

# PA ENTERPRISE

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

December 2012



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to a PA**

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**Bringing the Restaurant to your office**

**All Clients Great and Small...**

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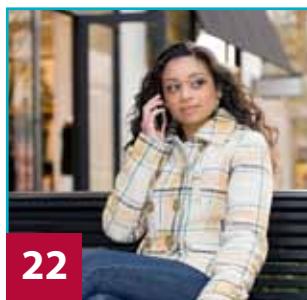


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## PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

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## Noisy eating is top office irritant

**Noisy eating by colleagues tops a list of office gripes by British workers, according to a survey.**

More than half (57%) identified the habit as the most annoying trait among their co-workers, followed by messy colleagues (32%).



More than a quarter (27%) highlighted a failure by other staff members to wash up after themselves as their biggest bugbear.

Food-related gripes featured heavily in the list of annoyances among British office workers, in the research commissioned by Ainsley Harriott Cup Soup.

Fourth in the list was colleagues who bring smelly food into the office (26%), followed by lateness (also 26%),

failure to listen (25%) and people who talk over conversation (23%).

William Hanson, a leading expert on etiquette, said that while the British option might be to say nothing, the best practice was to deal with colleagues' frustrating habits head on.

Mr Hanson said: "Take the annoying colleague aside, face to face, and, with a nice smile and your nicest voice possible, subtly tell them your gripe."

David Cherrie, marketing controller of Ainsley Harriott Cup Soup, said: "It's interesting that, rather than professional bugbears, such as not listening and talking over each other, it's food-related grievances that come out on top.

"Furthermore, we're all too cowardly to confront each other, meaning our working relationships could be suffering over what are basically poor table manners."



## Nearly 80 percent of workers with flu still come to work

The sounds of sneezing and coughing that ring throughout the workplace could be allergies, but, according to a survey by Staples, is more likely to be the cold or flu viruses. Nearly 80 percent of office workers polled by the office products retailer come to work even when they know they are sick, an increase of 20 percent over last year. But the picture is not much better for those that stay home - more than two-thirds will return to work while still contagious.

In a typical year, the flu virus is responsible for approximately 70 million missed workdays according to Staples research. Survey results also show that employees could do more to keep the workplace healthy: half of office workers don't clean their workspaces regularly and are unaware of the dirtiest surfaces in the office.





## Waste of Time: 33% of UK Workers Hate Appraisals

A survey of UK workers undertaken by Badenoch & Clark has found that 33% think that appraisals are a waste of time and have no impact on their career.

1,000 office workers were quizzed on their feelings about meetings recently. The responses have revealed a fair amount of apathy towards conversations with the boss.

**5% spend a mandatory 15 hours a year in appraisals**

**37% spend a minimum 7 hours a year in appraisals**

**33% think these meetings are a waste of time**

The overwhelming feeling among this dissatisfied third of the workforce is that appraisals are merely contractual and have no bearing on the realities of the day to day job role.

"Many organisations adopt a 'once a year' approach towards appraisals which means the process is scheduled and collation of employee feedback is often carried out through standardised forms or systems," says Badenoch & Clark MD, Nicola Linkleter.

"There is nothing inherently wrong with this but to gain the full benefits of appraisals for both the organisation and the individual involved it is important that personal development and assessment doesn't stop there."



## Dragon Hilary Devey is top choice for business advice

Hilary Devey is the celebrity we'd most like business advice from, according to research from Jurys Inn and Cross Country Trains

Hilary Devey has become a household business name following her appearance on Dragon's Den, and now takes the top spot for the celebrity we'd most like to receive business advice from, ahead of the likes of Sir Richard Branson, Karen Brady, George Osbourne and Sir Alan Sugar, according to a survey from Jurys Inn and Cross Country Trains.

Whether it is her feisty attitude, her hands-on approach to business or her determination to succeed, almost a fifth of the 1000 business men and women surveyed would welcome advice from the Dragon. Proving most popular with under 35's, the research proves that Hilary, who is soon to begin a new Channel 4 series, The Intern, offering ambitious candidates their first step on the career ladder, is increasingly becoming a role model for young hopefuls looking to tackle the business world.



## Festive season triggers concerns about alcohol misuse

There's no more fitting a time than the weeks running up to Christmas, to highlight the concerns about alcohol misuse, particularly in the workplace, warns workplace health and wellbeing organisation, Health@Work.

Health@Work regularly works with organisations to get their workforce thinking about their alcohol intake and how it effects their performance both in and out of work.

Health@Work Senior Consultant, Kevin Yip, said: "Alcohol misuse is a major issue in the UK, but businesses can play a big role in reducing the problem.

"It is in the interests of employers to tackle this problem, particularly as some 17 million working days are lost annually in England every year due to alcohol related sickness."

"By tackling the problem businesses can reduce absence rates, improve productivity and staff morale, which will directly affect the bottom line.

"Businesses can work with staff to identify people with potential

problems early on and refer them to where they can find support to help overcome alcohol issues."

In addition to offering free information and advice, Health@Work offers a variety of resources and techniques for business and individuals, such as their alcohol audits, unit calculator and drink diaries.

Health@Work is encouraging anyone concerned about their own drinking habits or those of employees or colleagues to contact them direct via 0151 236 6608, for free, confidential advice.

