

PA ENTERPRISE

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

October 2010



- ▶ Christmas is coming! Corporate gifts guide
- ▶ Returning to work: tips to make it easier
- ▶ The new rules of business networking
- ▶ Interview Dos and Don'ts
- ▶ News / Events / Products / Competitions

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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

Sales & Marketing Director

Jane Olsen
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



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One in five employees prevented from remote working

Public sector organisations could improve employee morale and boost productivity by being more receptive to requests for home working.

According to the Trade Unions Congress (TUC), nearly one in five workers would prefer to work from home, but are prevented from doing so by their bosses.

To mark National Work from Home Day, it highlighted the fact that 4.5 million additional employees would telecommute if given the chance.

The TUC said that home working can allow for better staff retention rates, while also improving motivation, boosting a firm's reputation and reducing costs through sickness absence and travel.

"Working for home is growing in popularity but millions of staff are still unable to try it out thanks to over controlling employers," said TUC general secretary Brendon Barber.

"Too many workers are wasting their time making journeys they don't need to ... while companies are losing out on the cost and productivity benefits of home working."



Bizspace launches website with 'live chat'

Small businesses and SMEs seeking flexible workspace, will appreciate the ease with which Bizspace's new streamlined website will allow them to search for office, workshop, studio, meeting room and storage space across 110 UK locations.

Bizspace's new website, www.bizspace.co.uk, provides major benefits to those seeking workspace including on-map location searching; clean and crisp details of all business centre locations and a novel live chat facility whereby customer questions about Bizspace products and services can be answered in real time through the website.

"We have put a lot of thought into designing a website that streamlines the process for finding workspace," comments Gregg Sheen, Bizspace's marketing director. "All the interfaces are designed with our potential customers in mind so they can easily understand what we offer and get in contact with us using their preferred method of communication."

Generation Y is disillusioned with the workplace

- Almost one in three young professionals do not trust their employer, according to the latest research from recruitment consultants Badenoch & Clark.
- When asked whether they trust their employer to deliver accurate information on business performance, 32.2 per cent of 16 – 24 yr olds revealed that they refuse to believe either 'most' or 'any' of what they are told by their employer. This is in contrast to 18.2 per cent last year, suggesting that Generation Y is becoming increasingly disillusioned with the workplace.

- Guy Emmerson, associate director of Badenoch & Clark commented, "Without a culture of trust in the workplace, employers will struggle to foster employee engagement and, in-turn, retain their workforce."
- "As recruitment activity levels pick up, employers need to consider the strength of their relationship with employees across all levels of the business, or run the risk of staff voting with their feet. Younger employees – the so-called Generation Y – have specific expectations of their employers, so encouraging more two-way conversations on business performance will prove vital to increasing levels of trust and gauging job satisfaction. Without this it will be become harder to obtain any kind of staff loyalty and in turn retain talented graduates."
- Those in the legal profession were particularly sceptical of their employers, with 36.9 per cent of employees across all age ranges stating that they do not believe either 'most' or 'any' of what their employers tells them about business performance.
- A further 26.3 per cent admitted to only trusting 'parts' of what their employer tells them and only one in ten (10.5 per cent) stated that they 'totally trust' their employer.



Chocolate Heaven as Chocolate Week approaches

Chocolate Week – 11-17 October - is a time of pure indulgence involving the country's best chocolatiers and chocolate shops holding events all over the UK.

There are events being held all over the country – for example Divine at The Bertinet Kitchen in Bath on 11 October.

The highlight of Chocolate Week, Chocolate Unwrapped is where visitors can immerse themselves in a decadent feast of chocolate. Chocolate Unwrapped is a dedicated chocolate show with the UK's finest chocolate companies including Artisan du Chocolat, William Curley,



Paul a Young, Rococo, Hotel Chocolat, Thorntons, Original Beans, Cacao Sampaka, The Chocolate Café, Duffy's Redstar Chocolate, Baruzzo, Auberge du Chocolat, GoDo Chocolate, Cocouture, Melange, Jeff de Bruges, Matcha, Lucky's, Patchi, Nicky Grant and many more.

The two day show includes chocolate experiences, links to cacao plantations, tastings, a chocolate wall, chocolate art and sculptures and even chocolate personality readings.

Following the popularity of the first show last year, this year's show has been expanded and has moved to an exciting new venue - Vinopolis on London's South Bank, close to the Borough food market.

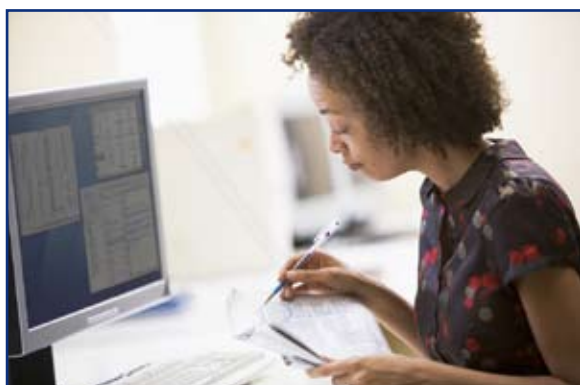
<http://chocolate-week.co.uk>



Home from holiday blues leads to job seeking

A third of British workers return from holiday vowing to look for a new job, with some seeking to quit their profession altogether, according to a new study.

Another survey of 1,000 adults by recruitment consultants



Badenoch & Clark found that only one in 10 felt refreshed after a break, with Londoners having the worst post-holiday blues.

Workers in financial firms were most

negative about their job after a holiday, followed by lawyers.

Heidi Waddington, of Badenoch & Clark, said: "Whilst a holiday provides rest and relaxation, workers also have time to reflect and often come back to work feeling like the grass may be greener elsewhere.

"With schools going back and summer ending, September traditionally sees a shift in momentum within the labour market, and this year is no different. We have seen a surge in CVs being submitted via our website over the past week."

Where is my nearest post box?

It's a situation we've all been in, not knowing where our nearest post box is. First port of call you would think would be the Royal Mail web site. There you can find your nearest post office, buy stamps online, recycle your mobile phone and now even put your own face on a stamp! But you can't look up your nearest post box! Come on now people, this is the year 2010.



Through the Freedom of Information Act, some clever people have managed to get all the locations of UK post boxes and have built a neat lookup tool to help you find the closest post boxes to your location – free.

So, if you need to send something small, use the free post box finder at www.shiply.com/postbox-finder.php and if you need to move something big that just won't fit - use www.shiply.com to get delivery quotes from over 17,500 customer-rated transport companies.

Corporate World Cracks Up for Crisis this Christmas

Crisis has teamed up with eight A-list comedians to bring classic Christmas cracker humour to the 2010 Crisis Christmas Card. Companies are challenged to swap standard Christmas cards for the Crisis e-cracker this year, helping raise £1 million to fund the Crisis Christmas campaign and provide food, companionship and access to vital services for homeless people at this time.

Funny men Alan Carr, Russell Kane, Rufus Hound, Reece Shearsmith & Steve Pemberton join comic legends Micky Flanagan, Pete Firman and Hattie Heyridge to offer nine unique comedy e-cards. Companies are asked to sign up to the campaign in a bid to help the homeless this Christmas and, in return, receive a personalised package of branded client e-cards plus feature within a Financial Times double-page spread.

Now in its 15th year, the award winning Crisis



Office workers are drowning under email

Unnecessary emails are the bane of the modern office with seven out of 10 workers complaining about being sent irrelevant emails or being copied on emails of no interest. This is according to the findings of new research released by Salesforce.

