

# PA ENTERPRISE

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

June 2011

- **Top 10 Hotel Chains around the world**
- **Make your own sandwiches and save £1,000 a year!**
- **Getting the best out of self-managed learning**
- **A history of the Great British Bust**

**Travel / Hotels / Venues / Products / Competitions**

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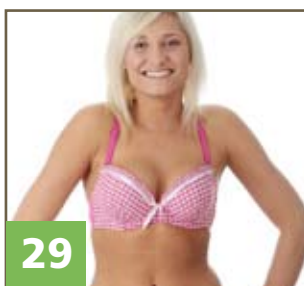
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## Late payments still a major cause for concern for British SMEs

Research by Bacs, the organisation behind Direct Debit, has revealed that British SMEs are having to wait an average of 41 days longer than their original agreed payment terms, before invoices are paid.

This figure is well up on the 45% recorded in June 2010 – which suggests life is getting increasingly tough for those at the end of the chain.

Michael Chambers, MD of Bacs, said: "Small businesses rely on receiving payments on time so that they can maintain cash flow and ensure the business can run on a day-to-day basis. Our research highlights the continued widespread nature and real impact of the late payment problem, which was affecting 961,000 SMEs in December last year - that's a massive 57% of all British SMEs."

Bacs' research shows that large companies are the main late payments culprits, with 37% of SMEs citing them as the worst offenders. However 17% of respondents pointed the finger at sole traders, with the same number blaming fellow SMEs. 6% of SMEs cited not-for-profit organisations and government as the worst payers, suggesting that the pledge made in the 2010 Budget, that government departments will pay 80% of invoices within five days rather than the usual 30, will be a challenge to meet.

Phil McCabe, spokesperson for the Forum of Private Business (FPB), said: "Late payment is a huge problem for small businesses and it's highly disappointing to hear that small firms are having to wait even longer to be paid.

"Late payment is frequently cited as the number one problem facing our members, eclipsing even taxation and regulation. With its damaging impact on a company's cashflow, it can cause a perfectly viable and successful firm to fold."



## Making tea could get you promoted!

Making tea and coffee for office colleagues could help workers get on in their careers, a new study has suggested.

A survey of 1,600 office workers found that most believed there was a direct correlation between making drinks and being promoted.

The study by office supplies firm Viking also found that over half of workers were reluctant to offer to make a round of tea or coffee because colleagues had become more demanding with their orders.

Viking said: "Asking how do you like it has never been more complicated because office workers are increasingly likely to specify their choice of tea and preferred infusion time or specify the precise amount of milk needed to create their perfect cuppa. Our research has found there is a direct correlation between making lots of hot drinks for colleagues and getting promoted at work. It is mainly because being prepared to make the tea or coffee demonstrates qualities such as attentiveness, humility and pro-activity which many employers welcome."

The research showed that 41% of workers maintain they make their fair share of tea.

# The Best Companies for Leaders – what makes a company be ranked among the top 20?

By Neil Atkinson

The Hay Group, an international management consultancy, conducts an annual survey of the best companies in the world for leadership. They ask employees for their views on their own company and ask them to rate three companies they admire most for leadership. The top 20 is a compilation of 'praise from outsiders combined with plenty of admiration from within.'

The 2010 study was headed up by such companies as GE, Procter & Gamble, Intel and Siemens.

These companies were better than the rest in a number of different areas but in particular they distinguished themselves in four particular ways.

- 1 They expect people at all levels to exercise leadership and bring value to the organisation.
- 2 The top 20 companies ensure they have a workforce which reflects their markets and local communities - they don't fear other cultures but embrace them. For instance, they are more likely to recruit local leaders to manage local offices rather than send out headquarters staff. Diversity is increasingly high on the agenda for the best companies because they know that 55.1% of the world's talent comes from south east Asia and only 17% of further educated people are white males.
- 3 The top 20 companies have leadership programmes in place to help managers adapt to change and to manage cross culturally. These companies are moving more quickly than others to flatten their business structures and diversify their workforces with the goal of improving their efficiency and competitive advantage in markets around the world. But most importantly they are providing the skills and tools to enable their leaders to succeed in these different markets.
- 4 The top 20 show a greater interest in social and environmental responsibility than other companies. But this is not all about being altruistic. The top 20 recognise that helping employees achieve greater work-life balance is a critical retention strategy.

If you work in an SME it is sometimes difficult to relate what companies such as GE do to your day to day business and yet there is something to be learnt from them. Turning the questions around, we could, for instance, easily ask ourselves:

- How much 'freedom to act' do people in your business enjoy? How much do they want? When was the last time you asked them?
- Do you use local recruitment companies to source talent? Do you deliberately recruit from your local community and or your target markets?
- What leadership training and programmes do you have in place and how often do you review and update these?
- What local charities or community projects are you involved in?

We may not want to work for Procter & Gamble or GE but there's nothing to stop us taking the best from them to benefit our own companies.



# UK companies remain complacent about fraud and corruption risks

Ernst & Young survey shows that firms are unprepared for the Bribery Act



Ernst & Young's 2011 European fraud survey shows that one in seven employees polled at large UK companies are prepared to offer cash payments to secure business, and little more than half are aware of an anti-bribery policy at their firm.

Despite greater regulatory scrutiny, with the Bribery Act due to come fully into force on July 1st, there is a persistently high level of UK employees willing to behave

unethically. In addition to the significant minority prepared to offer cash payments outlawed under the Act, around one in six would offer personal gifts or services to win business. The survey of more than 2,300 employees, from the factory floor to the C-suite, across 25 European countries, including 104 UK respondents, found that the majority of UK companies remain

unprepared for the new legislation, with compliance programmes significantly underperforming.

Little more than half of UK respondents are aware of an anti-bribery policy at their company, while only 26 % of respondents have personally received anti-bribery training compared to just 17% in France and 15% in Germany. This is particularly concerning considering that communication and training

is one of the six principles of adequate anti-bribery procedures set out by the Ministry of Justice in their UK Bribery Act guidance.

The survey also found that UK respondents continue to report a challenging business and economic environment and feel under more pressure than ever to reduce costs (77% up from 72% in 2009). Overall, 50% of UK managers admitted that they are likely to cut corners to meet their targets – while this is a high figure, it is lower than the proportion in France (76%) and Germany (78%).

John Smart, Fraud Investigation & Disputes Services leader for Ernst & Young in the UK & Ireland says: "Our survey findings should cause concern among company directors in the UK. A lack of understanding about fraud, bribery and corruption among all employees, combined with intense cost cutting initiatives at many companies, will no doubt create additional exposure to bribery and fraud risks."

Some comfort for the UK can however be found in the 72% of UK management who are not prepared, under any circumstances, to offer bribes to win business. This is far above the overall European average of 51%.

## The Bribery Act

The Bribery Act increases demands on all companies with UK operations to re-evaluate their ethical guidelines and understand the risk of bribery. The introduction of the UK Bribery Act is timely given that 71% of UK respondents want to see increased supervision by regulators, compared with 86% in France and 58% in Germany. 72% in the UK think that offering rewards to incentivise employees coming forward with information, will encourage whistleblowing, more than the 54% in both France and Germany.

