

PA ENTERPRISE

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

November 2010



- ▶ Christmas Venues/Gifts/Party Advice/Apps
- ▶ Office Relocation: Dos and Don'ts
- ▶ How to Prevent your Laptop overheating
- ▶ Cutting the Cost of Office Cleaning
- ▶ Software Money-saving Tips

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Enter now for your chance to win:

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PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

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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.

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FORGOTTEN YOUR PHONE CHARGER?

Don't panic, QHotels is one step ahead!

Following feedback from conference organisers, **QHotels** has appointed **conference concierges** in 10 of their 21 key meeting hotels across the UK, whose sole aim is to be one step ahead of all conference organisers and their needs whilst their event takes place at a QHotel.

The dedicated Conference Concierge service complements the event management service that QHotels already offers and means that organisers and delegates can be confident that whatever they need, however obscure, will be efficiently provided.

Operations Director at QHotels, Vivien Sirotkin explains: "Quite often it is the smallest things that can make or break an event. We have years of experience and know how fraught event management can be - even when every last detail has been meticulously planned and organised. Our Conference Concierges, who are now in all our key conference hotels, will help make the event organiser's day as stress-free as possible and the service comes at no extra cost to the organiser.

"Our concierges will not only be a point of contact and of all day assistance to the organiser, but will also meet and greet guests, ensure deliveries go to the right location, order taxis and generally work quietly in the background to make sure that the event runs smoothly and efficiently. They will even endeavour to get hold of those personal items that delegates often forget such as mobile phone chargers and stationery, so delegates can concentrate on the conference."

The Conference Concierge service is the latest upgrade to QHotels' Total Meetings Package. New benefits have recently been added, such as unlimited Wi-Fi access for all 24-hour and day delegates, healthy fruit smoothies or fruit skewers to kick start morning meetings, and home baked cakes and cookies to liven up afternoon tea breaks. QHotels has also introduced a new range of delegate restaurant lunches - delegates can now create their own lunch from a wide range of familiar favourites, fresh ideas and delicious desserts.

www.qconferences.co.uk

WONDERFUL WATERMELON

Watermelon could cut heart disease risk, US scientists say

Watermelon has become the latest everyday food to be credited with possessing significant health benefits, particularly in relation to heart disease.

According to a new report from a team of food scientists based at Florida State University, the amino acids found in the fruit were seen to enhance the flow of blood through the arteries of each of the hypertension sufferers involved in their research.

Furthermore, by giving the participants regular doses of watermelon, the experts noted a drop in their blood pressure levels, suggesting that the fruit can have benefits far beyond merely being low in calories and high in fibre

Lead researcher Dr Arturo Figueroa explained: "These findings suggest that this functional food may prevent prehypertension from progressing to full-blown hypertension, a major risk factor for heart attacks and strokes."



PULLING A SICKIE

Survey reveals worst sick-day excuses

Calling in sick to get a day off work is nothing new – but the excuses workers come up with seem to be getting increasingly bizarre!

Careerbuilder's nationwide US survey on absenteeism reveals that 29 percent of workers have played hooky from the office at least once this year. 27 percent of employers think they are seeing an increase in bogus sick excuses from employees due to continued stress and burnout caused by the weak economy.

"Just not feeling like going to work" is the number one reason why workers said they call off sick with made-up excuses followed by "just needing to relax" and "catching up on sleep." Other reasons included doctor's appointments, needing to run personal errands, and plans with family and friends.

When asked to share the most unusual excuses employees gave for missing work, employers offered the following real-life examples:

- A chicken attacked my mother.
- My fingers are stuck in a bowling ball.
- I had a hair transplant that has gone bad.
- I fell asleep at my desk while working and hit my head, causing a neck injury.
- A cow broke into my house and I had to wait for the insurance man.
- My girlfriend threw a Sit n Spin through my living room window.
- My foot was caught in the garbage disposal.
- Employee called in sick from a bar at 5pm the night before.
- I'm not feeling too clever today.



WATCH THOSE CALORIES!

Snacking in the office can pile on the pounds

Office workers consume an extra 700 calories a day compared to other professions, according to a poll conducted by HR consultancy, Reabur.

The results show that 89% of office workers admit to snacking at their desks every day, compared to just 4% of those in the medical profession.

Over a quarter (26%) said they have gained weight since working in an office environment, and a further 46% said that they only snack out of 'boredom' work.



while at

Co-founder of Reabur, Georgina Read said: "I would recommend if staff are keen to reduce their waistline they resist the temptation for snacks and instead go and get a glass of water.

"From a HR point of view, I would suggest people make the most of their scheduled break and lunch break no matter what their work environment.

"Not only will this help people resist the urge to snack but it will also boost productivity in the office.

"Having the occasional treat at work is a great way to socialise with colleagues; however, we must be careful to not allow it to become an everyday occurrence resulting in poor health."

SUPER STICKY LABEL PADS

Labelling just got easier

Office items that require frequent re-labeling, such as boxes, folders and filing cabinets, can end up looking tatty as the sticky residue from previous labels is left behind. Now 3M has come up with a solution – the **Post-it Super Sticky Label Pads**.

The back of each label is fully coated with the Post-it brand Super Sticky repositionable adhesive. This means that the labels not only stick securely to anything, but can also be easily removed without leaving a mark.

A clever, perforated tab at the side of each Label Pad also makes them quick and easy to use. Simply write on the label, use the tab to peel it from the pad and stick it in place, whilst removing the perforated tab completely..

The Super Sticky Label Pads come in an assortment of sizes and colours; yellow, white, pink, green, orange and blue.



EXPERIENCE PREMIER TRAVEL WITH EUROSTAR

Win a city trip to European cities and travel in style



Eurostar's Business Premier and Standard Premier classes offer the ideal out-of-office experience. This month they are offering you a chance to try it for yourself by giving away a pair of Standard Premier tickets every week.

Answer 8 short questions and you and a friend could soon be whisking your way in style to a sophisticated city trip in Paris, Brussels or Lille, or a fun-filled break in Disneyland® Paris.

You'll see it's the ideal way to let your mind explore. But why keep it to yourself? Your colleagues could soon be making the most of their business journeys too.

Business Premier offers the ultimate business travel experience, with fully flexible tickets, express check-in up to 10 minutes before departure, exclusive business lounge access, and fine food and drinks served at seat.

Or go **Standard Premier** for 30 minute check-in, a choice of semi-flexible and non-flexible tickets, and a light meal and drinks served at seat.

SWEETS GO CORPORATE

Retro sweets go corporate

The company behind A Quarter Of, the UK's biggest retro online sweetshop, has launched a dedicated corporate arm – www.corporatesweets.co.uk.

Aimed at the business market, Corporate Sweets offers a huge selection of distinctive and memorable sweets that can be packaged in wooden boxes, large and small glass jars, colourful cardboard boxes, wicker hampers and bags and personalised with a company logo, brand or message.