The study found that many office workers are running the risk of being overwhelmed by a data deluge. Over a third (38 per cent) of respondents said they now suffer from information overload at work, and the trends suggest that this is set to get worse.

"The habit of 'blasting' out emails to a large group of people to ensure that there is no chance of leaving anyone out of a particular message has created a

Christmas Card has evolved with advances in technology, delivering cutting-edge creative content year on year. The campaign provides an innovative way for companies to meet CSR objectives, supporting over 2,500 of the most disadvantaged homeless people at Christmas, meeting green targets by reducing paper consumption (note an estimated 1 billion Christmas cards are thrown away every year in the UK) as well as engaging employees year round with volunteering opportunities.

Leslie Morphy, Chief Executive for Crisis comments: "We are very excited about this year's Crisis Christmas Card, and pleased to have so many great names from the world of comedy on board. We challenge all businesses to think twice before sending their client Christmas cards this year and ask them instead to invest in a great initiative that will help many homeless people, who are particularly vulnerable at Christmas time."

The Crisis Christmas Card launched on the 22 September. For further information on the campaign visit www.crisis.org.uk/christmascard



situation where email is now becoming counter-productive," said Tim Barker, vice president EMEA strategy for Salesforce.

"Office workers are now facing the choice of trawling through countless emails that have nothing to do with them or ignoring them and potentially missing out on vital messages."

At the same time, the research shows that social media is on the rise in the workplace, with nearly half of workers (46 per cent) using social media at work every day. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is being shepherded in by the younger generation, with that figure jumping to 56 per cent for those in their early twenties and two thirds for those just entering the job market.

However, the younger generation of office workers are not just using social media for social engagement but as a useful business collaboration tool. Around three quarters (74 per cent) of respondents under 35 said they get some business benefit from the information they get from social media, while only about half (52 per cent) of those 35 and older feel the same way.

Cyclist's satnav app launched on the iPhone

Motorists have TomTom and Garmin. Cyclists now have the Bike Hub iPhone app. This free app is already a top three navigation app on iTunes. The app is getting new people on bikes and, by displaying clever short-cuts and bicycle-friendly routes, is cutting the journey times of existing cyclists.

The app uses a satnav-style routing engine developed specifically for cyclists. Unlike standard satnavs, or Google Maps, the Bike Hub iPhone app can route cyclists along cycle paths, such as routes on the Sustrans National Cycle Network. The app also routes away from up-hill slogs for cyclists who wish to avoid them, but gives a high priority to downhill routes.

Users can choose between three route modes: quietest, quickest or balanced.

'Quickest route' users are directed via roads (although not dual carriageways or motorways). Those cyclists who don't care to mingle with motorised traffic would choose 'quietest route' and would then be guided along back-streets and, where available and sensible, cycle routes. The 'balanced route' provides a good mix between the two.

The app was produced by Tinderhouse of Kent and commissioned by Carlton Reid, editor of BikeHub.co.uk, a newly-launched website owned by the two UK bicycle industry organisations.

Reid said: "Using the Bike Hub app is like being guided by a friend who knows all the clever short-cuts."

As well as working out bicycle-friendly routes the app has a 'bike shop finder' button, calling up bike shops within a six mile radius of an iPhone. Directions are then given to the shops discovered, of which there are 2500 across the UK. The database was supplied by the Association of Cycle Traders.

iTunes reviewers have been overwhelmingly positive. iTunes reviewer 'AndyGoodas' wrote:

"I thought the roads on my South London commute were too dangerous for me to consider riding as an amateur, but this showed me a brilliant alternative route on quiet back roads I'd never thought of without the app. Going to ride to work most days now, wish I'd started ages ago."

Andrew Norton of the Aarght art gallery in Oxford emailed BikeHub.co.uk with his praise for the app:

"I thought the fastest way to work was 18:40 minutes but after 2 years doing various different routes, you showed me a path and a couple of shortcuts that have reduced it to 16:50! Gob smacked!"

The app does not yet feature a turn-by-turn voice for directions but this will be added in an update. As well as a synthetic voice, the app will feature the famous voice of TV commentator Phil Liggett.



On iTunes, the Bike Hub app stresses that cyclists should not navigate with one hand and steer with another. Instead the app recommends the use one of a growing number of iPhone handlebar mounts, stocked by the Apple Store and other outlets.

Bicycles that give you Super Powers!

There's no excuse not to beat the nightmare traffic jams and take to two wheels, with this fabulous electric bike. No matter what your fitness levels are, with a Spencer Ivy bicycle you can fly up hills, and pedal miles effortlessly. This eco-friendly bicycle will be a super hero to anyone wanting a bit of help on the uphill bits! The beauty of the Spencer Ivy bicycle is that you can switch the super powers on for effortless cycling. Or you can switch them off, and hone your own Super Hero skills, losing weight and getting fit.

Pictured is Spencer, the commuter bicycle which offers the very best in electric bicycle technology with sleekcity styling. Fitted with a low maintenance Panasonic motor that powers every turn of the pedal, and with three levels of assistance, you can choose exactly how hard you want the bicycle to work. www.spencerivy.com



Young people are leaving themselves open to status hacking

New research has shown that many youngsters in the UK share their passwords while less than half password protect their mobile devices.

A study by Internet Security company AVG comparing young adults (18-25 year olds) in the US, UK and Australia shows that most are not taking adequate security precautions when it comes to securing their social network profiles.

AVG's study was commissioned to highlight the dangers of 'status jacking', the practice of hijacking status updates on social networks, which is particularly prevalent among students and the under 25s.

The research shows the degree to which young

adults in all three countries secure the devices that they use to access social networks - PCs/laptops, mobile devices, and handhelds such as iPads.

The results show that while most 18-25 year olds (78%) secure their laptops with a password, less than half (48.3%) password protect their mobiles. Among British young adults, only 50% secure their mobiles with a password. Barely a quarter put any kind of password security on their handheld devices, such as iPads or Blackberrys.

Most under 25s are aware of the need to use different passwords across different social networks. But unfortunately, four in ten across the UK share their passwords with friends and family.

Overall, young women are less careful about security than young men. 42% of women under 25 share their passwords compared to 28% of men. Meanwhile, while 81% of men under 25s password protect their laptops and PCs, a quarter (26%) of women don't bother to do so.

AVG's Ambassador of Free, Tony Anscombe says that it is concerning that many people share passwords. "The fact that most young adults secure their laptops and PCs is positive news, but the most worrying statistic is that four in ten share their passwords, something we do not advise doing.

"Sharing your passwords can leave your social networks open to status jacking and leaves your other online accounts, such as banking, vulnerable to attack."

"You only have to walk away from your mobile for a few minutes for someone to access your email, download your contacts, and to masquerade as you on a social network."

AVG has put together a video featuring UK comedienne Holly Burns, which guides students and young adults through the dangers of status jacking in a light hearted, but informative, manner.

'How to' with Videojug apps for iPhone and iPad

Videojug, the UK pioneer of 'how-to' online video, is helping solve the everyday problems we all face while out and about with the launch today of its new apps for the iPhone/iPod touch and iPad, www.videojug.com/mobile.

Allowing you to search for 'how-to' videos from Videojug's extensive library of professionally-produced films, the apps provide video solutions to every day challenges and tricky situations you might face on the go - from how to change a tyre and eat sushi correctly, to how to ace an interview. Both apps are available to download for free from the iTunes App Store, each specially designed to make the most of the smaller-format iPhone/iPod touch and the larger-screened iPad respectively.