## Failure of compliance leadership from management

The survey found employees in the UK hold boards and senior management accountable for establishing and enforcing appropriate corporate behavior. Over three-quarters of those surveyed across Europe think that company boards should be held personally liable for fraud, bribery and corruption within their organisation.

John Smart adds, "You don't have an effective business strategy unless everyone from the CEO to the 'shop-floor' understands compliance. These results highlight a lack of improvement in the corporate response to fraud and corruption that is surprising given the tougher enforcement of anti-bribery legislation in the UK."

Smart concludes: "The survey provides timely reminder for all UK companies. A declining focus on anti-fraud measures and a lack of understanding regarding the processes, structures and training around bribery dramatically increases the risks of bribery at a time when it has never been higher on the UK business agenda."

Management teams are committed to anti-bribery – which is great – but while the head is willing, the flesh may be weak, as the training, guidance and understanding of bribery risks across companies just isn't there.

Reinvigorating the commitment by management and their boards to provide appropriate training, processes and structures should become an urgent priority, and will certainly be appreciated by all employees and stakeholders alike."

## Airline to poll customers on Air Passenger Duty tax

Virgin Atlantic is to hold its own mini public referendum on how the government should reform the controversial APD tax.

The airline will send out postcards to all its customers set to travel from Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester airports explaining the tax and asking for views on an alternative.

The answers it receives will make up part of Virgin Atlantic's response to the government's consultation on the tax.

The airline says the move will strengthen the case for an alternative, as it is offering up the views of the travelling public to the government.

Chief commercial officer Julie Southern said: "This is a great chance for our customers to make their voices heard in a quick and simple way, rather than via the Treasury's inaccessible 49-page online consultation document.

"With the economy rate of APD to America having already tripled in the last five years, we expect that passengers will welcome this opportunity to state a case for no further rises."



## Ryanair to ground a third of fleet despite bumper profits

Ryanair saw profits jump 26% to -£348m for the full year to the end of March following an 8% rise in traffic, a 12% increase in average fares and a 21% increase in ancillary sales to -£696m.

The budget airline enjoyed a 21% increase in revenue despite disruption caused by the volcanic ash crisis, higher oil prices and the global recession.

However, the low-cost airline announced it would ground more than a third of its fleet next winter as rising fuel costs mean it will be cheaper than keeping them flying.

The decision is expected to lead to a 4% drop in passenger numbers in the second half of the year following a 10% increase in the first half.

## Biz lounge opens at Moscow Domodedovo Airport

At Moscow Domodedovo Airport, a new S7 Airlines Business Lounge has opened its doors in the airside zone of international gallery.



Branded with the airline's corporate design, the lounge has comfortable sofas, chairs and other conveniences for passengers waiting for their flight. There is also S7 Airlines Business Lounge in the departure area of domestic gallery.

Domodedovo passenger terminal hosts the airport's business lounges located in the galleries of international and domestic airlines. Here, the customers are offered a varied menu and a wide selection of periodicals, as well as office services and Internet access. Passengers of Domodedovo Airport can also enjoy the services of the Official Delegations Hall and VIP Lounge.



## Delta, Air France-KLM and Alitalia to cull transatlantic flights

Delta Air Lines, Air France-KLM and Alitalia have announced plans to cut their transatlantic services from autumn against a backdrop of rising fuel prices and excess capacity. The reductions are likely to push fares higher and leave passengers with fewer choices.

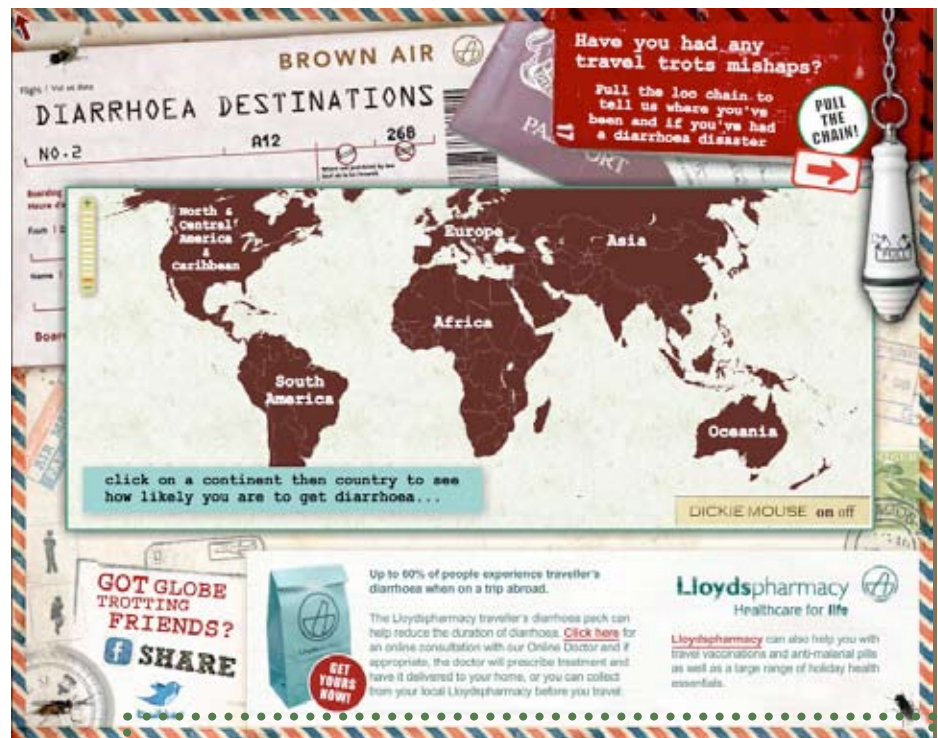
Delta began adding more transatlantic services in November 2010 with new services from Boston and Miami to London, as well as additional flights from New York to Paris and Seattle to Amsterdam.

## US airline puts extra comfort seats on sale

Delta Air Lines has started selling its new upgraded economy product on transatlantic flights for a supplement of \$80 to \$140 (£50-£99) each way.

Diamond and platinum members of the airline's frequent flyer programme plus those who buy full fare economy tickets will get the upgrade for free and gold and silver members will be offered the seats at a discount.

The "economy comfort" seats are roomier than standard economy with a 50% greater recline and four-inches more legroom.



## Brits warned about travel trots hot spots

Lloyd's pharmacy has developed an interactive map to show British holidaymakers where they are more likely to suffer diarrhoea. Its research found that India and Egypt were top diarrhoea destinations, while Thailand, Tunisia and Morocco were also up there in the 'top of the trots' list. Users are encouraged to upload their own data of where they've been and whether they've had a diarrhoea disaster.

According to new research from Lloyd's pharmacy's Online Doctor Travel Clinic, Brits suffered over 14 million ruined holiday days due to a case of the travel trots whilst abroad in the last year. The findings also revealed that diarrhoea is the biggest health worry for people when travelling abroad.

Holidaymakers also worry about being caught short when not near a loo, with 60% stating that it was the most worrying thing about having diarrhoea whilst on holiday.