The Corporate Sweets offering includes over 650 boiled, chewy, crunchy and chocolaty sweets including popular retro favourites like Flying Saucers, Shrimps and Kola Kubes.

There are also sweets suitable for every themed occasion from Christmas to Easter

and the Corporate Sweets' team can tailor make special selections to individual company requirements and budgets, such as team building events, Christmas corporate gifts or staff incentives.



NEW COMMUNICATION

One day conference explains Social Media

The development and spread of social media has impacted the way organisations communicate with their customers.

What makes up a good social media strategy and how can you maximise the benefits for your organisation?

A one day conference will explore all the issues surrounding social media and it's place in our business environment.

There will be speakers from the public and private sectors who are using social media to communicate with their customers.

Presentations will enable delegates to learn from others' experiences of introducing social media as part of a marketing strategy to engage with customers quickly and effectively.

The One Day Conference takes place on Monday 22nd November 2010 at the EBC Centre, Sun Microsystems, Linlithgow

www.mackayhannah.com/upcoming-conferences

EMIGRATE TO IMPROVE HEALTH?

But don't forget health insurance

Over three quarters of employees would consider moving abroad to help improve their health and wellbeing, according to new research from Aviva UK Health.

The research found that 40% of UK workers would move abroad to improve their health and wellbeing, and 36% believe other countries offer a healthier environment and more varied lifestyle.

However, a quarter are not aware of what state healthcare they are entitled to if they move overseas, and 17% believe they would automatically qualify for free healthcare.



Almost half of respondents (41%) wrongly believe that as a UK citizen they automatically qualify for state-funded healthcare in the EU and Commonwealth.

Teresa Rogers, international sales and marketing manager at Aviva UK Health, said: "In the UK we're in the enviable position of being able to choose to complement the 'free at the point of delivery' health services available from the NHS with a private health insurance policy.

"However, in many countries private health insurance is a necessity you can't afford to be without.

"While we're delighted to see that the majority of people would consider taking out additional private health insurance if they move overseas, our research clearly shows that many people have a very limited understanding of overseas health provision which could result in them choosing inappropriate cover or worse still, wrongly believing that either the state will provide cover or a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is sufficient."

TOUGH TIMES FOR ALL

Public sector workers beware of strikes

Striking public sector workers will quickly lose public sympathy if they cause disruption to essential services, says a quarterly CIPD survey of employee attitudes.

The private sector has been hard hit by the recession, and the study showed that 74% of employees now think it's only fair that the public sector takes its turn.

Interestingly, the survey, based on a sample of 2,000 UK workers, shows that 59% of public sector workers also believe they will lose support if they cause disruption to the public through strike action.

The survey suggests that the working public accepts the overall case for cuts. Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) agree with the statement that 'these are tough times and the deficit needs to be reduced through cuts to public spending'. There is a marked difference in sectoral attitudes, with 69% of private sector staff agreeing with this statement compared to only 50% of those in the public sector.

Almost half of public sector workers (49%) agree with the statement 'workers have to do what's

necessary to protect their jobs and if that disrupts public services, that's the price of living in a democratic society', compared to just 27% of those in the private sector.

Overall, just under half of respondents (48%) agree they are more concerned about the damage strikes would cause than about the impact of spending cuts, with 26% disagreeing.

The survey also shows:

- Half (49%) of employees agree that most people today are not willing to lose pay to go on strike, rising to 54% among public sector staff
- 36% of respondents agree unions provide essential protection for employees from bad management
- 43% of employees agree unions are 'good at pursuing their own political agendas rather than simply looking after the interests of their members'
- 28% of respondents agree unions are more relevant than ever during a time of recession and increased redundancies
- 37% of respondents agree that industrial action in essential services should be banned

Generation X lead the way

Older workers drive social networking in the office

You might imagine that young workers would be driving the use of social networking in companies - after all, facebook, twitter and the like are predominantly used by young people, right? Well, think again.

The youngest workers in the office aren't the driving force behind social networking in the enterprise. It's Generation X - people between 29 and 49 - who are taking to these new tools, according to a Forrester Consulting study.

And it's not just Gen-Xers showing up the Generation Y-ers, who range from 15 to 28 years old, in the office. The report, which was sponsored by Citrix Systems, noted that after Gen X workers, Baby Boomers over 55 were the most likely to use social tools in the workplace.

"We know from our own experience that the workforce is more dispersed and mobile than ever, and that people are increasingly turning to technology to help them collaborate with colleagues and customers many miles away," said Bernardo de Albergaria, a vice president with Citrix, in a statement.

And it may be no surprise that the

youngest workers aren't driving this social push in the enterprise.

A 2009 study by digital consulting firm iStrategyLabs showed that the number of Facebook users over the age of 55 was booming, while high school and college-age users were on the decline. Specifically, the report found that users over 55 showed 513.7% growth in just a six-month period.

And just months before the iStrategyLabs study came out, online tracker Hitwise reported that Facebook users over the age of 35 were seeing huge growth.

The report, which was based on an international online survey of 797 information workers last month, showed that 40% of Gen Y workers who use social media for business do so daily. That's compared to 50% of workers who are 55 and older. And those 55-and-over boomers have increased their business use of social media by 79% in the past year.

The study also noted that collaborative tools are on the rise.

The use of video chat is up 56% from last year, while the use of team document-sharing sites is up 55% and Web conferencing is up 52%.



Career versus salary?

Office professionals opt for career

Career progression is more important than pay when looking for a new job. That is according to a survey of 500 office support professionals undertaken by Crone Corkill, provider of recruitment solutions for Executive Assistants & Business Support staff.

For just over half of the respondents said career progression is the most important factor, followed closely by 35% whose most important factor is money. A further 12% want a socially responsible employer and only 3% say the job title is key.

Gabrielle Drake, Associate Director at Crone Corkill comments: "Contrary to common belief money is not always the primary motivator when looking for a new job. The poll results show that individuals are more interested in career progression prospects.

We are finding that more candidates are attracted to a certain role which is of interest to them, with more responsibility and the opportunity to grow; rather than a role with an attractive pay packet. Everyone has a different reason for working as we are all motivated by different things. It is important for you to realise what your motivator is to truly understand what it is you want to achieve in your career. It is also important for businesses to understand what motivates their staff in order to retain existing talent, and have a successful business."



DEBENHAMS LAUNCHES ONLINE TV CHANNEL

Solve shopping nightmares with new interactive TV Channel

Debenham's has announced the launch of its first ever interactive TV channel – named Debenhams TV – which it expects will become the destination for shoppers and online browsers looking for easy to digest, friendly style and shopping advice and purchases. The new station is expected to win an

estimated 1.5 million views in its first week, making it one of the most watched channels in the UK virtually overnight, giving Adrian

from womenswear, lingerie, menswear and accessories naming their pick of products and how to make these work for the season. There are also plans for personal shoppers and celebrity stylists to give online workshops on how to pick outfits which make the most of your appearance when attending job interviews, weddings, parties and other special occasions.