Videojug's apps not only help you deal with problems away from the home as they arise, they can also widen your knowledge and life skills just for fun. If you fancy learning how to do something new everyday, Videojug has catered for that too - just shake your iPhone/iPod Touch and one of those thousands of pearls of wisdom will be yours. Or use the videos to plan ahead while you are stuck in a queue, commuting or falling asleep in the doctor's waiting room. And if you've promised to cook dinner but are running late, look up Videojug's popular video on how to make chicken curry in ten minutes, drop by your local shop to pick up ingredients and arrive home in charge and with dinner under control!

Tom Laidlaw, CEO of Videojug, said: "Videojug itself was born out of a situation where its founder, David Tabizel found himself stuck on a motorway with a flat tyre but without the knowledge he needed to fix it himself. Inevitably, the 'how to' change a tyre video was one of the first films ever to be produced and continues to be one of the most popular viewed films on site."

Examples of videos include:

How to be lazy in the office and get away with it
How to tie a tie using a full windsor knot
How to eat sushi
How to change windscreen wiper blades
How to do napkin origami



Does the size of your desk really matter?

Getting the right size desk for your office is key to long-term business success, claims new research by Avanta Managed Offices, which also finds that unless your company takes space in a serviced office, buying office furniture is an often overlooked business investment.

There are many factors to take into consideration when choosing the style, layout and size of your desk and it is important to get it right first time. The industry standard desk is 1600mm x 800mm, but this may well be too big, or small, for your requirements.

What kind of desk do you need?

Before considering the myriad of desk options you need to determine what kind of desk you need and how you will be using it. For instance, will you be working at your desk from 9am – 6pm every day and therefore require a more spacious option? Are you looking for a desk for a receptionist, or even two receptionists, who would need a larger desk for sorting post and displaying newspapers or company collateral?

Is your desk, or indeed your entire office space, just used as a touchdown or hotdesking facility



and therefore just a small desk space for a lap top could suffice? All of these aspects will need to be taken into consideration.

What shape of desk do you require?

The traditional, rectangular desk, works for most people and industries, but there are plenty of alternative options available. An L shaped desk is a great option for someone who needs two separate 'areas' of working; U shaped desks offer a lot more space for files and documents and wave shaped desks offer a useful circular end which could be used for small team meetings.

What will you have on your desk?

The size of your desk will largely depend on what you actually will be using your desk for. Many people in the finance industry require multiple monitors, which

are generally displayed side by side and will therefore take up more space.

Graphic designers, for instance, will also require more desk space for larger monitors and graphics tablets and PAs may need additional space for paperwork and filing. Even the type and size of telephone you use can determine your desk size requirements.

In addition, the volume of paperwork produced by a business can mount up and take up valuable space. To get around this, the many options of vertical filing systems work well. These can also be fixed to the back panel of the desk ensuring that valuable space on the actual desk top is not wasted.

"There are clearly a number of different factors to take into account when choosing a desk," comments David Kinnaird, Avanta's group operations director. "Office furniture can be a significant expense for a small company, so it's worth doing some homework before taking the plunge.

"According to the Office of National Statistics, the UK workforce spends, on average, 43.2 hours per week at work, so it's important to make sure you get the right size desk from the outset."

www.avanta.co.uk

Businesses are accepting excuses rather than chasing late payments

British SMEs are now more likely to accept excuses from late paying customers than before the recession meaning that many could be suffering from poor cash flow, according to a recent survey commissioned by positivecollections.co.uk.

- Small to medium sized businesses are the most prone to suffer from late payers (with 74% stating that they are likely to accepting late payment excuses).
- 10% of organisations avoid chasing debts in the first place as they are worried about losing future business or simply feel too uncomfortable about broaching the subject.
- Micro businesses (businesses with one to nine employees) are the least likely to worry about debt recovery as 45% claim they are always paid on time.
- 17% of businesses would try to chase debts but avoid legal action as they believe it will be too expensive.

David Green, CEO of positivecollections.co.uk, said:

"In some cases, there will be genuine reasons for late payments which are unavoidable but, businesses shouldn't accept this as somehow 'inevitable' or the 'norm' because there are ways to combat this and keep your credit control in good shape."

WIN £150 Love-2-Shop vouchers courtesy of Avanta!

For your chance to WIN this great prize, simply answer an easy question. Avanta are also giving away FIVE runner-up prizes; £50 in Love-2-Shop vouchers and £50 Avanta meeting room cash.

[Click here to enter](#)

Avanta would like PA Enterprise readers to come and see for themselves the great facilities they have to offer. So they are inviting you to drinks and nibbles at their

stunning City business centre, 23 Austin Friars on Thursday 14 October from 6pm.

Avanta have fully equipped meeting rooms located in business centres throughout London and the UK.



UK's first office swapathon to help 'most neglected'

Office workers are spearheading the UK's first ever charity swapathon to help some of the world's most disadvantaged people.

Volunteer co-ordinators at workplaces across the country will hold a SwapIt event in a bid to raise £1m to support disability rights both in the UK and overseas.

Participants will donate £5 for a stamp to swap experiences or physical items with their colleagues, having fun in the run-up to Christmas.

The ground-breaking Stamp and Swap day coincides with Friday 3 December 2010, the United Nations International Day of Disabled People.



"Great things start with a little give and take and so we want as many people as possible to join in, help

out and start swapping," said Sarah Sandon, Director of Fundraising and Communications at UK-based ADD International, the charity behind the campaign.

"What you choose to swap is entirely up to you. You could be the boss for the day, swap some essential skills with your workmates or exchange books, DVDs, plants or fashion accessories.



"The key is to have fun while supporting the rights of disabled people, some of whom are the most neglected people in the world, living in extreme conditions of poverty."

A comprehensive campaign co-ordinators' pack, downloadable from the campaign site www.stampandswap.org, can be tailored to reflect the volunteer's own company branding.

The pack includes posters, PowerPoint and press release templates and tips to make the most of the campaign internally and externally.

ADD International research shows that a single £5 donation can make a real difference, especially to disabled people in the poorest countries many of whom cannot afford the transport costs to access basic healthcare. In Uganda, for example, £5 could pay for two disabled people to attend a workshop on HIV prevention. It could also pay for a training workshop in disability rights.

Amazingly, many disabled people living in remote areas of Africa and Asia believe they are the only disabled person in the world and that they have no rights at all. ADD-funded training gives them the knowledge and confidence they need to ask for the rights they are routinely denied.

For more information visit www.stampandswap.org

Top tips to bring down your home phone bill

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT Nearly all providers discourage payment by any means other than direct debit and impose punitive charges of anything up to £5 per month for dealing with cheques. The Post Office accepts payment by various means with no additional charges.

GO FOR PAPERLESS BILLING Some providers offer useful savings if you receive your statements online, not by post. You'll also be doing your bit for the environment.

CHECK YOUR SMALL PRINT If you're tied to a 12 or 18 month contract, you may be faced with exit fees if you want to switch before the contract term ends. Weigh up the savings and charges before making your decision as you may find the savings don't merit the switch.

BEWARE MOBILE COSTS Calling mobile phones is a universal burden nowadays so be sure to check how much it will cost you per minute to call a mobile

phone from your landline; costs vary hugely between providers.

CONSIDER CALLING PACK ADD-ONS If you have specific needs from your home phone service, for example if you make a lot of calls to international numbers, it may be worth getting a suitable calling plan add-on to keep a lid on those costs.

OPTIMISE YOUR CALLING if you have free mobile to mobile minutes on contract phone, then use these to call other mobiles. Use your land line to call landlines and 0870 numbers (as some providers include these).

PAY ANNUALLY Customers who pay up front for the whole year can save even more money. When paying by lump sum, Primus, BT and Sky's monthly line rental payments come down to £8.25, £9.49 and £9.00 respectively.

