

# PA ENTERPRISE

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

May 2012



**The Bribery Act:  
how to keep on the right side of the law**

**Conference Planning Checklist**

**How to make your office a greener workplace**

**Travel Advice from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust**

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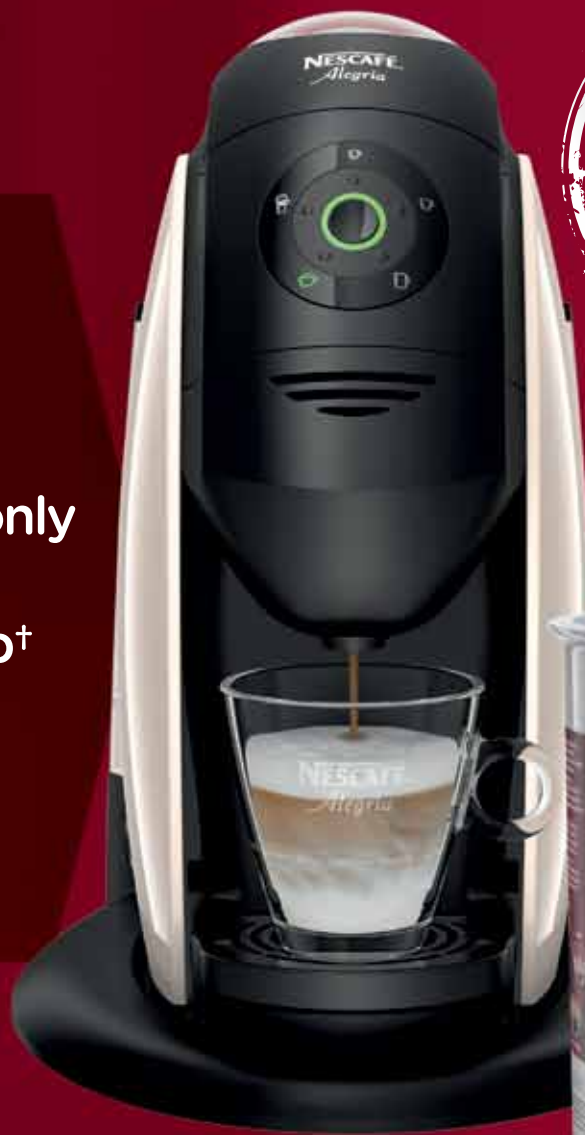
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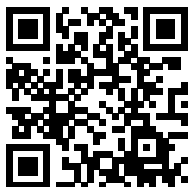
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## London is THE best place in the world - it's official

London has been ranked as the top destination in the world by millions of travellers worldwide.

The capital came in first place in the TripAdvisor 2012 Choice Destination Awards.

TripAdvisor spokesperson Emma Shaw said: "To be crowned the world's best destination in the Olympic year by millions of travellers is a tremendous honour for London. It's fantastic to see the capital recognised and rewarded by those that have really experienced the city - travellers themselves."

The awards honour top travel spots worldwide based on millions of reviews and opinions from TripAdvisor travellers. Award winners are determined based on the popularity of destinations, taking into account travellers' favourites and most highly rated places.

New York was named the second best destination worldwide, followed by Rome, then Paris.

Edinburgh was named as the second favourite city in the UK alone, followed by Liverpool and Torquay in third and fourth place.



## Is the 9-5 a thing of the past?

A new study released by Forbes Insights and Gyro shows that the lines between work and personal life are blurring, especially when it comes to checking e-mail and messages during out-of-the-office hours.

Some 63% of study respondents indicated they check their e-mail every one to two hours when outside normal office hours.

Another 12% indicated they checked their work e-mail when out-of-the-office five times on an hourly basis.

"There's no more off switch," said Tom Nightingale from Forbes.

"There are very few people who are not checking e-mails or receiving social media while at work, school, community or at the sidelines of their kids' sporting events."

Indeed, 52% indicated they received information related to the job non-stop. Another 53% said they have dealt with business issues "routinely" during a family gathering or meal time. This could be a sign that the nature of work is changing, stated Christoph Becker, CEO of Gyro.

"Our research challenges the perception that people are unable to juggle busy working lives with personal time," says Becker. "Nine-to-five thinking is a thing of the past and this must be reflected in how brands advertise with their customers and clients."



## Temporary employment market sees 33% upswing in hiring levels

A new report suggests that there has been a healthy upswing in hiring across the temporary employment market within three core sectors: Financial Services; Public Sector and Commerce & Industry.

Despite the tough economic climate, and conflicting opinion that the UK is experiencing a double dip recession, there has been an increase of 33% in temporary hiring in the first three months of 2012 when compared with the latter quarter of 2011 throughout the UK.