**For further information or to complete the alcohol audit online, please visit:**  
**[www.healthatworkcentre.org.uk](http://www.healthatworkcentre.org.uk)**



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## Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Office Xmas Party with a difference...

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage has found an ingenious way to turn the annual office Christmas party into an inspiring team building event.

Channel 4 star of *Three Hungry Boys*, Thom Hunt, will be offering foraging trips around the stunning coastline of Royal William Yard, next to Plymouth Sound, before sitting down to Xmas lunch.



Parties of six or more can spend an hour and a half exploring the natural food delights growing in and around the ex-Naval victualling yard, guided by expert forager Thom.

Once foragers have found some food goodies, Thom will take them back to the award-winning Canteen for a short cookery demo and tasting session of the foraged finds, followed by their Christmas lunch.

"It's actually a great team bonding experience for colleagues - and the surroundings are staggeringly beautiful, so it's a real pre-Xmas treat," says Thom.

Christmas Foraging will cost £10 per person, and can only be booked in conjunction with Christmas lunch at the Plymouth Canteen, throughout December.

[www.rivercottage.net/canteens/plymouth/christmas-in-plymouth/](http://www.rivercottage.net/canteens/plymouth/christmas-in-plymouth/)



## Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 Adds Spice to Delegate Menus

Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 has spiced up its Day Delegate Rate menus.

Collectively known as the Spice Trail, the hotel's business centre includes meeting rooms named Anise, Cinnamon, Jasmine, Juniper, Saffron, Tamarind and Wasabi. The newly adapted menus for morning coffee breaks and lunch now feature these ingredients, which are all known to boast specialist health benefits, perfect for delegates as part of their meetings.

Menus change daily to reflect fresh, seasonal ingredients, but delegates can expect delicacies such as anise tea, cinnamon pastries, jasmine flower tea (full of antioxidants, it has a calming and soothing effect), saffron risotto, Mr Todiwala's tamarind chutney to accompany a selection of sandwiches, and wasabi peas and peanuts.





## CATCH CHRISTMAS AT PESCATORI

Pescatori – the perfect place for a Christmas party...Italian's know how to celebrate!

The private room in Pescatori Fitzrovia, 57 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PD, is perfect for a variety of Christmas celebrations, whether its lunch with friends or colleagues or dinner with the family or office, we've got the room, menus and ambiance to make sure your party goes with a swing!

Including its own bar and two separate booth areas, the private room in Fitzrovia can comfortably accommodate lunch or dinners from 20 guests to 100.

The **Natalizio Menu** at £35.50pp is available for all party sizes throughout December. The **Celebrazione Menu** at £45.00pp for five courses, including cauliflower soup, black truffle & extra virgin olive oil, lobster with pink grapefruit, smoked crispy pancetta, a refreshing green apple sorbet affogato (drowned) in Prosecco, monkfish tail with clams and crispy prosciutto, and a delicious selection of desserts and cheeses.

Fresh from being refurbished, the spacious, elegant private room is candle lit, with leather seats in its own bar area, rugs on the floor and large mirrors.



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# How not to have *that* Christmas Party!



**It's the most wonderful time of the year - or so the song tells us, but if you've been given the task of organising the Christmas party - as well as the venue, date, theme, guest list, disco, raffle etc. it might worth giving a bit of thought to ensure it doesn't become known as that Christmas party.**

**Whether it's held in the office, a restaurant, a hotel or a reception hall, it is still a work event – and to help the party-goers try and remember that - you can put things in place to help it not go terribly wrong and see all your great organising skills go to waste.**





Often as the PA/Event Organiser it's your responsibility to ensure that nothing goes wrong on the night. But how can you control what people do? Even though you are not part of the management team (MT), you are often seen as an extension of the MT, and therefore, have to act accordingly. But to ensure the pressure doesn't just apply to you, assign roles and areas (if in a large venue – these could be the bar, foyer, dance area, food area, etc.) to the MT sometime before the party takes place. Do not be shy about doing this – it will show your boss and the MT that you take your job seriously, it will let the party-goers know that the buck doesn't stop with you, and the most important point, it will allow you to relax and enjoy the evening.

You do not have to be a party-pooper, and you don't want the MT crushing any enjoyment being had by employees, but keeping a casual but wary check on proceedings, it means that everyone can enjoy the party.

Here are some tips you may want to think about to stop it becoming known as *that* Christmas party:

### Serving Alcohol

The most common problem at office parties is the over-consumption of alcohol.

Deciding whether or not to provide alcohol at the office party is a significant decision, one that must be made in accordance

with the company culture and always with the express acknowledgement that drinking to excess is never acceptable, especially when partners are present.

When making the decision about whether to have alcohol at the party, it is worth taking advice from HR. It's more than just a matter of whether or not that guy from Sales is going to end up attempting to break dance in front of the buffet (again). Who knew he was so agile anyway? In all seriousness, it's also a matter of risk to your company.