The Primus Home Saver line rental package, the UK's cheapest monthly line rental deal available through Homephonechoices.co.uk, offers free weekend and evening calls to UK landlines and costs just £8.99 per month, offering savings of up to £36 per year.

www.homephonechoices.co.uk

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.

[Just click here to enter.](#)



YOUR 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, you will receive:-

- 35% allowable attrition
- One complimentary room or delegate for every 35 paid rooms or delegates
- Double Marriott Rewards® points or Triple Marriott Rewards points when you pay with your Visa® Card

Book more, get more:

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. For more information, visit MeetingsbyMarriott.co.uk



London Restaurant Festival

London Restaurant Festival is a citywide celebration of eating out, designed to showcase London's extraordinarily diverse and exciting range of restaurant.

From 4-18 October 2010 food lovers can explore some of the capital's finest cooking.

From Michelin-starred restaurants to undiscovered neighbourhood gems, this year's festival boasts great value Festival Menus. Prices start at under £10 so you can't afford to miss out.

The menus are specially created by the hundreds of participating restaurants and are available to customers throughout the Festival period.

You can book your table by using the search panel on the website

www.visitlondon.com/londonrestaurantfestival/

Festival Menus are a great-value way to try out new restaurants and also an opportunity for restaurants to truly showcase how creative, delectable, sustainable and delicious their food can be.

Last year more than 10,000 Londoners tried a Festival Menu, over six days, in 450 participating restaurants.

In 2010, London Restaurant Festival is 15 days long and will feature 800 restaurants, so there's even more choice and variety on offer.

StreetSmart is the chosen charity for the 2010 London Restaurant Festival.



Christmas is coming!

Corporate Gifts go a long way towards strengthening relations both within a company and with existing and prospective clients. Here's our round-up of some of the online companies offering a wide range of hampers and gifts, designed to offer great value whatever the budget.



Countdown to Christmas

Fortnum & Mason



The Classic Christmas Hamper is Fortnum & Mason's signature festive hamper and comes packed with timeless treats of impeccable deliciousness. Every Christmas need is met, from the cognac butter and claret to the Christmas cake and the all-important bottle of champagne. There's even a bag of mulling spices and a musical tin of biscuits, to guarantee a festive mood. Simply lift the lid of this hamper and let Christmas begin.

www.fortnumandmason.com

Giftinspiration.com

Giftinspiration.com offers a dedicated corporate gift service for business customers. From Christmas gifts sent direct to clients to a present to celebrate a new baby for a valued member of staff, they have quality gifts and hampers for all occasions and budgets. Your company logo can be added to gift cards and your corporate colours can be reflected in bespoke Christmas hamper packaging.

www.giftinspiration.com



M&S

Get ready for Christmas with a mouth-watering range of hampers from M&S! With a choice of indulgent gourmet foods, specially selected wine hampers, gift baskets and more you're sure to find the perfect Christmas gift.

www.marksandspencer.com

ChristmasHamper.com

ChristmasHamper.com have been supplying a wide range of Luxury Christmas Hampers and Corporate Christmas Gifts since 1985. They provide a great selection of gift hampers for all levels of Corporate Gifts whatever the budget. Their Luxury Hamper selections make ideal Special Occasions Gifts whatever the occasion.

Their new 2010 Christmas Hamper Range is now complete and comprises gift baskets and boxes filled with exciting Christmas treats. The boxes are hand finished with ribbon to add that extra special touch. For those who prefer the more traditional hampers, favourites including Port & Stilton Hampers, The Spirit of Christmas hamper, Decadent Delights wooden chest are among many others to choose from. www.christmashamper.com





CocoonCorporate

CocoonCorporate have made it their mission to provide original business gift ideas, corporate gift hampers, corporate gift baskets and goodie bags that clients and employees will really appreciate. Ditch the branded stress balls and 'one size fits all' t-shirts and see what they have to offer. They provide business gifts, goody bags and launch packs that you can tailor to suit your budget and recipients. With filled gift boxes and goodie bags for conferences and Christmas parties, there will always be something to suit!

www.cocooncorporate.co.uk/

Hotel Chocolat

Hotel Chocolat's aim is to make the process of choosing and ordering as easy as possible for you and to ensure that your chocolate gift is remembered long after the event and gets the right result for your company.

Illustrated is the Dinner Party Platter - an astonishing array of irresistible chocolate nibbles specially created for party munching, after dinner nibbling and all sorts of social shindigs - just lift the lid and dive straight in!

www.hotelchocolat.co.uk



First 4 Hampers

First 4 Hampers has been a family owned business for over 10 years. They aim to offer a unique gift service, with a bespoke selection of specialty foods available for next day delivery to most locations in the UK and Ireland. When sourcing goods, whether it is a type of food or packaging for the hampers, they aim to be as ethical as possible.

They offer organic, vegetarian, vegan, biodynamic, gluten free, and dairy free options, and as many fair trade products as possible. All fresh fruit is GM free. All their gift baskets and hampers use recyclable fillers and outers.

www.first4hampers.com



Thorntons

Thorntons corporate gifts section gives you the opportunity to buy all of the delicious Thorntons chocolates you'd expect, but with the added bonus of corporate benefits and offers. Unique to the corporate gifts section are multiple delivery options, branded and personalised chocolates and packaging, corporate discounts and corporate gift packages.

Dedicated chocolate advisors are on hand to guide you to the perfect corporate gift solution.

www.thorntons.co.uk

Corporate Gifts Company

The Corporate Gifts Company have clocked up many Christmas's of trading and have been one of the leading suppliers of business gifts for over 20 years. Their experienced sales team can help you choose the business gifts that will meet your requirements. They offer free post & packaging on every order, free pre-production samples on every order and free engraving.

www.corporate-gifts-co.com





Harrods Corporate Service

Harrods Corporate Service has launched its celebrated Christmas Hampers and Gifts collection for 2010. New to the range is the exclusive assortment of Daylesford Organic Hampers, which showcase a selection of the finest foods, produced at Daylesford's organic farms in the UK. **The Daylesford Organic Complete Larder** (£275.00) offers everything you could need for the festive season, from handmade cakes, chutneys and preserves to creamy Gloucestershire cheese, sparkling Prosecco and plenty of crackers!



The new **Celebration of Chocolate** hamper (£85.00) offers heaven in a box for those with a sweet tooth. Featuring this sweet and sticky delicacy in all its glorious and decadent forms, chocoholics can indulge in the luscious truffle assortment, and the very finest dark, milk and white chocolate, buried in this cache of cocoa.



Harrods Corporate Service is offering complimentary UK mainland delivery for Hampers and Gift Boxes with a single value of £100.00 and above and ordered and paid in full by 19th November 2010.

www.harrodscorporateservice.com

Arcadia Group

Looking for a gift...and not sure what to buy? Why not choose Arcadia Group vouchers?

It's a great way of sending a gift to a colleague or clients, and with eight brands and eight styles to choose from, one voucher gives the recipient freedom of the high street to shop in all Arcadia's brands.

You can order their gift vouchers online for delivery direct to your recipient anywhere in the UK - complete with a free greetings card carrying your personal message.

www.arcadiagroup.co.uk



House of Fraser

House of Fraser corporate gift cards and vouchers give the recipient a world of choice in premium and designer brands and can be redeemed in any of our 61 stores throughout the UK and Ireland or online at www.houseoffraser.co.uk



There is free delivery on all orders as well as complimentary gift card carriers, or voucher wallets and envelopes on request. All orders received by 11.00am either by phone, email or fax, are delivered the next working day by 5.00pm.