Top five countries where UK holidaymakers have suffered diarrhoea:

- 54% of visitors to India
- 47% of visitors to Egypt
- 27% of visitors to Thailand
- 22% of visitors to Tunisia
- 20% of visitors to Morocco



## Find out how to Optimise your Business Travel Performance

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- Hear about new technology developments to drive business efficiencies
- Learn about new ways to ensure your travellers' safety and security

PLUS discover new tangible development skills that you can apply into your business immediately

## New PA Event for 2011

The event will include a professional training seminar, specifically tailored for Senior Executive PAs who book travel, followed by lunch and the chance to win a luxury holiday

[www.businesstravelmarket.co.uk](http://www.businesstravelmarket.co.uk)

## Corporate travel increases

Business travellers are back on the road and their companies are increasing their budgets, according to the latest figures from GetThere.

Jason Geall, GetThere's director for Europe and the Middle East said businesses are encouraging staff to travel more to generate new business, but there is still pressure to keep costs down.

While the volume of business travel has seen a definite period of recovery, corporates remain focused on reducing their travel expenses.

"Prudent travel practices remain intact because technology is now in place to help companies control their travel policies, and best practices introduced during the credit crunch remain even as corporate travel volumes return to pre-recession levels," said Geall.

Nearly two thirds of the survey respondents (61%) expect their travel budget to increase by up to 10% in 2011, while around a third expect a rise of up to a third.

Alongside the deepening of pockets is a push for higher adoption rates of online booking, said Geall.

"Adoption levels have reached record levels across Europe and we expect this to increase in line with the focus on savings," he said.

With more online booking, respondents to the survey said they had already made savings – for example, an average saving of 70% on agency fees, and between 18% and 24% in air fares.



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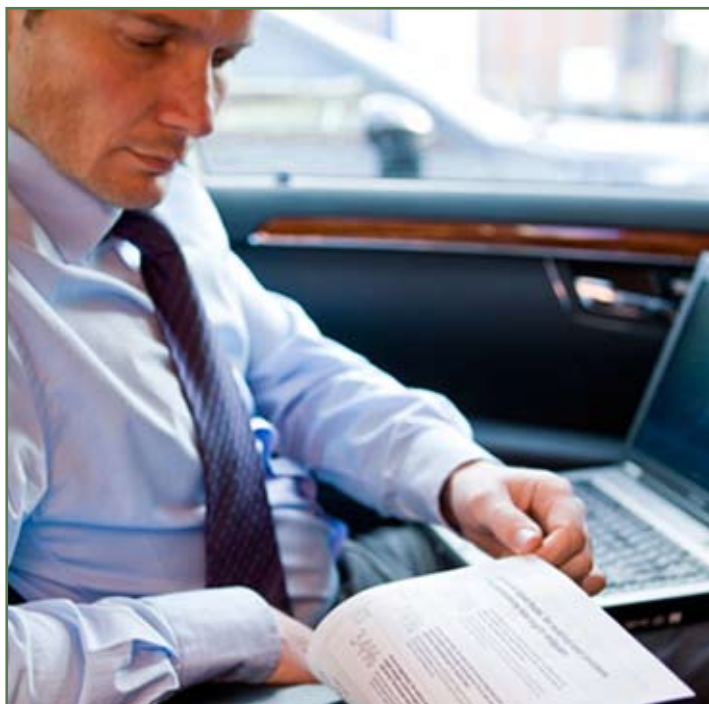


## Super fast laser printer

Samsung Electronics has launched its fastest ever Mono Laser Printer, the ML-5510/6510 series. This new range of printers, designed to help mid and large sized businesses to increase productivity, delivers faster throughput for large printing jobs in the office environment.

Dion Smith, general manager, Samsung UKI Print Division, says: "These products offer some of the fastest speeds available in the office market. We continue to deliver on the needs of our business customers by designing products that reduce their printing costs and in turn offer them greater functionality, a greener footprint, open software integration, secure printing and mailbox functionality.

The ML-6510ND is the world's fastest A4 mono laser printer. It is capable of A4 printing of up to 62 pages per minute, making it the fastest in its class among existing A4 mono laser printers.



## Mobile printing from Brother

The Brother PocketJet range of portable printers offers four different models: PJ622, PJ-623, PJ-662 and the PJ-663. Whether you use a laptop or a handheld device, the Brother PocketJet will give you sharp text, crisp graphics, and high-quality documents wherever and whenever required. Plus, printed pages can last up to 5 years.

Being able to produce professional looking documents immediately, wherever they are required, improves

efficiency and ensures you and your company give a professional image to your customers.

At just under 26cm long and 400g in weight, the Brother PocketJet fits easily into your briefcase or computer bag, and it can be quickly mounted in any vehicle or small work area. To ensure maximum portability, the PocketJet can be powered by rechargeable batteries, an AC adapter or vehicle power adapters.

The PocketJet printer range provide USB, IrDA or Bluetooth connectivity from a number of devices such as laptops, tablet PC's and Smartphone devices.



## Parker targets women buyers

Writing instrument manufacturer Parker has launched a premium handmade range of accessories called the Sonnet Feminine Collection. The company says it has reinterpreted its signature in three new styles to produce a 'stunning collection of pens' in metallic pink gold tones.

Subtly dressed with a vertical finishing and coated in warm pink gold, the gleaming Sonnet Pink Gold PVD is an elegant choice. Trimmed with pink gold, the beautiful Sonnet Pearl Lacquer has a sparkling iridescent lacquer and the finely crafted Sonnet Metal and Pearl Lacquer's textures ciselé alludes to the stunning facets of a flawless diamond.

The collection is also available as roller ball, ball point and ball point slim models. Prices range from £75.00 to £145.00.

## 3M launches new Scotch clear tape with easy tear qualities

3M has launched a new addition to its Scotch clear tape range - Scotch Easy Tear Tape. Research carried out by 3M shows that consumers felt that "ease of use" was one of the most important purchase drivers for sticky tape.

Responding to this research and the current purchasing trends of consumers, 3M has developed a new tape that not only fulfills this demand for hassle-free stationery but also provides an effective product at an affordable price.

Scotch Easy Tear Tape is a highly efficient sticky tape which is easy to unwind and tear, ensuring it will soon become an everyday office essential.

Scotch Easy Tear Tape acts as the everyday tape product, with Scotch Magic Tape and Scotch Crystal Tape completing the entire range.



## Pilot launches first online store

Writing instrument supplier, The Pilot Pen Co (UK) Ltd, has teamed up with eCommerce provider Shopatron to launch a new online store. Pilot's network of UK retailers will fulfil all orders to maintain a more personal approach.

Stocked with the complete range of Pilot UK's products, the store is accessible via [www.pilotpen.co.uk](http://www.pilotpen.co.uk). It allows consumers to place orders via the website and have those orders processed

by selected Pilot Pen dealers.

Pilot Managing Director Don Skelton says: "Our consumers are looking for an easy way to find and purchase our products online, but they also have strong ties to their local dealers. We like the fact that we can include local dealers in our online shop. The local dealer is essential to us, and Shopatron allows us to include them in the consumer's buying experience. This initiative makes us a leader in our industry when it comes to eCommerce."