### Here are some ways you could limit problems arising:

- ★ **Provide a limited amount of drink tickets** for each employee
- ★ **Have a bar** that supplies only wine and beer and no shorts
- ★ **Don't provide Christmas Punch** that may pack too much of a hidden punch
- ★ **Close the bar early** in the evening while there are still planned events ahead (and plenty of food) to encourage employees to linger and let the alcohol wear off. This is also a subtle way to prevent employees from heading out into the night with less than a clear head
- ★ **Serve food early** and keep it out until after the bar is shut. You don't want anyone drinking on an empty stomach,

and you want to encourage employees to eat more than they drink

- ★ **Communicate with the bar staff** and make it clear that they are not to serve any alcohol to anyone who seems drunk. Give them a management point of contact if they need help dealing with an argumentative employee
- ★ **Hire a professional barman** - even if the party is on premises. For reasons that we don't have to mention, you do not want your employees (and Father Christmas forbids, managers!) serving alcohol to other employees
- ★ **Enlist the MT** to be designated non-drinkers or one-drink-only role models. They can not only set a good example - and company expectations of behaviour - but can also be on the lookout for employees who may have had one too many and will need to find a way home
- ★ **Do not hesitate to call a cab** for an employee - have some cards for local cab companies and leave some in the foyer entrance, on the bar and keep some in your bag/pocket to hand out to people.

Also find out if any employees will be working or who are on call straight after the party. If you have employees who must abstain from alcohol for these reasons, ensure you have enough soft drinks to go round.





### Attendance

★ **Do not imply that attendance to the party is compulsory.**

Even if the party is onsite and during work hours, do not give the impression that employees must attend. Some have religious beliefs that prevent them from attending parties; others simply are too uncomfortable in social situations to do so.

If the party is during work hours and employees will be paid during their attendance, the MT may give employees who do not wish to attend the option of either continuing to work or clocking out and being paid out for the rest of the scheduled work day.

### Management and Employee Responsibility

★ **Ask the MT to discuss the party with their teams beforehand, and remind all party-goers that** while everyone is encouraged to have a good time, they are expected to still behave as professionally as always – this





message should then be communicated to all levels during team meetings, etc.

The MT also need to be diligent and observant of the behaviour around them - not just the abuse of alcohol, but also potential sexual harassment scenarios, inappropriate jokes or conversations, rising tension, etc.

★ **If employees are encouraged to give speeches or tell anecdotes, set some parameters before the event regarding what type of stories are encouraged (as in - what's appropriate).**

You don't need long-term employees telling the newer generation about the good old days when the holiday parties involved togas and beer kegs.

★ **Set a time frame for the party, especially if you are having it offsite at a restaurant.** If you clearly state that the company sponsored party is from 6pm to 10pm, you will be better equipped to fight allegations that you were responsible for the guys from accounts that were riding festive reindeers all over town after 10pm.

### **Dress Code and Dancing**

If you've had a problem in the past with employees not wearing appropriate attire, you may wish to make the party directly after work, so that their festive party clothes must also be office

appropriate - or consider having a dress code.

★ **Really think twice about dancing.** Yes, it can be fun, and for young generations it can liven up what otherwise could be a boring corporate event. However, it is another opportunity for employees to fail to use good judgment, whether dancing alone, or with a colleague's spouse.

And let's face it - music does move us, but some people it moves in ways most people don't wish to see.

The Christmas office party is something many employees look forward to all year long. It's a great time to socialise with your colleagues casually in a way that you usually don't get to do.

Unfortunately, it can also be an opportunity to let a little bad judgement ruin a good reputation and alienate colleagues. With a little foresight, structure, and help from your management team and HR, however, you can help to guarantee an evening of celebration without the morning after regrets.

*Wishing you  
all a wonderful  
Christmas  
party!*





# Festive Season Safety from Suzy Lamplugh Trust

**Christmas is a time to relax and have fun but it can also be very busy and stressful. You may be out and about more than usual – for that essential Christmas shopping and to festive parties and other social events – and the last thing you need is to become a victim of crime. To help avoid this, consider some of the following advice:**

## Christmas Shopping

- ★ Don't get loaded down with too many bags. Try to keep one hand free.
- ★ Try and avoid taking young children into busy shopping areas. If it is unavoidable make sure they know what to do if they lose you, e.g. tell the nearest counter assistant that they are lost and NEVER leave a shop without you.
- ★ Agree a meeting point with older children in case you get separated.
- ★ Be careful where you park your car, especially if you will be returning to it after dark.
- ★ If parking in a multi-storey car park, choose a well-lit space as close to the exit as possible and away from pillars. Reverse into position.
- ★ Keep car doors locked whilst driving in built up areas, especially if you've got bags of presents in the car.



- ★ Don't leave lots of presents on show in a parked car as they could tempt thieves
- ★ Keep alert and aware of your surroundings, especially in busy shops and crowded streets where thieves and pickpockets may well be operating.
- ★ Keep a close watch on your valuables and try not to keep them all in one place.

## Christmas Parties

- ★ Most of us like a drink or two but remember that alcohol will affect your judgment – don't let it endanger your personal safety.
- ★ Remember, the most common date rape drug is alcohol, with victims being given drinks with a far higher alcohol content than they think.
- ★ Watch your drinks and food to ensure that nothing is added to them.
- ★ Never leave your drink unattended, even if you are going onto a dance floor or to the toilet.
- ★ If your drink has been left unattended, do not drink any more of it.
- ★ If something tastes or looks odd, do not eat/drink any more of it. Be aware though that some date rape drugs are colourless and tasteless.
- ★ If someone you do not know or trust offers to buy you a drink,





either decline or accompany them to the bar and watch that nothing is added to your drink.