Gift cards offer flexible load values, with top-up and balance enquiry facilities. The maximum load is £1000, the minimum is £5.

www.houseoffraser.co.uk



Selfridges

Packing the best of the Selfridges Foodhall into wicker hampers with a splash of the iconic trademark yellow, Selfridges' hampers have been enchanting food-lovers for decades.

The selection ranges from the Christmas Gift Box at £25 to the impressive Connoisseurs Choice Hamper at £1,000, which contains a wonderful selection of champagne, wine, port, smoked salmon, cakes, puddings chocolates and cheeses, plus much more.

www.selfridgeshampers.com





Throwing a corporate Christmas function

You're the boss and ultimately responsible for the office Christmas party. Follow this advice from Office Christmas to keep your employees motivated, happy and safe this festive season.

Make the event an incentive

The prospect of an end-of-year bash can be a remarkable boost for your employees. Why not suggest that when certain targets or service levels are met another £100 will go behind the bar. You can also offer more than the typical bar drinking session by getting cabaret acts, themed parties and murder mystery nights to make the event truly

safely, make sure it's not too pricey (especially if you're footing the bill) and choose a venue with plenty of room – some of the less sprightly co-workers may not be keen on standing up or dancing all night. Bars, pubs, hotel events rooms and restaurants are all great venues for a corporate Christmas party.

Pick the date

Be sure to give your team plenty of notice before the party. The last thing you need is to pick a venue, pay the deposit and organise the entertainment only to learn that half the team can't make it. Be sure that all employees can keep the date free before making any final arrangements.

That's entertainment

Now you've chosen the location you have to decide on the entertainment. Depending on the scale and venue of the event you can range from a DJ to a live band, fancy dress to a cabaret show or a buffet to a three course sit-down dinner. The possibilities are endless. Consider your staff when organising the entertainment, what age-range do they span, what are their likes and dislikes, how many vegetarians? Show your staff that you truly know them by throwing a celebration that everyone can enjoy.

Most importantly, make sure you have fun yourself. Use the opportunity to get to know your workforce in a work free environment. You'll find you can learn a lot from staff in this situation and perhaps get some new ideas and feedback that would normally go unheard in the workplace.

www.officechristmas.co.uk



As a manager you know that the most valued resource at any company is the staff. To reward hard work and effort over the year it is a manager's responsibility and privilege to throw a Christmas party. Not only is this an occasion for sharing drinks with your co-workers and letting your hair down, it is also an excellent opportunity to motivate staff to hit sales and service level targets. Use the following suggestions as a guideline to building up to and throwing the office Christmas party that your employees deserve.

something to work hard towards. Do this and be sure to have a motivated group of colleagues and an event to look forward to.

Choose a good venue

Location, location, location. Not just the mindless slogan of property television shows but a sound piece of advice when it comes to organising an office Christmas party. Remember, an office party doesn't need to be held in an office, in fact it almost always shouldn't. Choose a centrally located venue to ensure everyone can get there and back

1000s of cinema tickets to be won in our on-pack competition!



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See website for full terms and conditions
Opens on 01/05/10 and closes on 31/12/10



Enjoy a special treat from Avery!

Dreading the overwhelming Christmas mail out? Fear not! Avery is on hand with a special delivery to brighten up your festive season. Leave this job to a professional you can trust and spread your seasonal cheer with help from the nation's favourite postman.

Just buy two packs of Avery Addressing, Mini or Removable labels and you can collect a trio of free cuddly Postman Pat toys.*



Postman Pat © 2009 Classic Media Distribution Limited. Original writer John Cunliffe. Lic.RMG Ltd.

What's more, Avery is giving you the **chance to win a wonderful weekend break to Longleat** where you and the family can visit the popular Postman Pat village, watch out for some amazing wildlife and enjoy its many other attractions.

Addressing Labels
For easier addressing



Mini Labels
For return addressing



Removable Labels
For repositioning without damage



Little things that work in a big way. Avery.

The run up to Christmas is always an exceptionally busy time for everyone and none more so than the Post Office. Use Avery labels to make sure that your letters and parcels are accurately and professionally labelled to ensure that they arrive on time and in good condition, reducing the risk of loss and a whole lot of bother!



Avery Addressing Labels are guaranteed to be JamFree™ to avoid frustrating printer jams. They also come with unique QuickPEEL™ technology so once they're off the printer they'll be on your envelopes, faster than you can say "how many shopping days are left before Christmas?" These ingenious labels contain perforations along the length of their backing sheets, allowing a whole column to be removed in a flash because the label edges are exposed.



Avery Mini Labels are small but perfectly formed and come in a wide variety of small sizes to suit every need. Use them to provide a return address label to guarantee lost mail is returned, or why not add a festive message to your mail to make the recipient (and the Postman) smile?



There's also a lot to arrange in the run up to the festive season even though Christmas comes but once a year.

Avery Removable Labels are ideal for short term projects that need organising - use them to mark up your Christmas party plan folder or to sort out the table plan (don't worry if someone wants to join the party, these labels can be repositioned again and again). They also adhere to a wide variety of surfaces but once removed they leave no sticky residue.

Use these first class labels with the free Avery software and label templates available on the website at www.avery.eu. Your seasonal planning and postage will have never been so quick and easy.

* Whilst stocks last. Selected products only. Not suitable for children under 36 months. Promotion may vary by customer.

Win a wild weekend with Avery

To celebrate the launch of this superb promotion, Avery is giving away a fabulous three night stay at Center Parcs for you and the 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

How to make your day more productive - top tips from Google



Today we live faster and work faster. As our working day becomes more demanding, we are constantly under pressure to increase our productivity and achieve more in less time. But while working around the clock might have been seen as a sign of commitment in the 80s or 90s, these days the importance of work / life balance has been recognised and many people want to make time for their families, health regimes and hobbies. So how can we work smarter and make sure that time in the office is time well spent? With a few small changes here and there, we can free up quite a lot of time and give ourselves some breathing space.

Start each day by making a list and make sure that the most important and time-critical tasks are at the top. Accomplishing these first will give you a sense of momentum and will motivate you. In addition, if anything unexpected happens towards the end of the day, you will have completed your urgent actions, so won't have to worry about other looming deadlines.

Learning how to prioritise and



manage your email inbox is vital. Email overload can be a productivity killer. If you know that some people send you e-mails that require quick responses, or don't want to miss a message from your boss again, **Google's Priority Inbox** will work out which of your emails are the most important based on which messages you open and which e-mails you respond to and move them to the top for you.

Make wise use of all the tools and technology available to you. Sometimes a phone call is quicker than a long and complicated e-mail that takes ages to draft. Sometimes a simple e-mail and the use of collaborative technologies will give better results than a conference call with many attendees. And instant messenger can help to get fast responses to questions, eliminating any need for chit chat.

Almost half (44 per cent) of us spend up to an hour each week **scheduling meetings**, let alone attending them. Scheduling meetings including many people with busy diaries doesn't have to

take hours. With **Google Calendar** and the **Smart Scheduler** option, all you have to do is specify who you want to meet. Google Calendar will find times slots that work for everyone as well as available rooms. And if you have a calendar clash, Smart Rescheduler will find alternative times and locations for your meetings.

If you need to collate questions or suggestions from your employees, **Google Moderator** lets you do it quickly and easily by sending everyone an email and aggregating the responses. Employees can even work collaboratively and vote to prioritise the top ones. It worked for Barak Obama – when he wanted to get the opinions of Americans on a variety of economic issues he used the same tactic.