Launch content focuses on key seasonal dilemmas such as what bra size your wife might be, or what the perfect gift for her at Christmas is. With this useful 'how to' narrative, the channel aims to attract the attention of other consumers that might not be on Debenhams.com through interest generated by social media.

Online Trading Director, Simon Forster commented: "Our online TV channel is a brilliant way for our customers to get style and beauty advice, see the latest fashions and just be entertained! You can see it on our website, through our iPhone app, on Youtube and coming soon – in our stores"

The new channel, Debenhams TV, will have interviews with top designers such as Ben de Lisi, Henry Holland and Matthew Williamson, plus fashion advice from top industry experts.

Menswear shows feature exclusive footage from the launch of Debenhams latest brand, FFP. Take a peek as British boxers Kevin Mitchell and Frankie Gavin, the faces of the brand guide customers through their favourite pieces and talk about their boxing victories.

The beauty channel includes easy to replicate, step-by-step make up lessons from industry experts, plus a detailed guide on what to buy to get the look. Customers can purchase any product that takes their fancy at the click of a mouse, buy taking advantage of the click-to-buy feature as they watch.

Debenhams TV will be available on Debenhams.com to launch, with plans to stream live in store in the future.



Chiles and Christine Bleakley a run for their money.

The channel will provide a fresh alternative to the traditional 'browse and buy' online shopping experience and TV already on retailer websites, and will also offer exclusive behind-the-scenes footage and interviews from photo shoots, fashion shows and launches.

For the first time, Debenhams is lifting the lid on its head office and the people behind the brand; with experts



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packs of **Avery Addressing,
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NEW BOOK OFFERS GUIDELINES

New book offers guidelines for successful strategy workshops

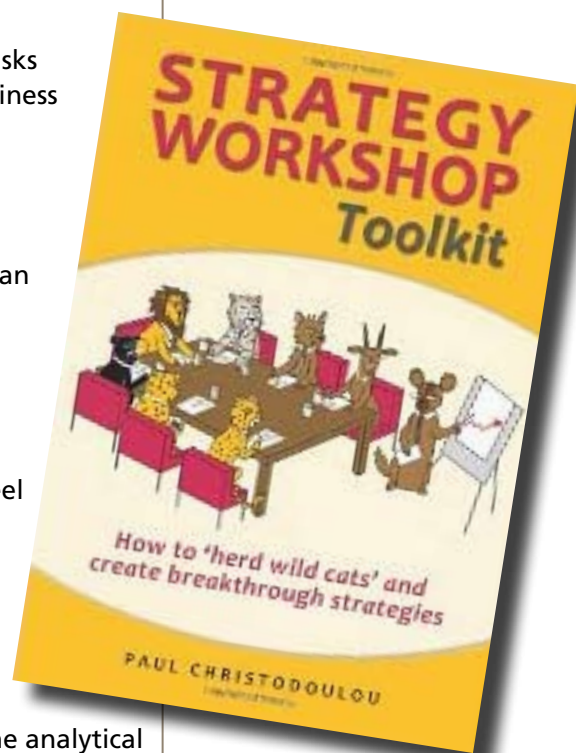
Author Paul Christodoulou has drawn on his combined engineering experience and business skill in identifying risks and creating solutions to launch a new book that teaches business leaders how to execute effective strategy workshops.

Paul Christodoulou believes top-down strategy is no longer appropriate in decentralised organisations. Strategy is now more 'middle-up', created by senior managers via intense, workshop-based initiatives. But running strategy workshops can be challenging. His book, *Strategy Workshop Toolkit: How to 'herd wild cats' and create breakthrough strategies*, provides a practical guide to assist the strategy leader in planning and delivering successful strategy workshops.

"Strategy workshops require careful preparation and imaginative orchestration so that facts, experience and gut-feel merge to create innovative strategic concepts. Furthermore, high political stakes can make these critical events feel like herding wild cats. Badly-run workshops can result in frustration and strategic paralysis. Well-run workshops can result in fresh ideas, joined-up thinking, a motivated team, and ultimately, significant business benefits," said Paul.

Paul believes his engineering roots have provided him with the analytical knowhow needed to understand strategy. Professional engineers, by the very nature of their job, are creative problem solvers and very good at identifying risks. According to Paul, this coupled with his MBA qualification and over 20 years working in international business, has given his book the practical edge other strategy guides lack.

The book is available at www.amazon.co.uk for £18.99.



GET CREATIVE THIS CHRISTMAS WITH SHARPIE

Tired of seeing the same old Christmas cards? Well let your creative side run wild with a pack of bold and vibrant Sharpie markers and design your own season's greetings. This is the perfect way to make sure your card stands out from the Christmas crowd and will guarantee extra brownie points with friends and family for your personalised effort!

Or why not get your family and home into the Christmas spirit by making festive decorations. Coming in 18 vibrant colours, including a seasonal silver metallic Sharpie and brand new pastel range, you can write or draw on just about anything. From creating Christmas tree decorations to personalising wrapping paper, you can create your very own gorgeous grotto at home!



MINI gift, maximum thought.

Sharpie MINI's make an ideal stocking filler for whoever you are buying for. Whether you are stuck for a gift for Dad or need an idea for a Secret Santa, then Sharpie MINI's are a great way to say Merry Christmas. Sharpie MINI's can be taken with you wherever you go. They can clip onto a belt or key ring so will always be close to hand and never again will you be left hunting for something to make your mark. Sharpie MINI's are priced from £3.49. www.sharpie.co.uk

Enter now for your chance to win – iPod, £25 Arcadia Gift Card, weekend in

Win an iPod with AF International

What's lurking on your office?

On average you spend around 8 hours at work; that equates to a third of a day or approximately half of your waking hours at your desk. It is not surprising that we often eat, drink and even occasionally sleep at our desk. With this in mind, how clean is it really?

Some shocking facts about the cleanliness of the average desk:

- A desk can harbour up to 10 million microbes
- A telephone carries the most microbes with up to 25,000 per square inch
- There can be up to 3,500 on your keyboard
- More than 1,500 on your mouse, compared with 49 on a typical toilet seat

AF have a fabulous prize draw for you to enter. First prize is an iPod and there are also 50 runner up prizes of screen cleaning wipes.



[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)

Win a pair of Eurostar tickets - every week this month

Fancy a sophisticated trip to Paris, Brussels or Lille or a fun-filled break in Disneyland® Paris?

This month Eurostar are giving away a pair of Standard Premier tickets every week. Answer a few quick questions and before you know it you and a friend could be exploring some of Europe's finest destinations, from the boulevards of Paris to the grand squares of Brussels.

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)



Win £25 Arcadia Group Gift Card

Answer one easy question, and you could win a £25 Arcadia Group Fashion Gift Card that you can spend on something special from any of seven top-name High Street fashion stores!

With an Arcadia Fashion Gift Card in your pocket, you have the key to thousands of fashionable items. Must-have styled clothes, footwear, accessories, jewellery, workwear and more is at your fingertips, from no less than seven of the country's favourite High Street names.

