and what you expect from them in the upcoming year.

Let's say you only give reviews to your top performers. What does that say to those who don't get a review other than "hello there useless waste of space, why are you still here?"

Let's say you only give reviews to your bottom performers. Now what does that say to those who get the review other than "hello there useless waste of space, why are you still here? You won't be here much longer!"

Why would any company give those sorts of messages? Companies like this are probably not a candidate for Forbes Best 100 Companies to work for!

As I stated above, yes you have to address the past performance as a recap. If you are just bringing up issues now at review time, then shame on you. Why did you go all year without addressing performance issues or concerns? Want to really waste your time and create bad performance? This is a guaranteed technique. Don't talk to staff during the year. When they mess up, don't deal with it at the time but SAVE it up. Then, at the appraisal meeting, bring out everything saved up in the bank and dump it in the employee's lap. That will show them who the boss is!

Supervisors forget that the appraisal process is about improvement not blame; it is about setting a roadmap, a plan for success for both the employee and the company. You need to ask and establish:

- **What direction do you want the associate to go in,**
- **What do they need to do in order to be successful,**
- **What does the associate need to do to help the company be successful,**
- **What help, direction or guidance are you as the supervisor going to give the**

associate,

- **What is the specific plan,**
- **When will you be touching base again to evaluate**

We do appraisals to improve performance, not find a donkey to pin a tail on or blame. Managers who forget this end up developing staffs that don't trust them, or even can't stand them. That's because the blaming process is pointless, and doesn't help anyone. The whole point of a performance appraisal is to get managers and employees working together to improve performance and relationships. If you follow these steps you will find that the Performance Evaluation process is easy, painless and mutually beneficial to the employee and the company:

- **Evaluate on a constant basis**
- **Provide constant feedback**
- **Recognize good performance to encourage it to be continued**
- **Address performance issues as they arise**
- **Keep notes**
- **Communicate**
- **Recap areas where the associate performed well**
- **Recap areas where the associate fell short of expectations**
- **Develop a clear and concise roadmap and action plan for success with the employee**
- **Give your total support to the associate**

If you follow these guidelines your employee, you and your company will find that the Performance Evaluation process is painless, a true benefit to you and the company, and will set everyone up for success!

About the Author

John Slimp is a Business Executive with over 30 years of experience, in the Retail Industry. He is a graduate of Missouri University with a degree in Sociology and Psychology, and a graduate of the Center for Creative Leadership.
www.createawinningteam.com

What does **Communication** have to do with **Innovation**?

by Keith Harmeyer & Mitchell Rigie

Just how many earth shattering ideas do you figure have been created over the millennia, yet no one ever heard about them? How many times every day do you believe a brilliant concept is presented to a decision-maker, only to be shot down and silenced forever?

How many artistic geniuses do you think are truly able to effectively communicate and present their ideas to others? Not everybody is capable of being a Steve Jobs. In fact, very few folks are. Which is one of the most important reasons why Steve Jobs is so successful.

Creativity and innovative thinking don't actually rely on lucid, powerful communication. Brilliant scientists with negligible social skills churn out stupefying concepts in the privacy of their think tanks every day. However bona fide innovation requires that those exceptional, game-changing ideas make it through the gauntlet of opinion and critique, all the way through to conclusion, where they can deliver true, sustainable value. That simply can't happen if nobody knows about them and eagerly accepts them. And that requires effective communication and presentation capability.

Communication is commonly the forgotten, important element of innovation. True, it is not as compelling as all the other elements we have a tendency to like hearing about, topics like strategic implementation, enhanced value, creative ideation, disruptive technology, elegant design and all the other overused buzz words. However in the end, if your great idea is not eloquently

and convincingly presented to your collaborators and decision makers, it will simply wither on the vine.

We've all seen it happen, especially during a group brainstorm. Someone at the table thinks up an idea, a smart idea, one they like which has real merit. Sadly, this person lacks the skills and expertise to speak about it persuasively. A louder voice and bigger ego in the group knocks it down, and there it lies. Occasionally a sympathetic pal will pick up the concept and defend it to the others. But if a skilled communicator doesn't accept the challenge, it's done for.

The good news is that communication and presentation techniques can be learned and mastered by just about anybody. As with any other discipline, there are straightforward, proven strategies and techniques that can help you speak with confidence and affect the opinions and decisions of others. So if you're hoping to be a successful innovator, or even a contributor to the innovation process, you had better begin boning up on your communication skills.

Here are a few tips to help you more effectively sell your next big idea...

1 Know what you are trying to achieve

Before you open your mouth, think for a few moments about what you wish your words to actually achieve. Are you making an attempt to convince someone that your idea is the best there is, or simply one among many worthy of further consideration? Are you attempting to receive final approval for your idea or simply create the opportunity to present it up the ladder? Is your idea absolutely thought through or simply an embryonic notion? Such issues will have a big impact on what you say and how you say it. So take a moment or two to think about what you wish to achieve before you speak, and you'll have a much better chance of selecting the best words to help you attain your goal.

2 Who are you talking to? One of the most surprising revelations most individuals have when mastering communication and presentation skills is that their audience usually doesn't really care at all about what they have to say. In truth, the individuals you present your concept to only care about one thing... what's in it for them. To sell your plan, you need to perceive ahead of time what the other person's agenda is, what their own objectives are in the given scenario, and then frame your argument in the most effective method possible to let them recognize that

you understand, and that your plan can help them achieve their goal. Can your idea make them (or their team) look good? May it end in a bonus or praise from their supervisor? Is it so risky that they might be hesitant to support it? Keep in mind this #1 secret of great communicators - understand your audience well, and tell them what they have to hear. That's persuasive communication.

3 Know what you are going to say

However how many times have you ever opened your mouth and realized, almost at once, that you simply were saying exactly the wrong thing at precisely the incorrect time? If you've taken a few moments to concentrate on the first 2 steps, this third step becomes much simpler. What must you say to this person in order to induce them to reply the way you'd like them to, right now? That's precisely what you wish to say at exactly this moment.

4 Consider how you are going to say it

As the saying goes, you'll catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar. Of course, you'll

kill a lot more with a flyswatter. Too docile or too bold an approach will not get the result you want when presenting an idea for approval. How you deliver your message will be just as critical as the content itself. Consider the situation. Is the mood positive and genial or tense and confrontational? Are concepts being killed faster than they can be verbalized, or is everyone being overly encouraging and not really giving anything truthful, critical analysis? Are you on a tight deadline or do you have plenty of time? Pay attention to the atmosphere in the room before you start selling. Make sure your manner and attitude are confident, but appropriate.

Is it truly possible to try and do all of these steps in the middle of a brainstorm, or even a presentation? Of course. Expert communicators and presenters do it each day. It simply takes a bit of alertness, thought and practice. Don't wait till your job depends on it. Begin using these four easy communication tips today. In

no time at all you will be able to consider all of these things in just a few seconds.

Many people assume that being a assured, persuasive communicator is something you're just born with. Nothing could be further from the truth. Communication is a skill. Learn it, master it, become a more valuable player in the innovation cycle - and start seeing a lot more of your ideas become a reality.

About the Author

Mitchell Rigie and Keith Harmeyer have a combined 40+ years experience in the strategic marketing communications field. SmartStorming® is the result of their personal experience and expertise, as well as extensive research and practical application. To learn more about SmartStorming, visit their blog at SmartStorming-blog.com or their website www.SmartStorming.com.