- ★ Know your own limit.

- ★ If you meet someone new at a party, don't go home with them or invite them back to your home or accept a lift from them. Arrange a second date in a public place to get to know the person better.

- ★ Pay attention to your instincts. If you feel un-easy about someone, there may be a reason

- ★ When it's time to go home, carry your keys, mobile phone and some money in your pocket, so you can give up your handbag or wallet and escape quickly if necessary on the way home.

## Transport

- ★ The party's over and you need to get home. You are likely to be tired and slightly the worse for wear so you need to be careful.

- ★ The ideal plan is to book your cab or taxi in advance or call a licensed cab company from the party and arrange for them to

pick you up right outside the venue.

- ★ Never accept a lift from a minicab touting for trade. They are illegal and can be very dangerous.

- ★ If necessary walk to the nearest minicab office – Keep to well-lit streets and walk against traffic and in sight of other people whenever possible.

- ★ Always sit in the back of a cab and if you get chatting to the driver do not give away personal details. If you feel uneasy with the driver, ask him to stop at a busy familiar place and get out.

- ★ If using public transport, have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so that your wallet or purse is out of sight.

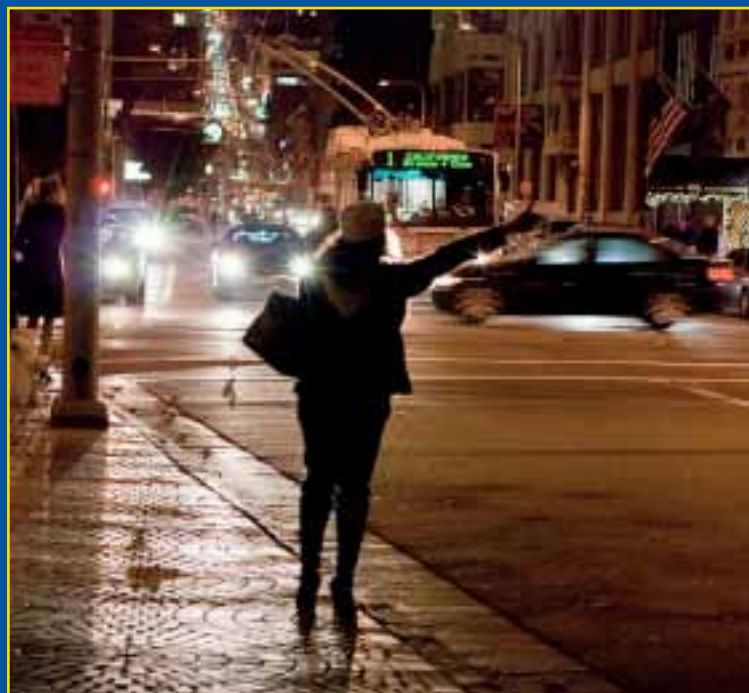
- ★ Always wait for the bus or

train in a well-lit place near other people if possible and try and arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or station.

- ★ Take note of where the emergency alarms are and try to sit near them.

- ★ If a bus is empty or it is after dark, stay on the lower deck as near as possible to the driver.

- ★ On trains, avoid empty compartments or compartments that have no access to corridors or other parts of the train. If you feel threatened on any public transport press the alarm and/or make as much noise as possible to attract attention of your fellow passengers or the driver or guard.



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# Say Hello to a PA...

## Meet Jackie Weldon



**Welcome to our new feature 'Say Hello to a PA...'**  
**In this issue we meet Jackie a PA for Openreach (part of BT Group). Find out what advice Jackie would give to a PA starting out on their career, what she would change if she were Prime Minister and who most has inspired Jackie.**

### **Tell us about the company you work for - size, sector, location.**

I work for Openreach, which is part of BT Group. Openreach looks after the 'first mile' of network, from the exchange through to homes and businesses. Our customers are not the end users but the companies who supply their telecommunications services to them. We provide fair and equal access to our network for all Communications Providers, helping them achieve success in their own businesses. Openreach has around 33,000 people who install, support and maintain the wiring, fibres and connections which link tens of millions of homes and businesses in Britain to their Communications Providers' networks.

### **What is your role and who do you work for?**

My role is Personal Assistant to the Director of Transformation Design.

### **How did you get this position?**

I joined BT in 1987 and have worked in various clerical roles. I applied for a job working in the Chief Engineers unit as PA to the MD of Network Policy. Over the past seven years I have moved from various parts of the business as he has moved from role to role.

### **Has the recession had an impact on your role/your company?**

The recession has had a huge impact on my role. The main rule of thumb for me is to adopt the same approach to spending money at work as I do at home. I spend more time booking travel and accommodation to ensure that I have obtained the most cost effective options.

As a company cutting back on what we spend will allow us to spend on - or invest in - areas like better tools and systems, measures to reduce faults or better ways to allocate work and delight our customers.

### **What is the best thing about your job?**





The variety makes it very interesting as I speak to many different people during the day from Telephone Engineers to Senior Executives

---

**What do you think makes a good boss?**

I think someone who is fair, honest and hardworking and someone who communicates well makes a good boss.