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)



► Athens, Center Parcs break, Eurostar Tickets, Marriott Meetings discount

Win a weekend in Athens courtesy of Marriott Hotels

You and a companion have the chance to stay at one of Marriott's fantastic hotels in Continental Europe. The prize includes return flights to Athens, plus a three night stay including breakfast at the luxurious Athens Ledra Marriott Hotel. With spectacular views overlooking the Acropolis, the hotel is just minutes from Plaka, Piraeus Port and the New Acropolis museum. To enter this fabulous prize draw, you simply have to answer the two questions.



[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)



Win a wild weekend with Avery

To celebrate the launch of Postman Pat promotion, Avery is giving away a fabulous three night stay at Center Parcs for you and your family, and a fun-filled day out at Longleat safari park with its many attractions, including the popular Postman Pat Village.

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)

Special offers when you book meetings

Meeting Rooms for £10 per hour Any size, any location!

This amazing offer is exclusive to PA Enterprise and DeskDemon users.

Avanta provides fully equipped meeting rooms throughout London and the UK. Book now!



[CLICK HERE](#)

Meetings Matter More at Marriott

Enjoy great benefits in 2010 when you book and hold a qualifying meeting with at least 35 cumulative room nights or 35 day delegate packages. Plus for each qualifying meeting over 100 cumulative room nights, receive a 2% rebate off the master bill.

Choose from 60 hotels in the UK and Ireland and over 100 in continental Europe.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Christmas is coming!

Choosing a venue for your Christmas party can be daunting, but there are a whole host of companies out there to help. Events specialists really take the hassle out of the organisation, and if you search online, you can select the best venue for your budget, location and choose from a wide range of exciting themes. Here are a few to get you started.



*Countdown to
Christmas*



London Zoo

Christmas-Sorted.com is an event tool designed to help the Christmas party booker get their company Christmas party sorted. They provide online access to a comprehensive list of venues and suppliers.

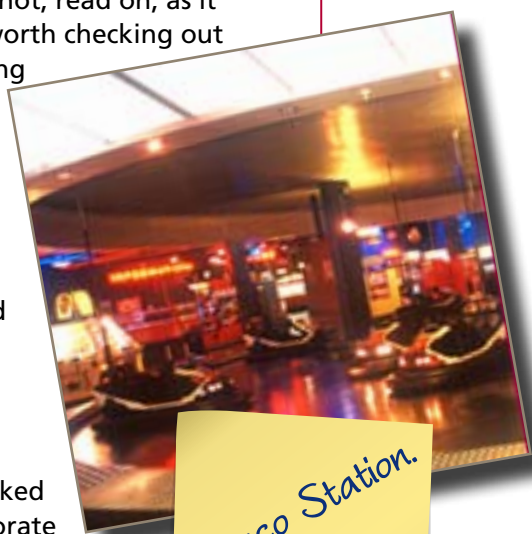
One of their featured venues is well worth a look. How about a 'Wild & Wintery' themed dinner dance at ZSL London Zoo! The party kicks off with a glass of mulled wine at the fairy lit entrance, followed by Cocktails in an Animal House! Here guests can 'break the ice' in front of fun and unusual live exhibits... and as if that's not enough, a furry friend will arrive for a unique 'meet & greet' with their keeper, who will be happy to answer any questions. Then it's on to a sit down dinner in themed dining suites complete with all the Christmas trimmings and lots of sparkles! Prices start from £75 per person.

www.christmassorted.com

Have you heard about Namco Station? If not, read on, as it could be well worth checking out for the upcoming party season. Namco Station is situated in London's magnificent County Hall, which is located next to the London Eye on London's South Bank.

This action packed venue for corporate entertainment boasts over 150 of the latest interactive video games, a luxury American Pool Hall, twelve lanes of Techno Bowling and (oh what fun!) Bumper Cars, all spread over 3 levels of pure enjoyment and big kid fun.

www.namcostation.co.uk



Namco Station.

The Circus - Christmas Party at Athena 2010 - Leicester

Performers fly, spin and twist as you enjoy a succulent four course dinner, fine wine and good company.

Flash your cash on the fun casinos whilst sipping on a sumptuous cocktail, test your skills against your friends and colleagues on the new fairground stalls, get a glimpse into the year ahead by visiting a fortune teller or relax and enjoy a freshly ground coffee in a quieter area.

<http://christmas.hospitalityline.co.uk>



*Athena,
Leicester*

Chelsea Football Club is reacting to buyer demand for Christmas 2010 by focussing on non-themed events for the first time.

Following feedback from agencies and direct buyers, the venue has opted out of selling a standard themed package this year. Instead, the venue will focus on delivering high quality, value for money packages with the excellent service and catering offer that Chelsea Football Club is synonymous with

The venue is able to accommodate corporate Christmas events for up to 1,000 in the Great Hall or more intimate festivities for 20 in the exclusive Millennium Suites, overlooking the pitch

Christmas packages start from £49 per person and include festive decorations. Themed events are available on a bespoke level for those with specific themed requirements.

<http://bluewing.chelseafc.com>



Chelsea FC

Great Hall Medieval Christmas Banquet 2010 at Warwick Castle

This year the spectacular Great Hall is having a magnificent medieval makeover. Warwick Castle is playing host to one of the most indulgent evenings in Castle history. Guests have the opportunity to sample a brand new authentic medieval menu compiled specifically for this event.

Throughout the banquet guests will also enjoy an array of authentic entertainment and when you have eaten your

fill return to the 21st Century and let your hair down with the after dinner disco.



Warwick Castle

<http://christmas.hospitalityline.co.uk>

Imagine an intimate venue, elegantly dressed with crystal drop chandeliers, stunning table displays and tables strewn with diamonds. This is what's on offer at inneventive.co.uk's Errol Street venue.

Dressed to impress, this party will bring out the glamour in you all. Following reception drinks, guests are called to the main dining room

Black clothed tables covered in diamonds and gems, all glittering with the light from soft burning candles and mirrored table displays. Even

the stage is framed with a mirrored and glittered backdrop

Overlooking the dining area and dancefloor is the 'Chill Space' gallery filled with soft low seating.

To make this an even more unforgettable event why not upgrade to our 'Diamond Champagne Drop'... a diamond in every glass but which one holds the REAL diamond?

www.inneventive.co.uk



Errol Street





Secret Santa Etiquette

One of the most interesting traditions in some offices is that of Secret Santa. The original idea was to allow gift-giving without causing the giver to go broke; by giving a present to one person, you symbolically give it to everyone that works there. The basic idea is that you pick another employee's name at random, and then purchase that person a small, inexpensive gift which is then dispersed at or slightly before Christmas. Although it can be fun, there are some guidelines that should be followed.

Try to stick to a small amount; for even close workers, a few pounds is acceptable. The idea is to show that you like and respect the person; a small gift is all that is required to demonstrate this. Anything more expensive is actually almost offensive, as it demonstrates too great an affection.