## Win a Digital Camera with AF International

Dirt, dust and greasy fingerprints makes screens difficult to read and may lead to headaches, eyestrain and wrinkles in the delicate skin around the eyes.

You can protect yourself by using AF International's screen cleaners. They are all anti-static, non-flammable, non-smearing and OEM approved. Use AF Screen-Clene products, or for Plasma Technology the Multi-Screen Clene range is the preferred option - this concentrate can be used on ANY type of screen.



Answer 3 questions online and you could win a Canon Powershot Digital Camera! There are 50 runner up prizes of AF screen wipes.

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And, if you're trying to stay one step ahead in the office, then you may as well do it in style... To ensure you're always putting your best foot forward, we've got three fantastic £500 designer shoe shopping vouchers to give away to you label lovers out there.



The lucky winners will be able to treat their feet to some top class footwear, so you'll soon be racing ahead in the fashion - as well as the organisation - stakes.

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## The Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars Hotel

The Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars Hotel has opened the new Whimbrel Suite, a permanent rigid marquee, measuring 450 sqm, with a capacity of 500 guests or up to 800 when combined with the adjoining Kingfisher Suite. The marquee is fitted with mains electric heating, lighting and power sockets and a full glass front which overlooks the lake vistas, providing an ideal venue for a breakout room for delegates. The Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars Hotel conference centre has a total of 21 meeting rooms and 2,450 sqm of conference and exhibition space.

Four Pillars Hotels have created Meetings Four You - a meetings, conferences and events offering that can be tailored to suit you. Start with one of our packages, which are listed below. Then you can add whatever you like from our comprehensive range of optional extras. It means that you get complete flexibility, great value and that you don't pay for things that you don't need.



[www.four-pillars.co.uk](http://www.four-pillars.co.uk)

## Happisburgh Manor

Amazing Retreats' Happisburgh Manor has opened following an extensive refurbishment. Now available for exclusive hire for the first time, the Grade II Listed Arts and Crafts country house offers views over the coast of North East Norfolk.

With its thatched roof - thought to be the largest in England - Happisburgh offers eight suites which will sleep up to 16 people, flexible meeting and event spaces, gym, sauna, games room and treatment room. The property also has its own garden, orchard and watchtower overlooking the sea.



[www.amazingretreats.com](http://www.amazingretreats.com)



## Manchester Central scoops silver at Enjoy England Awards

Conference and exhibition venue Manchester Central has been awarded silver in the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence in the Business Tourism category.

The venue gained praise from industry experts following the completion of a £30million redevelopment, which added more than 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of flexible client facing space.

"The venue has generated in excess of £56m of economic impact for Manchester in the last 12 months and is set to increase this figure by a further £4million in the next financial year," said Lesley Tomlinson, chief executive.

Manchester Central is hosting a number of corporate conferences this year, as well as the CIPD annual conference in November.



## Regus Digital World, Manchester

Regus has opened its ninth business centre in Manchester, located in the Digital World Centre (DWC), opposite both the BBC's and ITV's new offices at MediaCityUK on Salford Quays. The new centre offers a modern working environment with the latest IT facilities. Products and services range from fully equipped serviced offices to professional meeting rooms, 'drop in' business lounges and video communication facilities. The Regus centre occupies three floors of the Digital World Centre, alongside Transport Media and Telegraph Media Group.



[www.regus.co.uk](http://www.regus.co.uk)



## The Greenway Hotel, Cheltenham

von Essen hotels will re-launch The Greenway Hotel in Cheltenham on 17 April, following a multi-million pound renovation focusing on the transformation of a stable into the new Elan spa, the Front Row brasserie and six refurbished guestrooms. The re-launch marks the completion of the final phase of The Greenway's full renovation, which began in 2008 with the upgrade of all bedrooms and public areas in the main house. The 21-bedroom country house hotel features four meeting rooms which cater from 35-65 people theatre-style and 40-80 people at a reception.



[www.thegreenway.co.uk](http://www.thegreenway.co.uk)

## Independent thinking from the Royal Garden Hotel, London

The Royal Garden Hotel is launching its 'Independent Thinking. Imaginative Results' campaign which aims to underline the need for venues to adopt more flexible working practices for meetings and events. The hotel has recently completed a £45 million investment that has included a complete refit of the conference and banqueting product; making it one of the most sophisticated and versatile spaces in London.



[www.royalgardenhotel.co.uk](http://www.royalgardenhotel.co.uk)

"Organisers are no longer willing to accept venues that just provide standard packages and as an independent hotel we can react quickly to the demands of the most of the creative organiser," comments Jon Nixson, Conference & Banqueting Manager. "We now have the right space, the right AV and a fantastic food & beverage offering. We want to be tested."



## Crowne Plaza Chester

The Crowne Plaza Chester hotel has unveiled its newly refurbished events facility. The hotel's ballroom, the King's Suite has been subject to a full refurbishment, including a new colour scheme, carpets and the installation of a flat screen television to display event information. There are also newly marbled corridors; a dedicated bar area for events guests and feature artwork as well as updated toilet facilities. The Crowne Plaza has a number of air-conditioned suites which can be interconnected, making the hotel a choice for large conferences and exhibitions or small events. The King's Suite can hold up to 600 people.



[www.crowneplaza.com](http://www.crowneplaza.com)



[www.travelodge.co.uk](http://www.travelodge.co.uk)

## Travelodge buys Gatwick hotel

Travelodge has bought the former four-star Mercure London Gatwick Airport hotel. The 257-room hotel will undergo a significant refurbishment and expansion programme to bring it in line with the budget brand. Travelodge will refurbish the existing rooms and get rid of the hotel's 11 meeting rooms, three restaurants, swimming pool and gymnasium, turning them into another 146 rooms. Since the start of the recession, Travelodge has taken over 66 existing hotel businesses, or 3,245 rooms. This latest deal will boost the company's portfolio to 470 hotels and 33,204 rooms.

## One Wimpole Street

An investment project worth £350,000 has been completed at One Wimpole Street creating a new suite of seminar rooms. The venue already has lecture theatres and function rooms and has now extended its facilities adding a further three rooms. The Seminar Suite can function independently (capacity of 70 theatre-style) or as three individual rooms each accommodating up to 30 delegates. Full HD projection is the standard when set as one room. Each break out room is equipped with integrated HD plasma screens fitted in swing-arm mounts.



[www.onewimpolestreet.co.uk](http://www.onewimpolestreet.co.uk)

## Meetings & Events facilities at Arora Hotel Heathrow

Arora Hotel Heathrow's unique Boardroom on the top floor is now available for booking. With 360° views across the surrounding area including a full panorama of the airport, the room will be able to cater for up to 50 private dining and 60 theatre style. In addition, the hotel offers seven meeting rooms to accommodate from 2 to 120 delegates. Each room is fully air conditioned and features Smart boards with front projection, audio-visual equipment, flipcharts and whiteboards. And what's more, there is no extra charge for in-situ audio-visual equipment!