This is according to the UK's only provider of temporary and contract staff to organisations in the Private and Public Sector, Venn Group. The company has just released the first of a quarterly report offering an overview of the vacancy levels, average salaries and in demand skills across the UK.

The North West Region has boasted the largest increase in hiring levels – 61% in the first quarter of 2012 with the Midlands and London also showing a healthy start to the year with increases of 59% and 36% respectively.

## Men prefer iPad to girls

One in 10 single men would rather have an iPad 3 than a new partner, according to a poll. The research found that 11% of bachelors would rather own the popular Apple gadget than gain a new love interest.

And 3% said they would happily leave a current partner if they were rewarded with the tablet device, the poll of 600 people by online casino RoxyPalace.com found.

Women were found to be more social creatures, with 84% stating that they would prefer to have a new partner than an iPad 3.

Just under half (44%) of those polled said they had used an app to resolve a relationship problem, and 15% regularly consulted the internet for relationship advice.

A RoxyPalace.com spokesman said: "There has been a huge amount of hype surrounding the iPad 3 and for many it's the ultimate gadget, but instead of simply giving up their hard-earned cash it seems some men would be happy to remain on the shelf if it meant taking one home with them.

"The Apple product has a wide variety of functions but even the latest version can't offer some of the things that a new romance can, but it seems many males are happy to forgo this."



## Women are better at multi-tasking... False!

People love to multi-task - and it's reflected in many modern households as people play on their iPad as they watch TV.

It is widely claimed that women are able to multi-task successfully while men have to concentrate on one thing at a time.

But sadly, neither sex is any good at it. Both sexes enjoy 'multi-tasking' but those who, for instance, 'work' while watching TV, will find that the standard of their work drops.

Professor Zheng Wang, writing for the the Journal of Communication, said: 'There's this myth among some people that multi-tasking makes them more productive, but they seem to be misperceiving the positive feelings they get from multi-tasking.

'They are not being more productive - they just feel more emotionally satisfied from their work.

'They felt satisfied not because they were effective at studying, but because the addition of TV made the studying entertaining. The combination of the activities accounts for the good feelings obtained.'

But a new study has shown how media multi-tasking, like reading a book while watching TV, gives both sexes an emotional boost, but is not as productive.

Previous studies in lab settings found people show poorer performance on a variety of tasks when they try to juggle multiple media sources at the same time, like going from texting a friend, to reading a book, to watching an online video.

## Employees value 'Purpose' over promotion

A new report by global brand consultancy Calling Brands reveals a dramatic shift in employee attitudes towards work – with **corporate purpose** emerging as second in importance to pay for many employees.

Business leaders are being urged to rethink the conventional approach to employee engagement in response to a surge in demand for Purpose at work. After pay, Purpose has been revealed as the second most important reason people are attracted to work for, and stay loyal to, an organisation.

According to 'Crunch Time: The Power of Purpose', working for an organisation with a clearly defined Purpose - an underlying ethos that goes beyond commercial and operational goals - ranks ahead of other factors such as level of responsibility in a job and even career progression.



Calling Brands found that Purpose is also a key driver of effort and loyalty in existing staff members, as people are willing to work harder and stick with a business longer if they see Purpose in action.

Brook Calverley, senior consultant at Calling Brands, commented: "Ultimately, people want to work for a good business; they are ready to believe that their employer has a positive role in society because this in turn reinforces positive self-image. What our report highlights is that now is the time for employers to have a strong sense of Purpose. Those businesses that do will enjoy a huge commercial advantage over their competitors, driven by the superior performance of recruitment, retention and engagement of the best talent, and the attendant innovation and productivity this brings."

## TomTom launches Speed Camera app for iPhone

TomTom has released the TomTom Speed Camera app for iPhone, giving drivers access to fixed and mobile speed camera alerts. Powered by the largest European driving community with 1.6 million drivers in 15 countries\*, the app improves safety by keeping users informed about speed limits during their journey. Consequently, it helps users to avoid costly speeding fines and, in some countries, points on their driving licence.

The TomTom Speed Camera app offers access to TomTom's premium Speed Camera service in a standalone app. The app has a new dedicated user interface that is easy

to use. It informs drivers of their speed, the speed limit, the type of camera ahead and the remaining distance to reach it. A colour-coded warning system quickly and effectively alerts users if they need to slow down.

The app includes real-time customer reports from drivers that share newly added or removed cameras with each other. It gives drivers 95% coverage of fixed camera locations and real-time updates for mobile speed cameras. In addition, the app offers average speed check support. This helps drivers stay below the limit within average speed check zones.



The TomTom Speed Camera app for iPhone is now available for download from the Apple App Store.



## Gentle jogging once a week 'can add six years to your life'

Get those feet moving: Jogging for an hour a week from the age of 20 to 70 takes 108 days but adds more than five years to your life

Jogging for just an hour a week can increase your life expectancy by around six years, reveal scientists.