If possible, try to find a gift that the person can use. If they do a lot of gardening, gloves or a trowel are definitely acceptable. Try to determine what needs they have, and buy the most appropriate gift that you can find that fits within those parameters. As the idea is to buy a small gift, this may not always be possible, but it will definitely be appreciated. It should be noted that food (especially sweets) is also acceptable, as are small pieces of jewellery.

A humorous gift is another possibility. If you can be ironic when you choose the gift, so much the better. A classic is buying a teenage boy a toy car, but there are other options. You can also

apply scatological humour; a number of whoopee cushions and noise-makers are bought at this time of year for Secret Santa gifts. Do try to keep it tasteful, however.

Try at all costs to avoid gifts that are rude, intimate, or just tasteless. As the gift will be given in public, gifts that would be better given in private should be avoided. If you feel the gift must be given, then give it in private as a special, personal gift. However, gifts that require intimate knowledge or imply some relationship that doesn't exist, or are on the limits of taste should definitely be avoided. In essence, the rule that the gift should be acceptable to the person receiving the gift should definitely be followed.

It should be noted that these are just guidelines; there are some times when they won't apply. For example, between really good friends, the price spent on the gift may be increased. However, the guidelines should be followed in



general, so as not to cause bad feelings; the idea is to have fun, not hurt people. Secret Santa can be a fun tradition, especially among those who are clever and are willing to give what is needed. And it definitely one that builds morale!

For more party advice and event planning go to
www.officechristmas.co.uk

Top 10 Tips for the Office Christmas Party

Sound advice on making a lasting impression at the office Christmas party from party expert and event organisers Office Christmas.

10 Ensure you know where the party is, when to arrive and how to get there. Professionalism is not panicking where on earth the party is on the night.

9 Dress appropriately. If your company have chosen a fancy dress theme then it's essential to make an effort, regardless of how daft you may look. Getting involved and supporting what the company does will get you noticed for all the right reasons, even if you are dressed up as Elvis. A black tie evening calls for sophistication, so bring out your little black dress and killer heels.

8 Only drink from civilised glasses during the reception; this is not a time for a pint of ale with a handle on it.

7 Never complain about the food. Dry turkey is an office party tradition and you will appear terribly ungrateful. Grab some take-away stodge on the way home.

6 Avoid talking shop. Try and find some common ground to chat to people on all levels; this wins you respect and makes you look interesting. Religion and politics can't fail to upset someone, perhaps even your boss.

5 Be punctual. Try to not be the last to arrive.

4 Don't lavish praise on the boss, criticise your colleagues or fish for compliments from management. This inevitably falls into talking shop, and even the most understanding of managers mark this down as someone unable to communicate effectively. If you really can't hold it in, leave the party.

3 Steer clear of arguments and gossip. A colourful debate is one thing, but personal remarks can creep in and turn a discussion into an argument. Walk away and find a pleasant conversation to join in.

2 Keep tabs on how much you're drinking. Getting drunk and loud is not becoming.

1 Stay away from the mistletoe! You will most likely pucker up with just about the ugliest person in the office, if not the one that has had a severe crush on you since you started working there; now you have just picked up a stalker that happens to work opposite you.

www.officechristmas.co.uk





Corporate Christmas cards are a great way to communicate with your suppliers, customers and employees over the festive period. You can order and personalise online - check out these websites:

<http://christmasbusinesscards.org.uk>

By ordering UNICEF cards you are directly helping vulnerable children. 40% of the sales price of each card you buy will be passed to UNICEF UK.

There's a great range of card designs to choose from, and ordering is easy online. Cards can be personalised with a message, logo or signature, and you can get samples and proofs, as well as free delivery.

www.charitycards.org

Choose from over 250 designs in the 2010 range. Each card is personalised with your own details- you can even add a colour logo and signatures.

10p per card sold goes to charity- you can choose from 75 National charities.



www.printingdirect.com/products/ccards.php

Printing Direct offers five ranges for customers considering sending corporate Christmas Cards. Yuletide Greetings, Caring at Christmas, which carry a charity contribution, Photographic, Metallic and OwnDesign. You can view close-ups of the images and personalise the cards with your own company details on the website.



www.festivecollection.co.uk

With a range of over 175 designs, the Festive Collection has something for everyone. The cards can be produced with a variety of special finishes, including embossing, foiling and high gloss finishes. They offer a number of Christmas cards with your company name printed on the front to help your card stand out from others.

www.corporate-christmas-cards.co.uk/

All cards are personalised with your company greeting and include quality peel n seal envelopes. You also get free courier delivery, free email proofs and unlimited free reproofs on every design.

You can choose from 11 favourite charities when you order and personalise online.

New for 2010 are a selection of cards that offer a wide choice of board and foil options such as Golden Starry Tree so you can match your corporate theme with a truly personalised Christmas card.





If you are looking for uxurious wine and festive food gifts for the wine lover in your life, **Laithwaites** have all the answers.

Mouthwatering wines, fine spirits and gorgeous Champagne, as well as some magnificent hampers each filled with delectable festive goodies.

Illustrated is Fireside Sippers, £38, containing mellow Port and golden Cognac to warm the cockles - perfect colder weather nightcaps.

www.laithwaites.co.uk



Thinking of sending wine as a gift this Christmas? Take a look at **Majestic Gift Solutions**, a dedicated gift delivery service with 1, 2, 3 & 6 bottle gifts, personalised with your message, in a range of packaging options.

www.majestic.co.uk

John Lewis has launched its hampers and gift range for businesses for this Christmas. Beautifully packed and presented, the hampers are the perfect way to show appreciation to clients, customers and staff.

John Lewis's hampers have been carefully designed to feature high-quality products, including wines recommended by the award-winning Waitrose wine team. Ranging from £30 to £800, there are over 30 pre-selected hampers available. John Lewis also offers a bespoke hamper service which allows businesses to design a unique gift featuring their own selection of gourmet food or drinks.

Alongside the hampers John Lewis also offers a range of stylish gifts, from iPods to classic silver accessories. John Lewis gift vouchers are another great way for businesses to say thank you.

www.johnlewis.com/solutionsforbusiness.



Cadbury Gifts Direct offers a comprehensive service for Corporate customers. Their corporate Christmas chocolate gift range of products is an ideal source for staff gifts, corporate incentives and rewards, loyalty schemes, customer and client gifts and suitable for a wide range of other promotional initiatives.

Cadbury Corporate Christmas Gift hampers are packed full of top quality Cadbury lines, delivered in eye-catching purple Cadbury livery. Perfect for saying "thank-you" to work teams achieving monthly sales targets; or for completion of projects, the hampers can be made up exactly how you want.

www.cadburygiftsdirect.co.uk



JUST SOME OF THE FANTASTIC GIFTS AVAILABLE

Cottrillsreward offers three off-the-shelf Christmas gift packages, plus one bespoke option. Each festive package features a fantastic range of gifts, specially selected by their experienced team of buyers.