If you need to send an attachment in **Gmail**, you can simply drag the document from your desktop and drop it into an open e-mail. And if you have several documents to attach - just highlight them all and then drag and drop them together. Forget time consuming revision

controls, forget uploading endless changes to original documents or the confusion caused by numerous versions of presentations. With collaborative whiteboard technologies, like **Google Docs**, you can collaborate with others in real time on any type of document, including drawings.

Using built in templates in software can really save time. With **Google Apps**, you can also turn your favourite documents or sites into templates with a couple of clicks of the mouse.

Research from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) shows that over a third of staff in the UK regularly work through their lunch break and nearly a quarter take no lunch break at all, thereby damaging their health. The

perception that taking a proper break is 'wasting time' is counter-productive. Going for a lunch time jog can speed up your metabolism and make you more productive by kick-starting your brain for the challenges of the afternoon. And taking time to have lunch with your colleagues is often an opportunity for a spontaneous brainstorm and can inspire you or help you to look at project with a fresh pairs of eyes

Managing budgets across Europe can be a real headache. If you work with data that keeps changing, such as currency exchange values, or the stock exchange, **Google Docs** can produce 'living' spreadsheets, which import real time data from relevant sources for you, saving a lot of time.

Scheduling meetings when

travelling has always been tricky. **Google Calendar** lets you schedule meetings easily using any mobile device by sending a simple command, such as: "meeting with John tomorrow at 2pm in SW1 4PW". Google Calendar will translate this command into a calendar entry, will send invites to everyone attending the meeting and will even include a map for reference.

It's annoying when you know you have the answer to something somewhere you just can't remember where it's stored. Rather than having to waste time searching your emails, then your documents, then your websites, technology such as **Google Apps Search** allows you to search across all your information simultaneously.

Davinci reveals what your business cards say about you

Many of the UK's vast army of small and start-up businesses have no idea what their business card really says about them, claims Davinci Virtual, the UK's largest provider of virtual offices, telephone answering and virtual PA and staffing solutions.

"Most SMEs realise the benefits that having a virtual presence at a prestigious business address can deliver to their business," comments Steve Golding, Davinci's UK General Manager, "but often overlook the importance of getting the right messages onto their business cards."

First impressions are all too important to those running small businesses and poorly thought out business cards can be a real turn-off. We surveyed some of our 1,500 UK virtual office clients and found that the biggest no-no was to include just a mobile phone number on a card. Use of a landline implied longevity, stability, security and also gave

the impression of being a sizeable business.

The use of just a mobile number implied the business is small and probably run by a sole-trader. Using a PO Box number for a mailing address also gave potential customers a lack of security and an inability to contact the supplier if dealings did not go as planned. On the other hand, having a London virtual office for example with a central London address implied the business was established and secure and gave potential customers improved peace of mind.

Another indicator to business size was the lack of a web address. Most businesses have access to a computer and so having a website is viewed as an essential tool of an established business. Successful businesses are those that have a simple and easy to remember domain name and one that doesn't divert to a rival or gets lost in cyberspace if it is miss-typed.

Email addresses also reveal a lot about the quality of a business. The most professional addresses

use the first initial and last name layout rather than the use of just a first name, which implies the card holder is either the founder of the business or running a very small operation.

Lastly, the quality of the business card itself also reveals much about a business. Thin shiny cards imply that they were printed by a machine at the local railway station and most businesses overlook the opportunity to print a list of their USPs on the reverse. Overall, designing and printing a dynamic and entertaining business card is probably one of the best kept secrets in business today.

www.davincivirtual.co.uk



Mixing business with pleasure: the new rules of business networking

By Geraldine Brooks, founder of women's business networking group, the sugargroup
www.sugargroup.co.uk

I believe that today's entrepreneurs can gain huge benefits from business networking. When I worked as MD for one of Richard Branson's Virgin companies, I attended countless lunches, launches, cocktail parties and conferences, all with a distinctly corporate feel to them. This is why I understand why many business people today throw up their hands in horror at the thought of networking. But I'm not referring to the stiff corporate handshakes and formal exchange of business cards, but a new, more enjoyable form of networking, which aims to help entrepreneurs and start-ups feel part of a supportive community and gives them a chance to learn from each other's experiences. If you're still dubious, here are some "rules" to help you get to grips with the new business networking.

Thou shalt not start with a card

Networking means more than business cards and handshakes today – it is the sharing of experiences, personal and professional, and the chance to learn from one another and be inspired in an informal business environment, without 'the big sell'. Backing this up, recent T-Mobile research found nearly half (43%) of female business leaders see business cards as one of the least important assets to a company.

Thou shalt mix business



with pleasure

It is a reflection of how busy our lives are that we can no longer distinctly separate the personal from the professional. If you ask me, we should embrace the fact that we can now socialise and informally enjoy our peers' company within a business context – why shouldn't an educational discussion about a tax return at a networking event be followed by a burlesque dancing demonstration, for instance?

Thou shalt shout about thy achievements

It is amazing how modest many entrepreneurs can be, particularly

those in the creative industries, who may naturally shy away from corporate formalities. With the help of a supportive business network, their achievements can be publicised for them, as word of their talents spreads organically through the group.

Thou shalt admit thy weaknesses

On the flip side to this, by admitting our failings to our peers we are effectively asking them for help. There is a real sense of community spirit amongst entrepreneurs today and many will volunteer their time and services to help you, in the hope you'd do the

same for them.

Thou shalt not have a masterplan

Business networks are a great place to start if you are looking for inspiration for a new business, particularly for those who lost their job during the recession and are feeling unsure of their options. This can lead to dramatic and exciting career changes. They also offer an accessible talent pool to find your ideal business partner – for instance, one of my meetings brought together a nutritionist and a personal trainer, who have now formed a healthy lifestyle company.

Thou shalt get out of the office

Don't feel guilty for abandoning your office duties and attending a networking event. The knowledge and contacts you gain through getting out and about are worth the time away. Having access to a smartphone means you won't feel too guilty. I was late to join the BlackBerry party but, having just completed a week's challenge to work out of the office with T-Mobile, I'm now an addict.

Thou shalt get on the net

Business leaders should see social networking as a cornerstone of the new business networking; a way to help them build a far wider array of contacts and gain more knowledge than was ever previously possible. However, they should not rely on it as their only means of networking. Face to face meetings will always be important.

Thou shalt make thy own rules

The great thing about today's business networks is their diversity. A small amount of research will help you identify the type of network that is right for you and meet like-minded business people. The new business networking is all about breaking away from convention but don't take my word for it – try it for yourself and make up your own rules!

It's all about power and how to flaunt it

A tongue in cheek guide to how to be powerful in the workplace!

By Jo Owen

Meeting power

Arrive last. Keep everyone waiting because their time is less valuable than yours. Read a 100- page document in the meeting to show you are so smart you can read, react and chair a meeting simultaneously. Leave the meeting to take phone calls so that others know how unimportant their agenda item is.

Conference power

Arrive just in time for your speech and leave immediately afterwards. Important people talk, unimportant people listen. If you have to stay, use coffee breaks to talk only to people more important than you are. Talk in grave voices so under-lings think you are deciding their fate.

Communication power

Never make or receive a phone call; use your secretary or receptionist for that. Internal newsletters exist purely to carry your picture on as many pages as possible. Instead of a computer use a fountain pen (tradition, expense) or red Biro (makes recipients of your comments feel like they are at school again).

Dress power

Dress for success. That means bespoke. If forced to wear smart casual, focus on smart, not casual - immaculately pressed clothes and designer labels to set you apart from the masses.