**SPECIAL OFFER** - For your meetings this summer, take advantage of the DDR Pick 'n Mix special offer. In addition to room hire, two servings of tea/coffee and lunch,



[heathrow.arorahotels.com](http://heathrow.arorahotels.com)

choose two of the following items to create your own Day Delegate Package: parking, internet, additional tea/coffee break or a complimentary room upgrade for your meeting organiser - at no extra cost. DDR of £40 + VAT at any Arora Hotels, valid for new bookings taking place in June, July and August 2011.



[www.bw-wroxtonhousehotel.co.uk](http://www.bw-wroxtonhousehotel.co.uk)

## Wroxton House Hotel

The privately-owned Best Western Wroxton House Hotel in Banbury, Oxfordshire, has doubled its conference and banqueting capacity with the expansion of the Broughton Room. The extended ground floor room now seats up to 100 people theatre-style and benefits from air conditioning and complimentary WiFi access. The room also has access to a private terrace and gardens which is available for delegates to use as a breakout area. The hotel is situated close to junction 11 of the M40.

## Brighton Dome

VisitBrighton Convention Bureau partner, Brighton Dome, has completed a £200,000 refurbishment of its foyer and mezzanine bar which is being offered for private event hire. Hosting up to 800, the foyer bar offers a bright, modern space to host informal meetings, drinks receptions, networking functions and presentations. Brighton Dome

can also cater for larger conference and events of up to 1,742 people.

Available for hire exclusively, by day the Foyer Bar is flooded with natural daylight from the large overhead sky lights and by evening it can be lit up using coloured lights allowing you to create an atmosphere tailored to your event.

The Foyer Bar can be used in conjunction with any of the other venues or hired individually.



[www.brightondome.org](http://www.brightondome.org)



## Marriott's Autograph Collection extends to Spain

The **Autograph Collection**, one of Marriott International's newest ventures, is now officially accepting reservations in Europe with the addition of four new hotels in Spain.

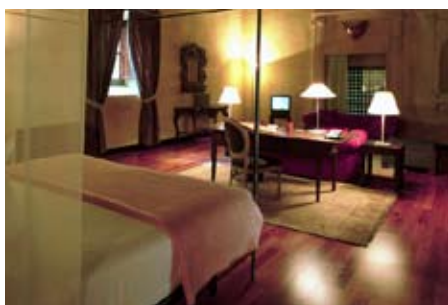
The new Autograph Collection hotels include:



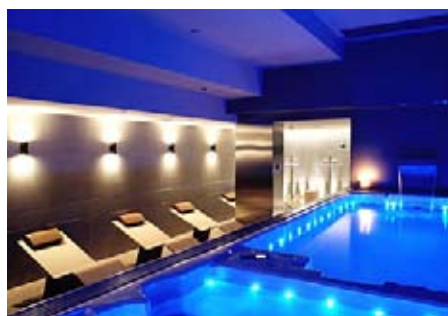
The **AC Santo Mauro in Madrid**, which occupies the premises of an elegant late nineteenth-century building, once the residence of the Duke de Santo Mauro.



Including 50 luxurious guestrooms, **AC Palacio del Retiro** is housed in a twentieth century building and preserves the original moldings, woodwork and stained-glass windows of the original noble residence.



The luxurious 75-room **AC Palacio de Santa Paula** is a true restoration masterpiece, located in the historic center of Granada and is housed in the premises of what used to be the Santa Paula Convent, a Moorish house and a Spanish noble house, all fused into one magnificent building within walking distance of La Alhambra.



The charming 102-room **AC Baqueira Hotel & Spa** will be the first ski resort in Marriott International's portfolio in Europe, located in Baqueira-Beret ski station looking over the impressive landscape of the Pyrenees.

The Autograph Collection was launched in January 2010, and has grown to include 20 hotels in five categories: Boutique Arts, Iconic Historic, Boutique Chic, Luxury Redefined and Retreat. The hotels include the spectacular Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, The Algonquin Hotel in New York and a number of Kessler Collection hotels, including the art-filled Bohemian hotels in Orlando, Florida and Savannah, Georgia. Guests may earn and redeem Marriott Rewards whenever they stay at one of these remarkable properties.

## New Conference App for Brighton Centre Conferences

Delegates attending events at the **Brighton Centre** can now download an **iPhone app**, tailored for their own event that will enable them to get up-to-date information about their conference and exhibition.

The new app will also provide attendees with information on local restaurants, pubs, taxis, hotels and other local businesses.

The app has a content management system so that conference organisers can send the most relevant information to delegates. The system also offers sponsorship opportunities too – and even allows delegates to send a postcard from Brighton.

"We wanted something that would help delegates organise their time better, keep them informed on conference programmes and to get the most out of the time they spend in the city, all in an easy-to-use format," said Penny Parker, Business & Communications Manager at The Brighton Centre. "Not only is the information available on the delegates' own phones, it will also help conference organisers keep in touch with their attendees and save on printing costs."



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# Top 10 Hotel Chains

**Grass Roots' selection of the best hotel chains that demonstrate global diversity across the meetings, events and incentives sector.**

## 1. Jumeirah

Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts is no longer just a leisure brand, which for a long time has been the perception of the group. Jumeirah has a strong meetings, events and incentive product offering and delivers exceptionally high standards, consistently from their Middle Eastern routes, to London, and New York. Watch out for their Frankfurt opening in Spring/Summer 2011.

## 2. IHG

British-owned operator, InterContinental Hotels Group, delivers consistent brand standards despite multiple franchisee arrangements. The top-end InterContinental brand has focused on some very innovative meetings, events and incentive solutions and has demonstrated excellence in this area.

## 3. Rezidor

The Rezidor Hotel Group has multiple brands and price points to suit all requirements

– Regent, Missoni, Radisson Blu, Park Inn, Country Inn – all operating within the EMEA region. The Group offers very consistent brand standards and delivery with strong environmental and corporate responsibility credentials.

## 4. De Vere

De Vere Hotels, Resorts and Venues is a UK-based group operating in the top-end, luxury bracket. Their dedicated residential and non-residential training venues have raised the bar of expectation in this sector. De Vere also has a broader understanding of the meetings, events and incentive market and delivers well against customer desires. The training venues have recently modernised and offer home-from-home accommodation, not to mention award-winning catering from their Steam Bake and Grill concept.

## 5. Shangri-La

Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is Asia Pacific's leading luxury hotel group and is expanding outside of the Asia Pacific region. The 'Shard of Glass' London opening in 2012 is sure to bring worldwide attention and establish itself as an iconic London hotel. Shangri-la prides itself on Asia hospitality and delivers truly world-class service.





# s around the world

## 6. Taj Hotels

Indian-owned Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces offer truly stunning and memorable properties, many of which – of those located in India – were former Royal Palaces. The Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Mumbai that suffered terrorist atrocities in 2008, has now been fully renovated.

## 7. The Rocco Forte Collection

Sir Rocco Forte has been in the hotel business for decades and as the late son of Lord Forte, he took over as the CEO of the Forte Group in 1992, before establishing his own hotel collection. Predominantly a boutique selection, the 13 hotels offer genuine luxury and diversity. Delivery is consistently high and there's a property to suit anyone's diverse tastes. Each hotel has a unique story and boasts a rich history.