---

**What are the three most important skills you use at work?**

Most important skills for me would be good communication skills, listening as well as written and verbal. Having excellent IT skills in the current environment is a must, and being a little bit of an "IT girl" as well as having a good knowledge of MS office is extremely important. My mantra is "read the instructions". Good analytical skills is my key skill as frequently something comes up that I haven't done before so I need to be able to think fast, have a logical approach and come up with a solution to the problem.

---

**What does a 'typical' day look like for you?**

**If you would like to take part in this feature, please email [editor@deskdemon.com](mailto:editor@deskdemon.com) - we look forward to hearing from you.**

No two days are ever the same, I always have a "to do list" which I write up at the end of the each day but I am lucky if I get through the first two items in the morning before something else comes up. My main tasks are checking my boss's diary and making sure he has no clashes with calls or meetings, I then go through my email inbox and see what needs to be done urgently and what can be put aside to later. I then try to arrange travel for the coming week, booking hotels, flights, train tickets etc. My telephone rings constantly so I often have to stop what I am doing and jump to another task or enquiry – remembering what I was doing before the interruption is the hardest thing.

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**What was the biggest challenge you have faced and how did you tackle it?**

Logistics is tricky, getting my boss from A to B sounds simple but when flights get cancelled due to Icelandic ash clouds or trains are delayed due to flooding on the line it can get quite hairy. I try to stay calm and not get flustered. My biggest challenge recently was arranging an event for around 150 people. The location for the event was planned for Ipswich and this was changed to Stafford at short notice so I quickly set up a mini planning team with a few of the team and divided up the tasks that needed to be done so that each person had specific actions to do. I held daily

conference calls with the team to track progress and to address any issues. Fortunately there were no major issues and everyone had a really good day but I certainly wouldn't want to repeat the experience.

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**How have you got to where you are today in your career?**

I believe I have built a reputation for being hardworking, trustworthy and helpful.

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**Do you have any career plans for the future and what are they?**

I am currently attending an evening class at college to study financial accounting so maybe that will take me down a new path in the future.

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**What are you doing to make sure they happen? What new skills will you need to learn?**

I will continue to do my job as a PA and aim to complete my college course over the next year. Once I have completed this I will look to see what the next step is and whether I feel ready to progress towards Chartered Accountancy.

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**What one piece of advice would you give to someone beginning their PA career.**

Avoid listening to gossip or passing on information – people will remember if you are known for being a gossip around the office and it is very difficult to build good working relationships



if you cannot be trusted.

### **If you were giving career advice to students how would you sell being a PA?**

It can be very rewarding career, you learn quickly about the business at a higher level and it can often be a good platform for moving upwards into other areas of the business.

### **What would you look for in a PA?**

Someone who is friendly, polite, helpful, enthusiastic and a good listener.

### **Tell us about a humorous event/moment at work - maybe you've been asked to do a strange task?**

My boss called me from London as he had just finished a meeting at 5pm and couldn't find his suitcase. He thought someone picked up his suitcase by mistake when leaving the meeting room. After a lot of calls to check if anyone had inadvertently taken the wrong suitcase I asked the doorkeeper of the building if anyone had handed in a suitcase. The doorman recalled my boss coming in to the office in the morning but said that he didn't see him carrying a case. We decided to check the CCTV footage and sure enough, we could see my boss arriving at the reception with no case. When I explained this to my boss he realised that he must have left the case on the train to London that morning. Luckily the train

he was on was going in to Euston Station and the ticket inspector had found the case and handed it into lost property. My boss was able to go back to the station and pick it up before checking into his hotel.

### **One thing you would change if you were Prime Minister?**

I would try to do more to encourage young people to go to college and university. My goal would be to reduce or remove fees as I feel a good education should be accessible to everyone.

### **What is your best holiday memory?**

My best holiday was being married on the beach in Mauritius

### **If you could spend a year on a remote island with any four people (living or not) who would they be and why?**

- My husband John – I wouldn't want to spend a year away from him as I would miss him too much.
- Professor Brian Cox – I love listening to him as he can make science sound interesting.
- Joni Mitchell to sing and entertain us.

- Nigella Lawson to cook delicious food with fruit, vegetables and fish.

### **If you were invisible for the day - where would you go and what would you do?**

I would spend the day following and listening to Simon Cowell to see how he conducts his business interests.

### **Who is the person who has influenced you most in your life and why?**

I have been inspired by Anita Roddick, the founder of the Body Shop Cosmetics. As well as being a campaigner for human rights she was also an environmentalist. Body Shop was one of the first companies that banned the use of ingredients which had been tested on animals being used in their cosmetics.

### **What is your proudest moment?**

Receiving an Openreach Quarterly Award in 2012 for consistently role modelling Openreach values, especially heart, helpful and straightforward and my proactive and helpful attitude.

I also received Community Champions Awards in 2010 and 2012 on behalf of the local youth football team in recognition of my volunteering in the community and I received an Openreach High Performers Award in 2009 as recognition of my achievements throughout the year.

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## Breakthrough by David C M Carter

Reviewed by Alison Pedrick, Editor

Published by Little, Brown Book Group, £14.99

### About the book:

In 1954, Roger Bannister decided he would break the four-minute-mile record. Not only did he do this, but within a year, his achievement empowered 37 others to do the same. He accomplished his own 'breakthrough' and inspired others to push themselves beyond what they thought they could achieve.