All you need to do is choose the package and tell us who you want to say thank you to (be it employees or customers) and they will do the rest. It's that simple!

www.cottrillsreward.com



We all love apps - and here are some must have Christmas ones for the festive season



Sleeps to Christmas

This free app counts down to Christmas. You can choose between various characters who will tell you how many nights, hours, minutes and seconds there are before Christmas finally arrives. Snow falls around the character while festive music plays! What's more, if you shake your iPhone you'll hear sleigh bells ring.



Christmas Tree Decorator

If you love Christmas and feel like decorating the Christmas tree in winter and any other season – this 0.59p app is just what you need! Create a perfect Christmas tree decorating it with candy canes, icicles, ornaments and coloured lights but try to be careful so that not to drop any of the decorations – see what happens if you accidentally do it!



Christmas C@rds

This app (£1.19) is a quick, easy, creative way to send personalised Christmas greeting cards or postcards from your iPhone / iPod touch. Choose from a range of templates, add photos from your album or camera, text and other features and save it to your album or send them out directly from the App.



Christmas Shopping List

The easiest to use and most comprehensive Christmas shopping list on the App Store, this app has all the tools you'll need to make Christmas shopping fun, easy, and quick. You can manage a list of people you are shopping for, add them to groups and tick them off when you've finished shopping for them. Your budget totals will let you know how much money you have left.



A-Story-A-Day Advent Calendar

Get into the Christmas spirit with this Advent calendar that has it all - a festive music soundtrack, snowflake animation, and a new Christmas image and story ready to read each day. The 2010 Calendar will be available closer to Christmas.



Christmas Fun - 4 apps in 1

This app is a one-stop shop for everything Christmassy! It includes a day countdown, Advent calendar with surprises, gift list, games, jokes, songs and wintery wallpapers.

Once the 1st of December arrives, you can open your first window and start unlocking the secrets in this Christmas application. Also new this year, is a gift list so you can keep track of all your present ideas. You can store the name of the person, and the gift idea, then tick it off the list when you've bought it.



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An office move should boost business, but a failure to plan could leave the company all shaken up

Office relocations can be like organising a military operation. Managing sensitive computer equipment, confidential documents as well as staff and other belongings requires a clear and comprehensive plan set out well in advance. www.reallymoving.com, the UK's leading provider of instant online quotes for moving services, has these tips to help ensure your office relocation runs like clockwork.

Plan in advance

You should begin preparing for your office move at least three months in advance of the move date if not more, and avoid any significant project deadlines. Make sure both clients and suppliers are also aware of where you will be moving and when, so that payments and deliveries comes to the right address and clients

are aware of any potential for disruption.

Keep employees informed

Keep employees informed at all stages of the move; make sure that they know where you will be moving to and when as soon as possible as it may affect their decisions on taking holidays, for example.

Do your research on removals firms

Make sure you approach a number of different firms; reallymoving.com will provide instant quotes from up to four reputable companies. They should visit both your old and new premises when organising the move, and check that they have the necessary insurance. You should also ask for references, and if they have the ability to move any unusual equipment.

Back up all computer files

Be sure to back up all computer files and transport the disks separately to avoid damage. It may even be worth having two back-up hard-drives as extra insurance.

Plan the layout of the new premises

Devise a floorplan for your new office, and run it by key employees to make sure that you haven't missed something important. Take measurements to make sure large items will fit in the new office and remember to leave space for drawers to open! It is also useful to colour-code boxes according to different areas of the new office.

Speak to your phone and internet providers

Phone and internet networks can take time to connect, especially in offices with large numbers of

users. Speak to your providers and make sure that all connections are ready and working in advance of moving day to minimise disruption.

Make sure staff know their responsibilities on moving day

Make sure all staff know what is expected of them as part of the move. Are they responsible for packing files? What should they do with personal items? Will they be expected to come to work on moving day if it is during the week? Will you need their help if it is over the weekend? If possible, arrange a site visit prior to moving.

Be aware of and comply with all Health & Safety regulations

Moving office has several health and safety implications. Do not allow staff to lift heavy loads, be careful to clear away any trip hazards. Ask your removals company for advice to ensure compliance with all the requirements.

Secure all necessary parking permits

You may need to liaise with local authorities to obtain parking permits for the removal vans. Equally make sure staff have any necessary parking permits or access to bike racks for the new office building ahead of their first day in the new premises.

Be aware of security

Your company's documents and equipment are always more vulnerable in transit. Losing confidential information or valuable equipment can have a serious impact on your business, so it may be worth asking all employees and removals men to wear security passes on moving day, when doors are likely to be left open, and unfamiliar faces might go unnoticed.

Learning on the job

By Neil Atkinson

For as long as we can remember, one question keeps challenging business folk: How can businesses support leaders and managers to improve their performance at work?

And to answer it we need firstly to understand how leaders and managers learn and where they go to for support. If we know this then maybe we can support the people who support our managers.

So where and how do we learn.....

I was astonished by a piece of research conducted by Princeton University. It suggested that 70% of effective learning by managers is from on-the-job experiences, tasks and problem solving in the workplace; 20% of learning from feedback and working with role models; and 10% from formal training.

Another survey conducted with 200 managers said that 55% of managers will use trial and error at least once a month and 62% say that this is a very or fairly effective way to perform.

When I digested these findings my immediate concern was around how much money I could be wasting on training courses.... Then I started to consider the consequences for my learning and development department. If people mainly learn from on-the-job experiences, how can an organisation support and enable that learning?

As a starting point I suggest sharing these stats around learning with your staff. Leaders and managers will be astounded to learn that they are largely responsible for each others' learning - and that it's not L&D or HR who 'trains' them!

Beyond that, as an L&D professional or indeed anyone interested in raising performance at work, we must think through how to give informal learning a bigger role in our L&D strategy. Here are some suggestions from our own experience:

- ✓ Build learning in to the working day by encouraging individuals to share their on the job learning experiences with others through informal 'water cooler' chats; encourage every individual in a team to share what they've learnt today via an email prompt (they may not do it literally but it may get them to stop and think about what they've learnt) and get them to think about who might benefit from this learning.
- ✓ Build coaching and mentoring responsibilities into everyone's job description - but then make it the role of L&D or HR to ensure everyone is skilled up to deliver on this.
- ✓ Finally, as most training is conducted by managers on the job, HR or L&D have a role to play in supporting line managers by providing technical input into training design and pointing them to useful training resources.

In our experience, informal learning is part of our working life, but by sharing these stats we have become more conscious of our responsibility to help and develop others.

Tips to prevent your **LAPTOP** from **OVERHEATING**



Is my laptop overheating? I am sure anyone who owns a laptop has asked themselves this question at one time or another. You know the scenarios; your computer starts to run slow, it crashes a lot, it is hot to the touch, start-up time is slower, and so on. Luckily there are ways to prevent overheating in the first place...