## 8. Morgans

The Morgans Hotel Group pioneers contemporary, minimalist lifestyle properties designed by American real estate developer, Ian Schrager. The group is still going strong despite increasing competition from independent design hotels and groups, such as Gramercy Park Hotel, Firmdale, The Standard, Gansevoort, Viceroy, to name but a few. The group can now boast hotel brands

with iconic stature: Sanderson London, Hudson New York, Delano Miami, Clift San Francisco and Mondrian Los Angeles. Watch out for the expansion of those now iconic brands in key gateway cities over the next decade.

## 9. Sol Meliá

Sol Meliá was founded by Gabriel Escarrer Juliá in 1956 in Palma de Mallorca and the hotel chain now boasts 300 hotels in 30 countries on 4 continents. The ME Madrid has proven the success of Spanish chain, Sol Meliá's newest cutting-edge brand. A modern, trendy, design hotel in central Madrid with a rooftop bar boasting one of the most desirable 'in-crowds' in Madrid. ME London is set to open in 2012.

## 10. Steigenberger

Steigenberger Hotel Group is Germany's most well known hotel brand, now owned by Egyptians, Travco. The group delivers consistent 4- and 5-star service across Germany, Austria, The Hague, Switzerland, and Egypt. The lesser known 'InterCity' brand delivers a consistent budget offering, ideal for business travellers.

Source: Taken from the Grass Roots 2011 Meetings Industry Report.



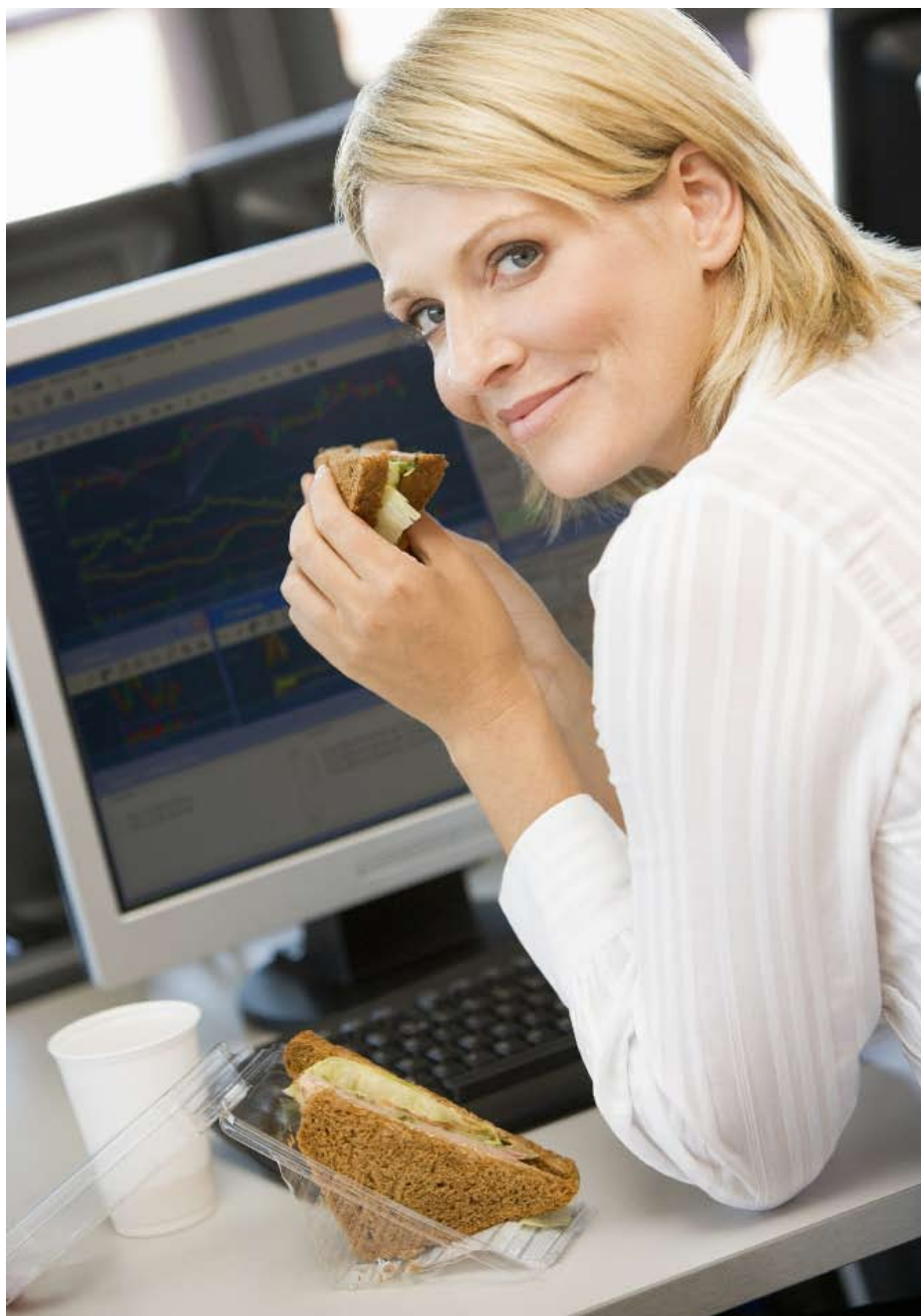
# Make your own sandwiches and save £1,000 a year!

A recent survey of office workers across the UK has revealed that more than a third buy sandwiches in their lunch hour, rather than making their own.

On average workers are spending around £3 on sandwiches every day, with some spending up to £5. Around half of those surveyed say they sometimes buy a drink with their sandwich, adding another one or two pounds to the cost.

The research called 'Lunch in the Credit Crunch', on behalf of [www.nigelsecostore.com](http://www.nigelsecostore.com), also revealed that three times the number of women make their own sandwiches compared to men.

Nigel Berman, founder of [www.nigelsecostore.com](http://www.nigelsecostore.com), said: "With around 240 working days in the year, lunchtimes are making a huge dent in salaries and some people are spending over £25 a week. But because people are spending a small amount every day, they don't think about the cost over the year and it can really add up. The research shows that the average spend is around a staggering £1,000 a year." Just over 66 per cent of the workers surveyed claimed that they always make their own sandwiches.



Of those who buy sandwiches, 25 per cent said they always recycle the packaging, with 54 per cent sometimes recycling. The remainder, around 20 per cent, never recycle the packaging.

The survey also asked people what would encourage them to make their own. Around 20 per cent said they could be persuaded if there was a large cost saving and a similar

number said they would make their own if they had a way of transporting them easily. Interestingly, just over 24 per cent said they would make their own if they had some good ideas for fillings.

Making your own sandwiches can help the planet, especially if you re-use the foil or cling film. There are also solutions like a reusable sandwich wrapper called Wrap n Mat which costs £4.99 from [www](http://www).

nigelsecostore.com. The Wrap n Mat helps commuters transport sandwiches easily and means you don't have to use foil or plastic. It is washable and the cotton wrapper acts as a placemat.