For the first time, the world's leading mentor David C M Carter shares his most effective 'breakthrough' secrets in this practical guide to becoming the best you can be. Previously only accessible to his handful of exclusive international clients, these strategies are the keys to a more successful and happier you. By following them, you will learn how to identify and clarify your goals - and then achieve them in every area of your life.

With simple, easy-to-action 'breakthroughs' outlined in each chapter, complete with 'how-to' tools, you'll have no excuse to live anything less than the life you were destined to live.

[Read full review online](#)



## Makers - The New Industrial Revolution by Chris Anderson

Reviewed by Marie Herman  
CAP-OM, ACS, Administrative  
Assistant, MRH Enterprises

Published by Random House  
Business Books in Hardback,  
£20.00

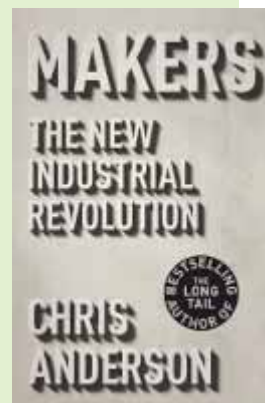
### About the book:

If a country wants to remain economically vibrant it needs to manufacture things. In recent years, however, the developed

world has become obsessed with making money out of the precarious service sector, leaving the real business of manufacturing to the developing world.

Makers is about how all that is being reversed. Over the past ten years, the internet has democratised publishing, broadcasting and communications, leading to a massive increase in the range of participation in everything digital - the world of bits. Now the same is happening to manufacturing - the world of things.

[Read full review online](#)



## The Cubicle Manifesto by Mainak Dhar

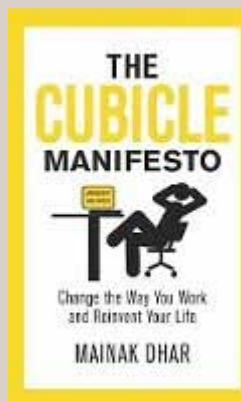
Reviewed by Keena Cauthen, Administrator, USA

Published by Vermilion, £6.99

### About the book:

Welcome to THE CUBICLE. The desk space you occupy for hours on end. Where creativity is dead and stress levels are high. Where you feel guilty for leaving, but reluctant to arrive. Where you eat lunch, plan, strategise and phone home to say how late you'll be tonight. The Cubicle Manifesto is a business parable for the modern age that will transform the way you work. Read this and join the revolution.

[Read full review online](#)





# Bringing the restaurant to your office...

By Alison Pedrick

**Hungry? I know I am, where did this cold wet weather come from? It's making me reach for the biscuit tin, or chocolate bar, not to mention Mary from Accounts birthday cake sitting in the kitchen – is this a familiar feeling and do you do the same?**

We all know that healthy eating is good for us, but when hunger strikes, you're having a bad day and need to cheer yourself up, all those good intentions can easily fly out the window.

I recently listened to a talk about food and health given by Ed Baines, Patron Chef for Randall & Aubin (R&A), a fish restaurant in London's Brewer Street - and also a judge on Britain's Best Dish TV programme for more than six years. I expected to hear the usual advice about eating breakfast, exercising, oily fish, small balanced portions etc. and in part it was, but Ed's passion and common sense really hit home.

Ed is not only passionate about health he is also passionate about where the food comes



***Catering Manager James Du Plessis***

from, taste, flavours, fulfilment, nourishment, the environment, UK food industry, and more. And Ed feels that these things are just as important when you eat at work as when you are at home or in a restaurant.

To know what you are eating,

where it came from and that it is grown somewhere in the UK, not only helps the economy and environment – it satisfies something inside each of us – “I eat well, I buy well = I feel good” says Ed.

He favours taking the blinkers



**10.11am**

Nina a PA at APR Communications, West London, decides she wants to order her lunch in, she looks at the menu, both online and in print, and places her order of a smoked chicken salad. Some of her colleagues also order - white leek and chive soup (£3), roast Goats cheese, rocket, mango and pear chutney baguette (£9.50), honey roast sausage with creamed potatoes and gravy (£7.50) and JPs chocolate profiteroles with vanilla cream (£4). They want the order for 12.30pm to be delivered to the office. As the order is over £15 delivery is free. Nina is a regular customer and has her own account on the R&A system and within minutes the order has been placed and confirmed by email.

**10.12am**

The order comes through the system, and prints out automatically. The order goes

through to the kitchen.

**11.15am**

The order is made up by the experienced Chefs – the smoked chicken comes from Cotswolds, the salad from Kent and cheese from Somerset – almost everything else is also UK sourced. It smells wonderful and I am already hungry!

**11.47am**

The order is checked, packed and ready to go.

**11.49am**

Safely stored into the caddie box on the moped, the fresh food is on its way.

**12.20pm**

Nina and her colleagues receive the order.

**12.30pm**

Happy healthy eating occurs!



**10.11am -  
Nina places  
her order**



**11.15am - the  
order is made  
up by the R&A  
chefs**



off, when it comes to eating. We all know deep down that if something is priced extremely cheaply (i.e. 20 chicken satays for £1), something is not right – he urges you to think about the bigger picture.

Ed and his business partner, restaurateur Jamie Poulton, are now delivering food across London including sandwich boxes and salads for office lunches, canapés and bowl food for larger functions to sit down dinner menus for more formal occasions.