Desktop personal computers in general heat up but because they are much larger there is more room for the air, from its internal fan, to circulate. With laptops this isn't the case mainly because of their size. They are smaller, meaning all the components need to be compacted into this little space leaving very little room for good airflow.

Just like desktops, laptops are equipped with internal fans. These work fine during general laptop use but what if you are working with powerful software? An example would be design or editing programs which put a lot of pressure on the computer's CPU. You will notice your laptop heat up much quicker and for a longer period of time.

1 If you are looking to buy a new laptop you can avoid overheating concerns by researching the different models available before you buy. Certain brands and models are well known for having overheating issues. There are many factors involved such as processor type, cooling system type, ventilation and items such as video cards can increase the laptop heat as a whole.

2 During your product research check to see where the fan expels air from the casing. Will it be blocked by resting the laptop on your lap, or hindered by putting the computer flat on a desk? These are obvious warning signs that the model is badly designed and could

eventually be susceptible to overheating issues.

3 Is your laptop just hot or actually overheating? It's a common misconception that if a laptop gets hot it is overheating. If you think your laptop is actually overheating keep an eye on the temperature of your laptop by using monitoring software regularly. Normal core temperatures in laptops should range between 35 degrees Celsius and 40 degrees Celsius, give or take a couple degrees. If this reaches anything higher than your in danger. Normally 55 degrees Celsius is the problem point.

4 Take note of the environment you are working in. For example, working in a shaded, air-conditioned room will probably keep your laptop cooler than if you were working in a small, stuffy room on a hot day with the sun bursting through the window directly at your computer.

5 Keep your laptop clean! Make sure to dust it often as the fan has to work extra hard when there is extra dust inside the computer. If you dust regularly, the fan will not experience as much wear and tear. When your computer is turned off, use canned air to blow short bursts of air into the fan vent to blow out any dust particles. Also use the canned air to blow out any other vents or openings that lead into the computer's insides.

6 Illegal software, bugs, viruses, etc compromise the performance of your computer and can cause your system to overheat frequently. To minimize the amount of processing your CPU is doing at one time regularly

run anti-spyware and anti-virus software.

7 As mentioned above, the type of software you use can have a huge effect on your laptops performance and temperature. When using a powerful program make sure your computer has enough processor speed, (GHz), to work efficiently. The harder a laptop is working the hotter the processor will become. Take note, this does not necessarily mean that the computer is overheating though.

8 What is your laptop connected to? If you have USB devices plugged in such as external hard drive this will put a small load on the processor. If your computer is getting hot only connect USB devices when required.

9 Do not place your laptop directly on a soft surface nor a surface where it blocks the airflow of the machine. I personally think the tiny legs on most laptops are not long enough to raise the computer a sufficient amount to allow for decent airflow.

10 Give your laptop a bit more lift to increase the airflow under the machine. The best solution here is to buy a laptop cooler pad or lap desk. These are portable laptop stands or a plate that sits under the laptop helping to circulate air and help stop laptop overheating problems. They come in all shapes and sizes, many have built-in fans and raised backs just enough to increase the flow of air and keep your laptop cool. Check out the website at the end of this article for more details.

12 If you travel a lot then make sure you shut down your laptop before placing it in your carrying bag. While it is convenient to simply pull your laptop from the bag, open the screen and start working, the environment inside of the case may be too warm for your computer and can quickly damage the hardware and the screen.

13 As soon as your battery is full unplug your charger. A common mistake people make is leaving their computer plugged in at all times. By doing this the constant source of electricity will heat your battery and in turn overheat your laptop. Only charge your computer as long as necessary.

If you do find your computer is a running a little hotter than usual then turn it off and allow it to cool down. If you find that this hasn't helped the situation much and your laptop is experiencing screen freezes, sudden shut downs, sluggish performance and extra heat then this may be a sign that your computer is in fact overheating.

Follow the notes above, invest in a laptop cooler pad and if this doesn't help then consult a computer repair expert.

For more details on preventing laptop overheating with a laptop cooler pad go to Laptop Cooler Pad and check out the images, reviews and videos of all the latest units.

You can compare different cooler stands by following this link: <http://laptop-cooler-pad.com/compare-cooling-pads>.

Office Cleaning: Counting The Cost



The pressure from customers to reduce costs is greater than ever due to the current economic climate. Many companies are now reviewing overheads across their business and looking to see where savings can be made. In terms of office cleaning, reduced budgets will ultimately lead to a lower level of service, so it's about taking a logical, common sense approach that balances savings opportunities against critical business needs.

Reducing the frequency of the office cleaning operation offers immediate cost savings, with some companies switching from a daily service to alternate days. However, some businesses have taken more extreme measures, which in my opinion is a mistake. For example, if a company is to introduce a deep clean just one day a week and then rely on its staff to maintain the cleanliness of the building for the remainder of the week, this will not only distract employees from their day-to-day roles, but also result in much poorer working conditions by the end of each week.

Careful Planning

Better planning offers a more

effective alternative to simply reducing office cleaning across a business. One of the simplest ways of reducing costs is taking a close look at the overall office cleaning operation to focus resources to make the most of budgets. By classifying areas as either high or low profile it is possible to adapt the office cleaning regime to concentrate on critical requirements.

Typically, areas such as the office reception, entrance, washroom, meeting rooms and boardroom are seen as high profile, whilst back office and administrative spaces are seen as low profile. Mind you there is still a fine balance, because cutting back too much on

low profile areas can damage the working environment for office staff and have an adverse impact on workforce motivation.

Therefore, companies need to undertake a range of initiatives to effectively remove costs from an office cleaning operation without incurring damaging side affects. Intelligent office cleaning is a way of understanding the needs of an operation to reduce the required hours through better scheduling. If a meeting room is often only used on certain days of the week does it need to be cleaned on a daily basis? Could it instead be cleaned every other day or only when it has been in use. With some clever thinking it is possible to streamline an office cleaning operation without impacting on levels of cleanliness, which ultimately removes additional costs.

Daytime Approach

Switching to daytime office cleaning offers a host of business and operational benefits including reduced costs, increased productivity and enhanced customer care. Additionally, reducing a building's opening hours, for example from 5am-9pm to 8am-7pm, will enable it to be locked down for longer periods, offering reductions in operational costs such as heating, air conditioning and security.

Also, there is often a change in customer and staff perception when adopting daytime cleaning. The Increase in the visibility of office cleaning staff raises the overall awareness of the process, highlighting its importance and demonstrating the commitment to high standards. Building occupants tend to show more respect towards office cleaning staff when they see them working hard to keep the building clean, so greater care is often taken by staff and visitors as a result.

Having office cleaning staff

available during a building's opening hours ensures a consistent level of cleanliness throughout the day. With a traditional service, a building is likely to be clean at the beginning of the day and then standards gradually deteriorate until office cleaning staff return the following evening or morning.

Daytime cleaning offers new levels of flexibility and the opportunity to respond to any situation. Office cleaning schedules can be adapted to better meet the needs of customers whether this

is identifying operational peaks, or arranging job allocations based on the planned usage of meeting rooms. Moreover, it enables an immediate response in the case of unforeseen accidents and spillages, minimising the required clean up time and promoting a clean and hygienic working atmosphere.