According to health experts, as well as helping to save hundreds of pounds a year, home-made sandwiches can be better for you.

Kate Arnold, of Kate Arnold Nutrition, explains: "Bought sandwiches can be pricey, and you have no control as to what goes in them. They are often very high in fat and calories so making your own at home can be so much better for your health and your purse.

"The issue I have with bought sandwiches is they are all bread and no filling. By making them at home you can reduce the carbohydrate, choose your own bread and create a high-protein filling for less than half the price of a shop-bought sandwich.

"Choose a good-quality wholemeal bread, or whatever suits you, and really fill it with protein. Leave the mayonnaise and focus on high-protein foods as a salad sandwich will not fill you up."



cranberry  
sauce with  
crushed walnuts

### **For a fresh undressed summer sandwich try:**

Grated carrot, beansprouts, grated apple, sesame seeds, chopped walnut, chopped baby spinach, low-fat cottage cheese, chopped red onion and chopped parsley.

### **Kate has come with ten fillings to inspire people to make their own:**

- Hummus and cucumber
- Turkey, avocado, tomato, sprouting seeds
- Avocado, smoked chicken and cranberry sauce
- Mozzarella and sun dried tomatoes
- Mash a can of red salmon in a bowl with freshly chopped dill, 2 tbsps live yoghurt and pepper.
- Generous slices of honey roast ham with mustard.
- Tofu and tahini: (Crumble tofu and mix brown miso, tahini, minced onion, carrot and sunflower seeds)
- Goats cheese and char-grilled pepper with sweet chilli sauce and leaves
- Turkey with low fat mayonnaise and

According to The British Council, British people eat 2.8 billion sandwiches each year but the humble sandwich started life as a snack for England's super-rich.

In 1762 the first written record of the word 'sandwich' appeared in the diary of the English author Edward Gibbons. He remembered wealthy men eating 'a bit of cold meat' between pieces of bread.

The snack was named after the Fourth Earl of Sandwich. He was so addicted to gambling that he would often refuse to stop even to eat meals. So he asked for a meal consisting of beef between two slices of bread so that he always had one hand free to play cards.

When other men saw what he was eating, they began to order 'the same as Sandwich' - so the sandwich was born.

# Getting the best out of self-managed learning

By Robin Hoyle, head of learning at Infinity Learning

It's no secret that most people find it difficult to self-learn. It is not easy. Regardless of this organisations increasingly expect you to do even more learning on your own; in your own time and often in addition to your normal daily workload. Unfortunately many businesses set themselves up for immediate failure by spending more time thinking about the content of the learning programme and not enough time on supporting and nurturing the culture of the business and the individuals (like you) who are expected to complete it.

Many people will have convinced themselves that they don't need to learn (or that they don't really want to), so why should they complete a programme off their own back if they don't believe it will benefit them? Food for thought, but in reality the trend is going in the self-managed learning direction and you can't change that. But you do have

the opportunity to create a better learning experience for yourself. If you find you are constantly battling the same scenarios, Robin Hoyle, head of learning at Infinity Learning highlights a few reality checks and offers some hints and tips on how you can make self-managed learning work to your advantage.

## Some common scenarios:

*"I've been given more self-managed learning to do but my company never seems to provide any kind of support or advice in terms of what I might need to do differently to juggle my workload with learning."*

Sound familiar? This is a common complaint but doesn't detract from the fact that you are expected to manage your learning. So, how do you make space in your day to day job to allow time for this? Diarise your learning. It sounds obvious but planning time to complete your learning (perhaps on the same day/

time each week) will help.

Making a commitment to someone else also helps "I'm completing my learning on Tuesday between 3pm and 4pm". Even highlighting the fact that you are doing it to someone will alert others to respect your space. "I'm doing my learning at the moment so please don't interrupt me". If you were in a meeting people wouldn't disturb you, so treat your learning in the same way to give yourself some quiet time to concentrate.

## Know your learning limits

Try to organise your learning in small chunks of around 20 minutes per session as it will be much easier for your brain to digest. Ploughing through reams of material for hours on end will have little benefit. *"Why is this module mandatory? I don't need to know this/or I already know this so it is a complete waste of my time..."*