You can order online or over the phone food that is



tasty, that will fill you up and not break the bank, for example soup starts at just £3 so there is something to suit every taste and budget. I went along to see how the whole process worked from your order to delivery.





### Nina's verdict

Nina says, "When I'm busy and don't have time to pop out to get something to eat, Randall & Aubin's delivery service is ideal. I can order in a minute and know that I can get on with my work and the food will turn up when expected, if not a bit earlier. My boss also asks me to order for her, and we have used them for meetings as well, the fact that you can rely on them makes my life easier."

Everything is made fresh for each order – nothing sits made up from the night before in the fridges, Chef orders in items every afternoon for morning delivery – so the food quality is of the highest, freshest standard. The extensive menu offers a big selection of simply cooked, nutritious, filling food – satisfying the tummy and the soul.

At the moment this service is only available in London (mainly central and west), but if you are outside of London the team cater for meetings, conferences, weddings etc. – just give Catering Manager James Du Plessis a call to talk through your requirements. As soon as the service covers a wider area, I will let you know (I'm hoping they start delivering to Middlesex soon, where DeskDemon is based...).

And with less than three weeks to go, and if you still need Christmas party food - you can choose from a mouth-watering menu and a beautifully presented selection of restaurant quality canapés, prepared by R&A's professional chefs, and can be delivered to every Christmas party, office get-together or dinner party. Guaranteed to bring some Soho style to



every event, the canapé boxes start from £1.20 a canapé (minimum order of 20 canapés or £24). Highlights from the canapé menu include: Ham hock with remoulade & mustard dressing on crostini, poached salmon with leek vinaigrette and seared beef over Emmental with rocket & horseradish – yum.

Now, if you're thinking yes all this is great, but life isn't perfect and what if I want a piece of chocolate cake or gooey biscuit, Ed is down to earth enough

to recognise that we are human and want to treat ourselves every now and then – and, like me, he is just as partial to the odd bit of cake too. So, you will find some delectable desserts on the menu too, but maybe it is best not to eat them every day...

**What was it Ed said again, I eat well, I buy well = I feel good!**

**DeskDemon has teamed up with R&A to offer the first 25 DeskDemoners who order 25% off delivery. To take advantage of this offer, call 020 7478 0507 and quote DeskDemon.**