Eating power

Have a special diet. It must be esoteric and cause maximum disruption, ensuring you have special treatment on planes, in restaurants and even at office buffets. A gluten-free diet is perfect. You need know nothing about wine; order the most expensive. Status, not taste, is everything.

Pastimes power

Expense and exclusivity being vital, opera and shooting are good. Skiing is only good if it is in an exotic location. A pet charity implies wealth and enables you to network with other power people.

I'm sure you never play any of these games, do you? It's worth remembering that we are setting an example to others in our behaviour so if anyone in the office is doing any of this, ask yourself, "where did they get the idea from?"



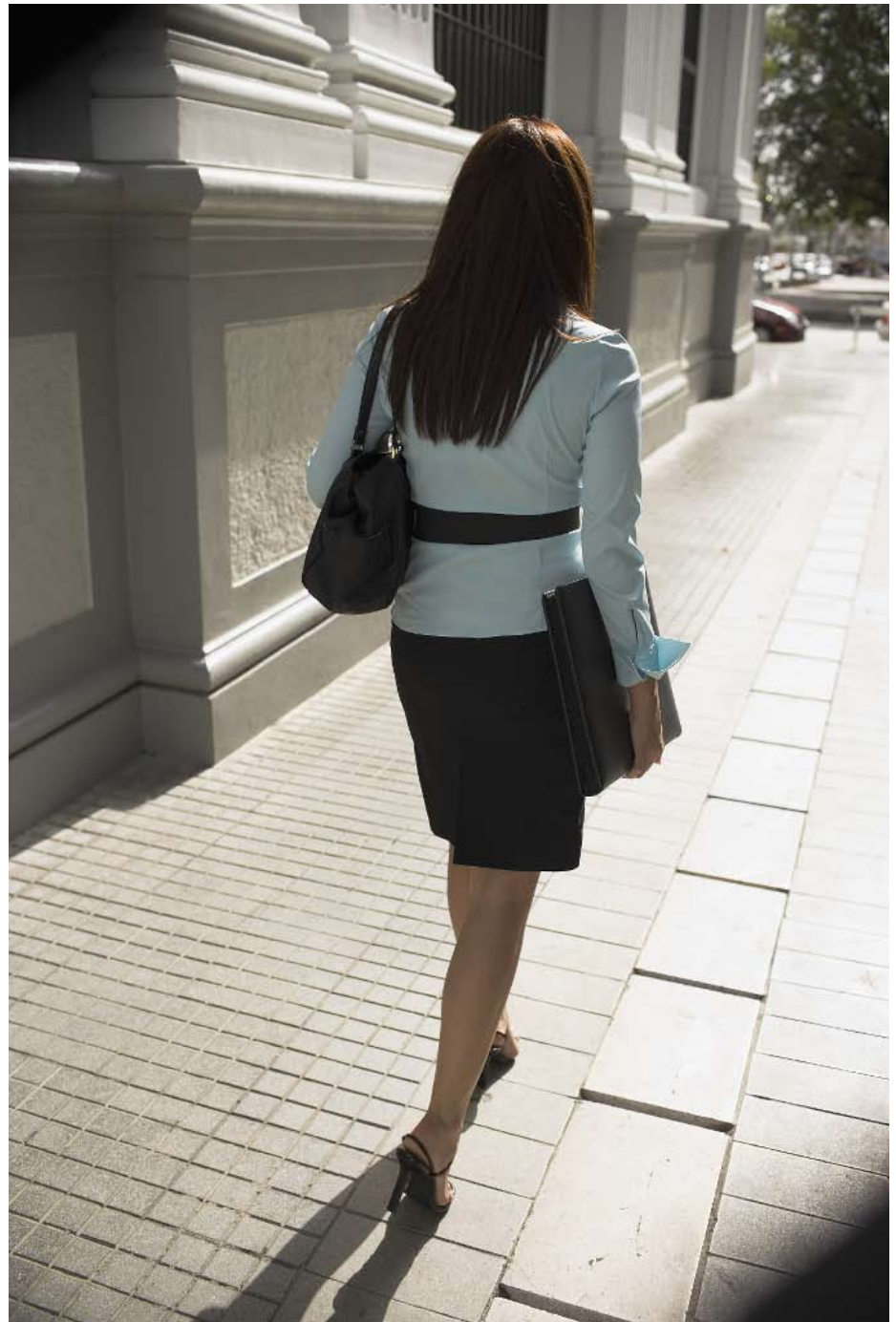
Time Management tips for a smooth return to work

By **Matt E MacLeod**

It is not uncommon for workers to feel as if they are “running around like chickens with their heads cut off”. One way to combat the stress and frustration of feeling overwhelmed on the job is to set up a system of time management to help yourself organise and prioritise your work. This system can be especially important if you are returning to work following a lengthy absence due to illness or injury. You may find it hard to get back into the swing of things, and you might be even more susceptible to stress in your weakened condition. What better time than now to re-organise your routine and strive to establish a smoother, more effective working mode? Follow our 10 easy tips to keep your productivity levels at peak performance.

1 Recognise the areas where you waste the most time.

Pay attention during your work day and pinpoint the areas where you find yourself getting side-tracked or slowing down. Maybe it's your co-worker, Bill, who always starts a conversation about the latest antics of his pet poodle whenever you deliver something to his desk. Maybe you have a hard time getting back into a focused working rhythm after you've returned from lunch. Maybe you pause whatever you are doing to listen whenever the hourly news broadcast airs on your favorite radio station. It's important to minimise daily distractions, so turn off that radio, keep yourself energised by walking briskly outside while you eat your lunch, and either avoid Bill, or visit his desk only when your schedule



allows you time to socialise.

2 Plan each day ahead of time by making a list of the things you need to accomplish.

Start each day by setting goals for yourself. Know what you need to accomplish in the hours you've been given to work, and set up a

system to visualise and organise the important tasks of the day. There are many tools available to help you create lists, from the old-fashioned combo of pen and paper, to day-planners, to advanced computer programs and software. Choose whichever technique works best for you, and get into the routine of planning out your day

before the chaos of the job takes control and bogs you down.

3 Prioritise your list of tasks.

Now that you've created a list of goals for the day, look over your tasks to determine which are the most important. Do some of the jobs have crucial deadlines with dire consequences if not completed on time? Work on these items first! You may have some tasks that need to be completed before you can move on to the next step in a project - acknowledge this and make these tasks a priority. If something is important, you always want to get it out of the way quickly to avoid the stress and panic of a last-minute emergency.

4 Eliminate non-essential tasks from your list.

Which items on your list really don't need to be done either today or maybe ever? Is there really any point to you attending that 3pm meeting if you can simply read over the minutes and catch yourself up later? If a job is of low priority, put it off for a day when your workload is light, or consider not doing it at all!

5 Delegate the jobs that can be performed by someone below you.

Are you one of those types with an attitude of, "If I want something done right around here, I'm just going to have to do it myself?" Well, stop! One of the most important tools of time management is learning when to relinquish an unimportant task to someone whose time is less valuable than your own. You can quickly lighten your work day by delegating certain duties to others (and if you are already at the bottom of the heap, with no inferiors to boss around, simply ask your co-workers if they are able to help you), but be cautious about taking on too many tasks that are being delegated in YOUR direction. Learn to say "no" if your

supervisors or co-workers expect too much from you.

6 Use time management tools.

There are many tools available to help you stay organised and efficient in all aspects of your job. Use these whenever possible to keep your daily tasks manageable and running smoothly. As technology advances, you'll have no difficulty finding time-saving programs and applications for your Blackberry, Smart Phone, or other assistive device. Jot down on your task list that you need to set aside time to learn how to utilise these helpful tools to your fullest advantage.