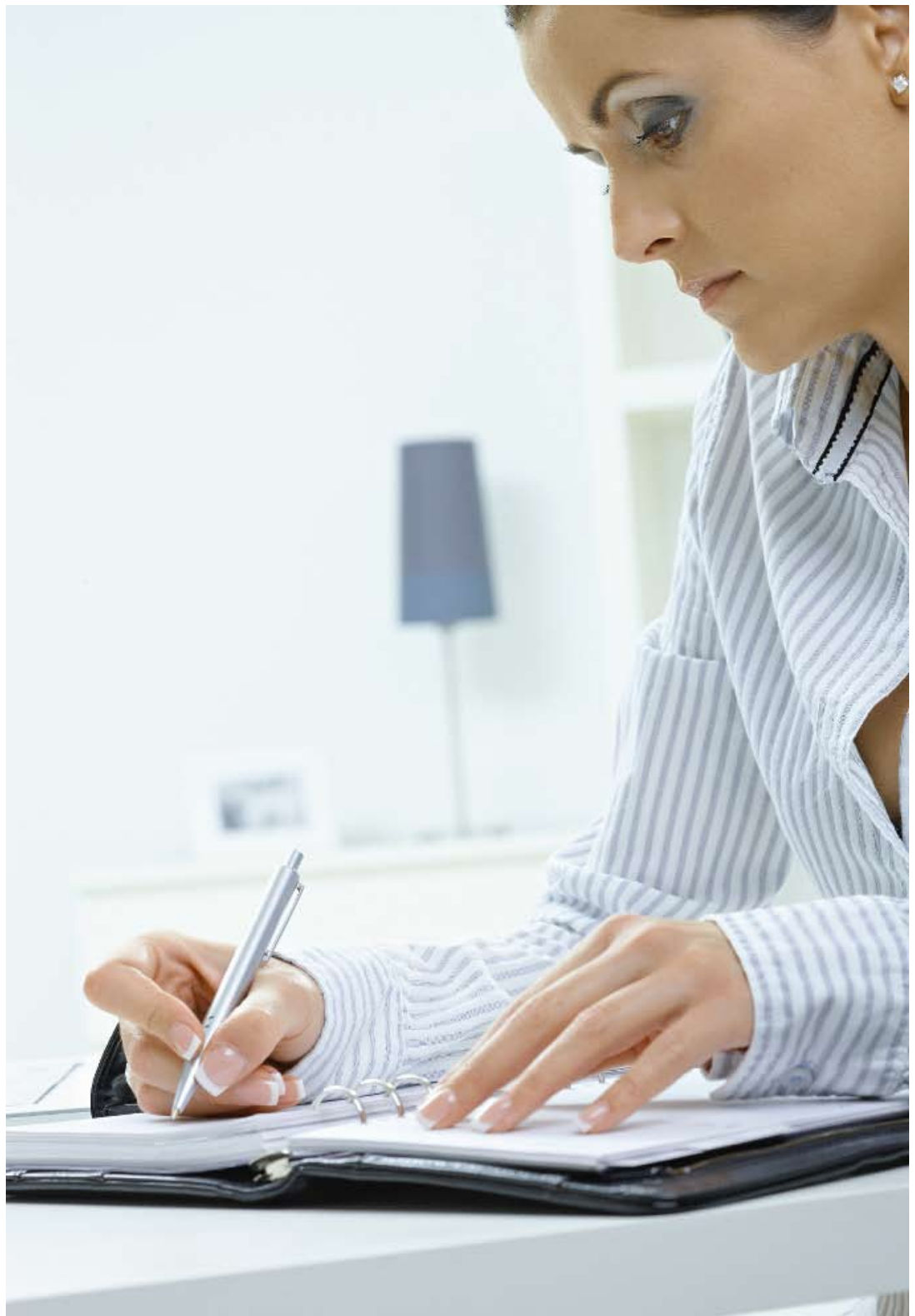
Unfortunately many businesses become so



absorbed in the content of the learning programme that they overlook the fact that they may be teaching people things they already know or don't necessarily need to know. As a learner you have a responsibility to give feedback on your learning in terms of exactly what learning is being given to you. This gives you the opportunity to say ***"This is, or isn't working for me"***. It is very unlikely that every learning module you complete needs to be mandatory so don't be afraid to ask why.

If your organisation has put in place the tools to encourage you to give feedback, use them. Some businesses will implement a mechanism by which you can provide feedback in a controlled way. If they haven't, we live in a digital age – so use email instead. Find out who is responsible for the learning programme and contact them directly to give feedback.

Be active in the process. Liken this to any other form of electronic transaction and you will usually receive an automated email requesting feedback on your experience. Businesses rely on this feedback to develop



and grow in the same way a training manager should welcome feedback, to help improve learning programmes.

### **Why am I learning online? Why not in a classroom?**

This is an argument that in the current climate, would be hard to win. Organisations have long realised and universally accepted

the benefits and efficiency of online learning. Besides, there will always be people that complain about learning and development regardless of where or how it takes place. This is usually because learning involves change, and they probably don't want to change.

You could also stop to ask yourself why e-learning might be better than traditional learning methods and that there may in fact be something in it for you. For instance, online learning enables you to work at your own pace, you don't have to spend time travelling to and from different locations and you don't have to endure a 'lecture style' training session complete with reams of Powerpoint slides that are likely to go 'in one ear and straight out of the other'. Unless you want to be categorised as a learner that is resistant to change (which in the modern business world is not the best place to be), projecting a dynamic attitude towards your learning even if you don't agree, can only be a good thing for your own personal career progression. Some organisations are also becoming much stricter when it comes to learning. In many cases they are actually pulling people off of a course if they haven't completed the pre-work for the training. Then your line manager is notified (which doesn't look good) and this sort of thing spreads

like wild fire across the organisation. Of course, this all goes completely against the grain in terms of getting people to engage with self-managed learning, but it is happening more and more so it is probably wise to take it seriously or at least show an interest.

### **I've completed my learning. Now what?**

Do something with what you have learned, even if all you do is explain it to someone else. You need to use your newfound knowledge quickly to consolidate and reinforce it. If you don't, it will just become something you once looked up (that you will need to look up again). But the likelihood is you won't, because you'll believe you've already learned it. So you'll carry on regardless doing it in a half-remembered way or worse case, you'll revert to doing it the way you always did it in the past.

### **The conclusion?**

Sadly, most individuals do nothing to demonstrate that they have the ability to suggest change. The general consensus is you either accept it or become a resistor, but you can actually be positive about change and give worthy feedback that helps the business you work in to improve. Of course, to generate real results you need to be clever about it and prove that you appreciate what the business

is trying to do (i.e. how it is trying to achieve more with less resource). By using phrases that apply positivity and inspire ideas such as "This is good but it could be better with..." or "I really liked this bit, have you considered doing..."

The sad truth is many learners believe it is a case of 'engage or die' when they could actually become active consumers of their learning and create a better experience for everyone. The other route that you could take (and many do) is to ensure you do enough learning not to be the individual that hasn't done it. Learners must understand that it is a financial and economic reality for businesses to use online self-managed learning – and it is going to happen more. So rather than fight it, rise to the challenge, understand, recognise and embrace change via the process of providing feedback, because if you play your cards right, some of the change could come from you.

Infinity is a learning design company that embraces new technologies to deliver learning solutions to suit its clients' individual needs.

Please visit [www.infinitylearning.co.uk](http://www.infinitylearning.co.uk) for further information.

# A history of the Great British Bust

The rise and fall of the great British Bust has been revealed for the first time after extensive research by fashion store Debenhams.

Debenhams spokesman Ed Watson said: "It is now possible to chart Britain's economic record merely by keeping a breast of the times. This is history in a bra cup. Our research has revealed a direct correlation between the events of each decade and the position of a woman's bust."

Researchers examining trends in bust heights and shapes since the start of the century were able to break the years into several distinct trends.

## 1900 – 1920

An era of deniable busts. British women's fashion favoured flat chests, with strings of pearls hanging uninterrupted across narrow pencil style dresses. It was a legacy of a once strong economic growth, boosted by wealth from the colonies.

## 1920 – 1945

A period of great depression and social change, one of which was the emergence of a distinctly visible but subdued bust, rising gently away from the chest.

## 1945 – 1960

"You've never had it so good", said Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, and British bust heights and shapes supported his claim. They



rose rapidly and jutted proudly out, becoming wedge shaped statements of intent. Having discovered new independence working in the factories during World War Two, women were taking control.

## 1960 – 1967

The Great Slump, as women burnt and threw away their bras, preferring to be seen as nature had intended, reflecting the dominant liberal political agenda.

## 1968 – 1979

Harold Wilson's 'white heat of technology' was finally taking hold of Britain. New production methods were sweeping the country, including new ways of making bras that fitted and were, finally, comfortable to wear. The bust returned, but with a modified, more conical shape. Gossard launched their best selling 'Doreen' bra, along with Gossard 'Glossies',

which were the shape of things to come.

## 1979 – 1997

Dominated by The Thatcher Years, and the era of "power dressing". Busts rose to the occasion, becoming higher, but narrower than before to accommodate suits for high flying female executives.

Madonna set the scene for girl power to erupt with her iconic Jean Paul Gaultier cone bra during this period, along with Wonderbra's notorious 'Hello Boys' campaign.

## 1997 – 2007

Cool Britannia, introduced by Tony Blair. A boom in bust sizes echoed the housing market, and soaring economic strength as British women became more confident in their own self image.

## 2007 onwards

Current times Increasing inflation, as women react to the recession by making the most of their existing assets, with surgery if need be.

There has been a huge rise in sales of cleavage enhancing bras and products, and boobs are bigger than ever before, with Debenhams launching its biggest ever K cup bra.

"Our figures show that we are currently at a peak in the cycle. Experts are speculating over whether bust sizes will continue to climb, of whether there will be sudden collapse in the trend.