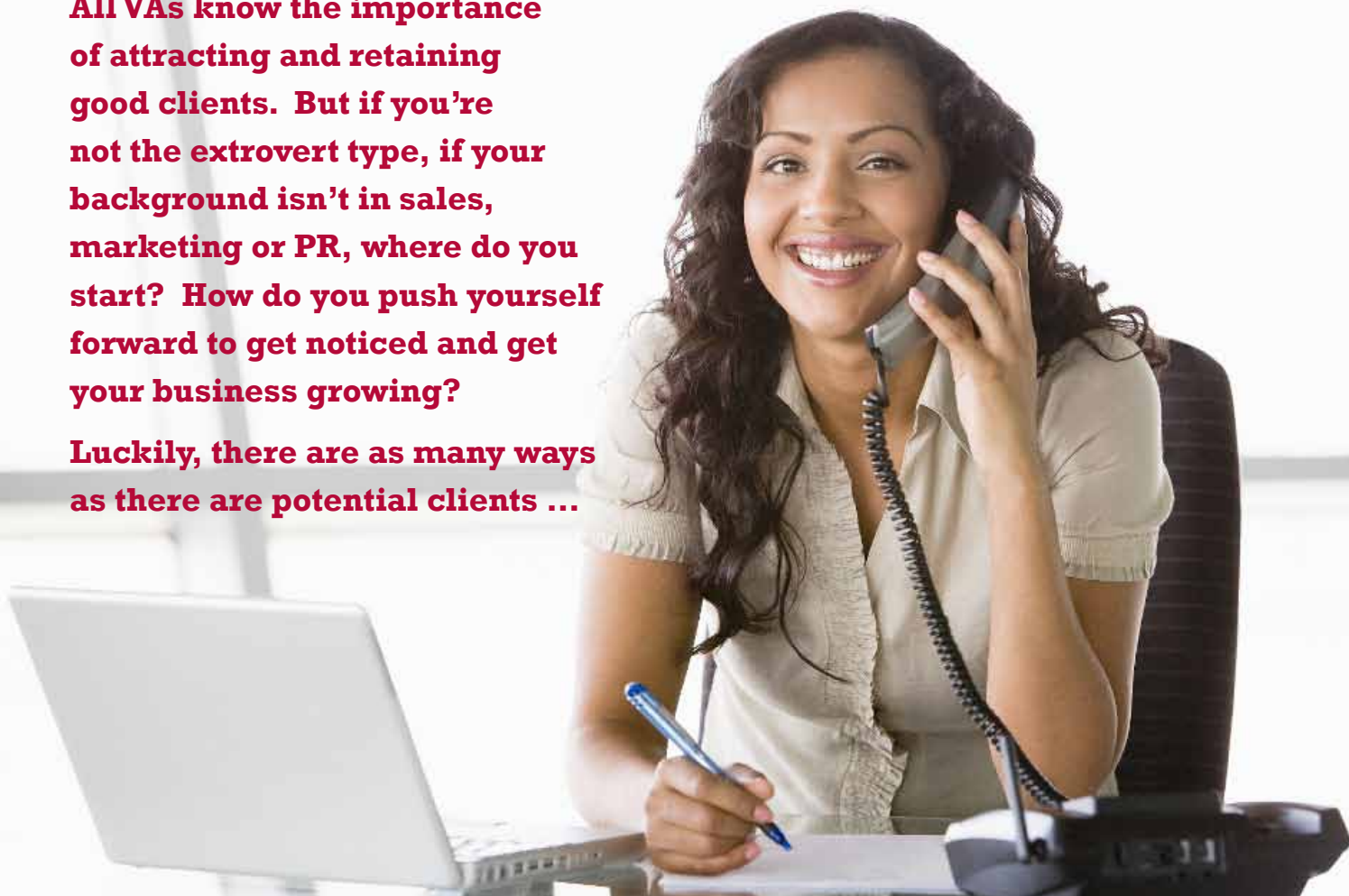


# All Clients Great and Small

by Christine Todd

**All VAs know the importance of attracting and retaining good clients. But if you're not the extrovert type, if your background isn't in sales, marketing or PR, where do you start? How do you push yourself forward to get noticed and get your business growing?**

**Luckily, there are as many ways as there are potential clients ...**



## Talk the Talk

One of the more effective ways is to pick up the phone. Once you know the company or organisation you wish to 'pitch' to (because that is exactly what you're doing), ring and ask if they ever use Virtual Assistants. If the answer is 'yes', you have a way in! You can then find out what they need and discuss how you can help. A 'no' and you'll need to judge it for yourself. If they're interested, you can continue the conversation and give them more information about your business. If they sound hassled, either ask if you should call back at a more convenient time, say you'll pop a letter in the post – or just leave it. Just remember: the worst they can say is, "no, not interested". That's it. Nothing bad will happen.

## The Write Way

Ringling up total strangers and asking for work can be daunting, so why not write a letter? Do your research, call to find out a contact name, and put your pitch in writing. Make it professional, make it interesting – but make it YOU. The client will be buying your talent and your expertise so the pitch has to reflect your personality.

You may wish to use email, given that you're a 'Virtual' Assistant. But think about all the other emails that a busy business owner receives during the course of a working day. Unless yours really stands out, your perfectly crafted words could get lost in the throng – or be delivered to the Junk Mail folder.





## Working the Room

Halfway between ringing and writing is networking. This can also be pretty daunting at first but choose the right group for you (and your preferred prospective clients) and it can be an excellent investment of time and money.

Everyone at a networking meeting is there to network. They are all interested in your business and how you can help them. With the added bonus that they get to meet you informally before deciding to offer you any work. And you get to meet them before deciding to accept it!

It's tempting to join lots of different networking groups – ones with breakfast meetings, ones that meet at lunchtime, ones for women only – but you may find you have lots of clients and no time to do the actual work.

## Online/Offline

Your website may be elegant, sophisticated and stylish - but it needs to earn its keep. Make sure it does its job and gets out there, promoting you and your business.

Sign up to as many free online directories as you can. There are hundreds of them – some local, some national (why not? you're virtual, after all), some for the industry you specialise in, some for related industries. There are also many free offline directories. You can get a free listing in the Yellow Pages and Thomsons Local as well as dozens of local directories. Whenever you find one that suits one your business, make sure you sign up to it.

Paid-for advertising can be expensive so tread carefully, picking the right publication for your target market. Dip your toe in first of all and monitor the results.

## Knockbacks

Sometimes things don't work out. You and your client may not get on, they may not like your work, they may not give you enough information for the work they've asked you to do, they may string you along and then not give you any work at all. Issues

such as these can knock your confidence badly.

It's true that any and all of these things can happen whilst you're in paid employment. The difference is when you're self-employed, you have to tackle it head on yourself.

If you and your client don't work well together, either grit your teeth, get through to the end of the contract and don't work for them again. Or suggest that perhaps they would be better with someone actually working in their office, rather than virtually. If you constantly find you don't have all the information for you need, explain that the work may be inaccurate or delayed because of this. In both cases, the problem could be that they are so used to a traditional PA in the office, they need educating in how best to work with a VA!

The key to resolving problems is to stay professional and keep the lines of communication open at all times.

And above all else, trust your instincts. If a client or a project seems too good to be true, it very likely is!



**For more information visit In Shed Secretarial - [www.intheshedsecretarial.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.intheshedsecretarial.co.uk/index.htm) or call Christine on 07791 765 734.**



merry christmas  
*everyone*

**Deskdemon.com**

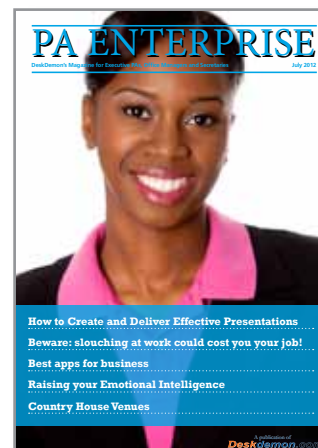
The World's Largest Website for Executive PAs, Secretaries, Administrators & Office Managers





# A big thank you to all our readers!

*We hope you have enjoyed  
PA ENTERPRISE during 2012 and wish you  
a very Happy Christmas and New Year*



# See you again in January 2013