7 Break up big jobs into smaller, less time-consuming sections.

If a job seems just too huge and daunting, realise that it is probably made up of many smaller components that can be broken down and dealt with one-by-one. These individual tasks can possibly be spread out over several days, or maybe even delegated to co-workers. Even if the job is something that must be done all at once, you will derive a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment as you are able to cross little items off your list as you go. For example, don't write down something as broad as "Plan Janine's retirement party". Instead, break the larger job down into simple tasks such as "Reserve meeting room", "order cake", "go shopping", "ask Debbie to handle the decorating", "collect money for gift", etc.

8 Fight procrastination.

If you find yourself dreading or putting off a certain job, rather than force yourself to do it - or, worse, never get it done at all - schedule a few short, 10-minute blocks out of each day to work on the disliked task. Anybody can stand torture for just ten minutes, right? Even during the Spanish Inquisition, nobody admitted

to practicing Christianity in just ten minutes! By working on a dreaded job in small, manageable increments, you will eventually get it done. Once you get started, you may even find that the task isn't so awful after all, and you can plow right through to the end.

9 Multi-task when possible.

Many important jobs will require your full attention, but there will always be times when you can work on more than one task at a time. Like sorting your email inbox while you are listening to the weekly teleconference where Janine likes to ramble on and on about the progress of her team's current project (good thing she's retiring, huh?). At the beginning of each day, glance over your task list and determine which items don't require your full brain power and could be combined with other activities. Maybe there are even things you could take home to work on as you watch TV in the evenings?

10 Reward yourself with deserved breaks.

Don't work too hard! If you've taken our advice from item #1 and eliminated distractions, you may have given up the most pleasurable moments of your work day. Don't deprive yourself of special treats and essential human interaction. Allow yourself time to relax and to socialise with your fellow workers - just schedule this time in enough moderation to ensure that all your tasks will still be completed as planned. You may find that you enjoy your breaks and "free time" even more once you are confident that these moments of pleasure are not interruptions that will ultimately interfere with your more serious workday!

If you are looking for more human resource tips and tricks, such as easy ways to reduce sick leave be sure to visit our website at <http://www.rtwmatters.com>

Interview Tips:

Pre-Interview Dos and Don'ts

By Andrew C Abraham

Here are some tips regarding pre-interview behaviour that I have utilised myself. Notice this article refers to pre-interview, but also understand that the interview really starts as soon as you arrive at the designated location.

DOs

✓ Arrive 10-15 mins early

Turning up with several minutes to spare let's you cool down and relax; go to the bathroom; check your hair, teeth and nose, wipe your brow and generally de-stress. By aiming to be there early, it also means you avoid arriving flustered as a result of rushing to be on time. If need be, practice a dry run of commuting to the interview destination at the same time on a previous day.

✓ Eat and be well hydrated

Sure these are two things you should be doing anyway, but many people forget to as a result of preparing or travelling to the interview. Nourishment will aid your concentration during the interrogation, and being hydrated will ensure your mouth isn't dry when answering difficult questions.

✓ Smile

Nobody likes a sourpuss so ensure you're smiling when you arrive. Smile in the elevator, smile at the receptionist and most certainly smile when greeting your interviewer. Practice your smile at home if you have to and verify that it's sincere - people can spot a fake grin a mile off. As Tyra Banks would say on America's Next Top Model, "You have to smile", that is smile with your eyes too. By the way I don't actually watch ANTM, but overheard it when switching channels the other day.

✓ Firm handshake

Sometimes the best first impression you can make is with a firm handshake. I've interviewed hundreds of graduates and it never ceases to amaze me how many falter on this aspect. Whenever meeting anyone that doesn't shake my hand firmly, it immediately puts me off and presents the other person as weak and lacking confidence - definitely not the impression you want to make with an interviewer. There's further handshake etiquette you should be mindful of by running a search on the internet.

✓ Initiate small talk

You know that period when your interviewer is leading you to the interview room? Well that's not meant to be awkwardly silent. In fact it's the perfect opportunity to make small talk and break the ice. If you're not an adroit conversationalist then ask/make some preconceived questions/ comments. Examples I have used

before:

- "Great views from this office, I don't know how you get any work done?"
- "Some great artwork in this building; I especially liked the mural in the lobby"

Such remarks will often spark a hearty conversation and demonstrate you're an affable human being.

✓ Be well-dressed

Martin Frohm: What would you say if a man walked in here with no shirt, and I hired him? What would you say?

Christopher Gardner: He must have had on some really nice pants.

I love the above dialogue from one of my favourite movies, The Pursuit of Happyness. I definitely don't recommend executing it though, unless you have a spectacular story to match. So for the rest of us that aren't Will Smith, make sure you dress appropriately for your particular industry. Law graduates can assume business formal when interviewing at a firm whereas science graduates might be required to wear less formal attire. Either way, ask the interviewer beforehand if you're unsure.

✓ Find out name of receptionist

I especially like this one. I used this tactic before successfully when interviewing at a multinational firm some years back. When arriving at the designated offices of the company I greeted the receptionist and found out her name was Jenny. I also engaged her in some



cheerful banter (but not too much as she was busy answering calls and welcoming people). Then as the interviewer lead me away to the location of the interview, I give her a wave and said "Thanks Jenny". It brought a smile to her face and I could tell by the expression of the interviewer, he was highly impressed. Also note that receptionists are asked to observe you as you wait and then report their feedback about your body language to managers.

DON'Ts

☒ Don't use your phone

Do not talk, text, play games or listen to music on your phone while waiting at reception for your interviewer to arrive - even if you installed the coolest iPhone app. This is an increasing problem among youth today as technology becomes more mobile and they become more technology savvy. Turn off your phone completely! Silent will not suffice. It's just as disconcerting for yourself and the interviewer if they hear the sound of vibrations in your jacket pocket during the interview. Any calls received during this time can go straight to voicemail.

☒ Don't smoke

This is something I advocate at all times, but if you happen to be partial to a puff of the cigarette then don't do it before the interview. Personal space can sometimes be compromised in small interview rooms and the last thing an employer wants to smell on you is a waft of foul tobacco induced odour. It's such an obvious smell especially on chronic smokers so save your cancer stick for post interview. It could also indicate to your future employer that you'll be less productive at work as you take frequent breaks to support your ailing habit.

☒ Don't overdo the perfume

Some cologne or perfume is recommended for both males and females, however it shouldn't be overpowering. When the fragrance is excessive it can be quite nauseating for people around you.

☒ Don't bring too many bags

Avoid carrying a lot (gym bag, laptop, luggage) to the interview as it proves to be very cumbersome. Try and schedule appointments such as the gym or guitar lessons well after the interview to leave

you enough time to go home first. Steer clear of shopping beforehand and save the stocktake sales for after.

☒ Don't drink coffee

Coffee smells really nice in a cup but revolting on someone's breath. As per smoking, save your caffeine addiction for after the interview.

☒ Don't interview if you aren't well

In such instances avoid the interview and call up the potential employer with your sincerest regrets. Ask them if it's possible to reschedule and affirm your enthusiasm for the position. In most cases this won't be a problem, even if the interview is conducted in a group setting. Just be genuine and your future hiring manager will be sympathetic to your situation; if not, then it's probably not somewhere you want to work anyway.

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Andrew is Founder of Kintuition, a company that aims to foster interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence among Gen-Y in Asia. He is a confident and articulate communicator, passionate about entrepreneurship and the opportunities it creates to see change for a better world. He has been invited as a speaker to various events to share his knowledge on such topics as Careers, Generation-Y and Personal Branding.