Workplace Hygiene

The swine flu epidemic has brought hygiene to the forefront of people's minds, with companies and employees alike looking at ways of minimising the spread



of the disease. What it has highlighted is the ongoing need for proper hygiene within the working environment to protect staff's health from dirty and germ-ridden surfaces and equipment. Therefore, any changes to an office cleaning schedule need to take into consideration employee welfare and the implications of any reduced levels of hygiene.

The cost of absenteeism to UK companies is considerable, with 11 billion lost each year due to sickness, and this figure is likely to have been even greater over the past twelve months. A large percentage of that is due to bacteria and germs being picked up by people in the workplace.

Desks and office equipment are in fact a breeding ground for germs and bacteria. For example, a toilet seat has on average 47 microbes per square inch compared to a telephone that has around 25,000 and a keyboard with 3,300. This is hardly surprising when you consider that toilets are cleaned regularly, but most people don't think about their office desk and the equipment on it. As a result, there can be up to 10 million bacteria on the typical desk, and this can include Ecoli, MRSA Winter Vomiting bugs and now of course Swine Flu.

Regular sanitising of IT equipment and hard surfaces is a must to reduce the spread of bugs, viruses and diseases. Also, taking time to educate employees about the personal and business risks will encourage better personal hygiene and working practices.

Waste Management

Recycling is now an important consideration for all companies who are under legislative, corporate and social pressure to reduce the impact their operation has on the environment and wider community. Therefore, there is an opportunity to take an integrated approach with the office cleaning

operation to adopt effective waste management procedures to keep time and cost pressures to a minimum.

Over the past few years, the cost of dumping rubbish at landfill sites has been increasing 25 per cent annually, and this is unlikely to change moving forward. Therefore, there are wider cost savings available for those businesses that can achieve high levels of recycling. Companies can also receive money back for waste paper, so this represents an added kick back.

By integrating waste management with an existing office cleaning operation, companies can benefit from added value resulting from efficient waste segregation and better-managed processes to make significant time and cost savings. It is possible to tap into the expertise of office cleaning companies to increase levels of recycled office and operational waste including paper, confidential paper, ink cartridges and food waste.

Outsourcing And A Partnership Approach

Some companies may consider that they can reduce costs by taking their office cleaning operation back in-house. However, organisations should not underestimate the knowledge and expertise possessed by office cleaning companies and the ability this provides to focus on core activity.

Most office cleaning companies will have access to specialist cleaning equipment that offers added efficiency benefits. Battery powered, low noise vacuum cleaners are essential for daytime cleaning operations, whilst microfiber cloths not only reduce cleaning time and improve results, but also minimise the use of polish and other cleaning agents.

There are also many hidden costs associated with in-house office cleaning operations. For example, companies will need to organise

appropriate training for internal office cleaning staff and also take into consideration holiday cover. Furthermore, companies will not have the same buying power as office cleaning companies, so equipment and cleaning product costs will also be higher as a result.

Office cleaning companies often widen opportunities to benefit from a multi-service solution. Many office cleaning companies are either part of a larger group or have partners in place to deliver an integrated service offering. Therefore, companies can access a wide range of complementary services to help achieve additional cost savings.

Simply slashing office cleaning budgets is not necessarily the most effective means of lowering overheads, so it is worth taking a step back and considering all the options available and what issues need to be considered. What is important is that whatever steps are taken do not negatively impact on a business' core activity.

Initial Facilities Services, a division of business services company Rentokil Initial, provides office cleaning companies, facilities management, hospital and catering services for organisations of all sizes and in all business sectors throughout the UK. Initial Facilities Services' flexible approach is designed to meet the precise needs of its customers whether they need single or multiple services, an integrated solution or full facilities management.

Initial Facilities Services comprises a range of complementary and market-leading businesses including Initial Cleaning Services, Initial Retail Cleaning, Lancaster Cleaning and Support Services, Initial Specialist Services, Initial Window Cleaning, Autograph Foodservice, Eden Foodservice, Initial Hospital Services and Insitu Services.

Find out how you could benefit from at least one of these services by visiting <http://www.initial.co.uk> today.

Save Money on Software

10 Out of the Box Ideas

You will need the Internet, you will definitely need a phone or phone system, and if you are planning on using a computer (of course you are!) you are going to need software. The good news is that these items don't have to break the bank.

Gone are the days when you were stuck with one provider, and didn't have any alternatives. Today, you have a range of companies or competing for your business. So check out these money saving tips.

By Rusty O'Connor



Tip 1: Use open-source software: Open source software is great for around the office and doesn't cost you a dime. Projects such as open office are even compatible with Microsoft Office! What could be easier? I think Bill Gates has made enough money.

Tip 2: Search the Internet for Promotional Codes: There are literally hundreds of sites out there that offer promotional codes etc to get software cheaper. Check out these sites, grab the codes and buy the software cheaper. As always do your homework to make sure you are getting a good deal...and a legitimate product.

Tip 3: Use VoIP for your phone calls: VoIP stands for "Voice over Internet Protocol" and as its name suggests uses the internet for making voice phone calls. VoIP is perfect for small business and can save you a large amount of money on your phone calls. "A good call". Sorry!

Tip 4: Find a cheaper business phone system: There are heaps of phone products out there for a variety of business types. For example hosted PBX systems are cheaper as there are no recurrent

hardware or software costs. Shop around for the best deal and for a system that suits your business.

Tip 5: Put everyone's mobile phones on the one network: Mobile phone networks offer cheaper, or in some cases free, calls to other people on the same network. This has the potential to save you hundreds a month.

Tip 6: Find an ISP that is suitable for you: Depending on your business, you may not need the biggest and the best Internet Service Provider. Shop around to find a package that will work for your business.

Tip 7: Meet online: Teleconferencing has become a lot more viable in recent years, and is really starting to become an alternative to face to face meetings. We are not saying replace all your meetings with teleconferences, but if you replace a few a week you will save money in travel and resources expenses. As an added bonus you will also save time.

Tip 8: Free form it: Rather than wasting your precious time and resources developing up forms, letters and tables for your business; search on-line for free forms. There are literally hundreds of websites out there that have forms you can download and print.

Tip 9: Buy a combined fax/printer/scanner: Alternatively upgrade the computing system so that you can do this from your desk.

Tip 10: Personal Mobile Phone Usage: Lets be honest most staff use their work mobiles to rack up big bills on personal calls. I know I occasionally did. Try the carrot and stick approach. Offer an incentive to keep calls below a certain threshold, but add that all bills will be randomly scrutinized.

Rusty is an affiliate marketer with eight years experience. His areas of expertise include SEO, articles, ezines, blogs and PPC. Rusty is particularly interested in the areas of goal setting, time management and financial and money management. If you want to check out all his money saving tips visit www.1000moneysavingtips.com