Even better news is that a gentle jog is better for you than any sort of extreme workout, the study concludes.

Researchers found that jogging at a slow or average pace for one or two hours per week can increase the life expectancy of men by 6.2 years and women by 5.6 years, reducing the risk of death by 44 per cent.

## Survey reveals little reduction in corporate hospitality as a result of the Bribery Act

**An Ernst & Young survey has revealed only 18% of companies have reduced their level of corporate entertaining in light of the Bribery Act.**

The survey, which was carried out by the FIDS (Fraud, Investigations and Disputes Services) team at Ernst & Young, also found 68% of middle managers said the tighter rules on entertaining had either made no difference or they were unaware of any significant reduction to their hospitality spend.

More worryingly the survey highlighted almost 60% were not familiar with their company's policies in this area, while more than half of the managers questioned (58%) would like more clearly defined limits.

Lavish hospitality has been a repeated message of the Serious Fraud Office in its explanations of how it sees corporate hospitality under the Bribery Act which came into force in July 2012.

John Smart, partner at Ernst & Young explains: "The best protection for firms that want to avoid issues with the Bribery Act is to publish and enforce clear, written policies regarding any gifts, expenses or hospitality that might influence or be seen to influence their business dealings in any way. However, this can be difficult since the Ministry of Justice and Serious Fraud Office has not sought to provide financial limits when it comes to guidance on corporate hospitality."

"Some corporate events this summer will see some businesses buying packages costing up to £7,000 per person. Although this may seem 'lavish' to many, the Bribery Act itself contains no specific rules, monetary limits or exemptions, which means that each case will ultimately have to be decided on the facts presented at the time, and the context."

Smart adds: "A great deal of the corporate hospitality being arranged at the moment will far outstrip the £100 per person cost that many UK middle managers consider to be 'lavish'. However, often even more important is the context and timing of hospitality and the impression this may create.

"Receiving or offering entertainment in the middle of a tender process or sensitive negotiations is more likely to be inappropriate and store up enforcement and reputational risks. In general, many people should simply ask themselves – particularly in the age of transparency and social media – would they be relaxed if details and levels of their corporate entertaining became public?"

**Read our feature on page 8 which explains why businesses need to be more aware of the Bribery Act**



# Bribery – a potential bolt out of the blue?

With the UK Bribery Act now in force and the Serious Fraud Office on a mission to find and prosecute wrongdoers, many businesses need to be mindful to stay on the right side of the law. Business risk experts at Interchange Solutions have set out some rules to follow.

In the run up to the London Olympics and other major events such as the forthcoming Queen's Jubilee, business risk experts at Interchange Solutions are advising hotels and hospitality businesses to be mindful of the UK Bribery Act.

With the London Olympics less than 100 days away and The Queen's Jubilee celebrations even sooner, the hotel and hospitality sectors no doubt relish the prospect of visitor and tourist bookings for accommodation and other corporate hospitality and revenue earning activities. Major sporting events are an opportunity for individuals to part with their money, especially if they have the chance to witness a truly historical event. The Queen's Jubilee is also expected to attract hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors to the UK.

But with the UK Bribery Act now in force and with the Serious Fraud Office on a mission to find and prosecute wrongdoers, many

hoteliers and hospitality businesses will be mindful of the need to stay on the right side of the law as they go about their daily business.

The Bribery Act applies to all companies, regardless of their business sector. The particular sting in the tale is the Section 7 offence of a company not having in place procedures to prevent bribery. The Guidance issued with the Act sets out six principles to help companies proportionately and appropriately implement so-called "adequate procedures".

"B&Bs and small hotels in the UK are no different to any other small business and are operating in a relatively risk free environment," says John Burbidge-King, business risk expert and CEO of Interchange. "They would not be expected to have volumes of policies, but they might consider a simple ethics policy that makes it clear to staff that accepting bribes (as opposed to normal tips) and other unethical or

criminal behaviour is unacceptable.

"Larger hotels and hotel chains are in a different field. The sort of risk they might face, for example, is a food or fittings buyer taking backhanders or excessive gifts so that the buyer is influenced to place contracts with a particular supplier; perhaps the promise of lavish hospitality from a beverages supplier to market their drinks in the bar? If there was a subsequent allegation – such as from a competing supplier who refused to pay bribes – those individuals might be investigated under the Act for giving or receiving bribes."

The hotelier would then be investigated to determine whether it had adequate procedures in place to have prevented the buyer accepting bribes. Under the Act, the burden of proof falls on the company to show those procedures were in place.

If convicted, the hotelier faces fines and the potential imprisonment





of individuals, even if they were not directly involved in the act of bribery. It is therefore in the interests of the hospitality industry to consider the nature of its exposure and act appropriately.

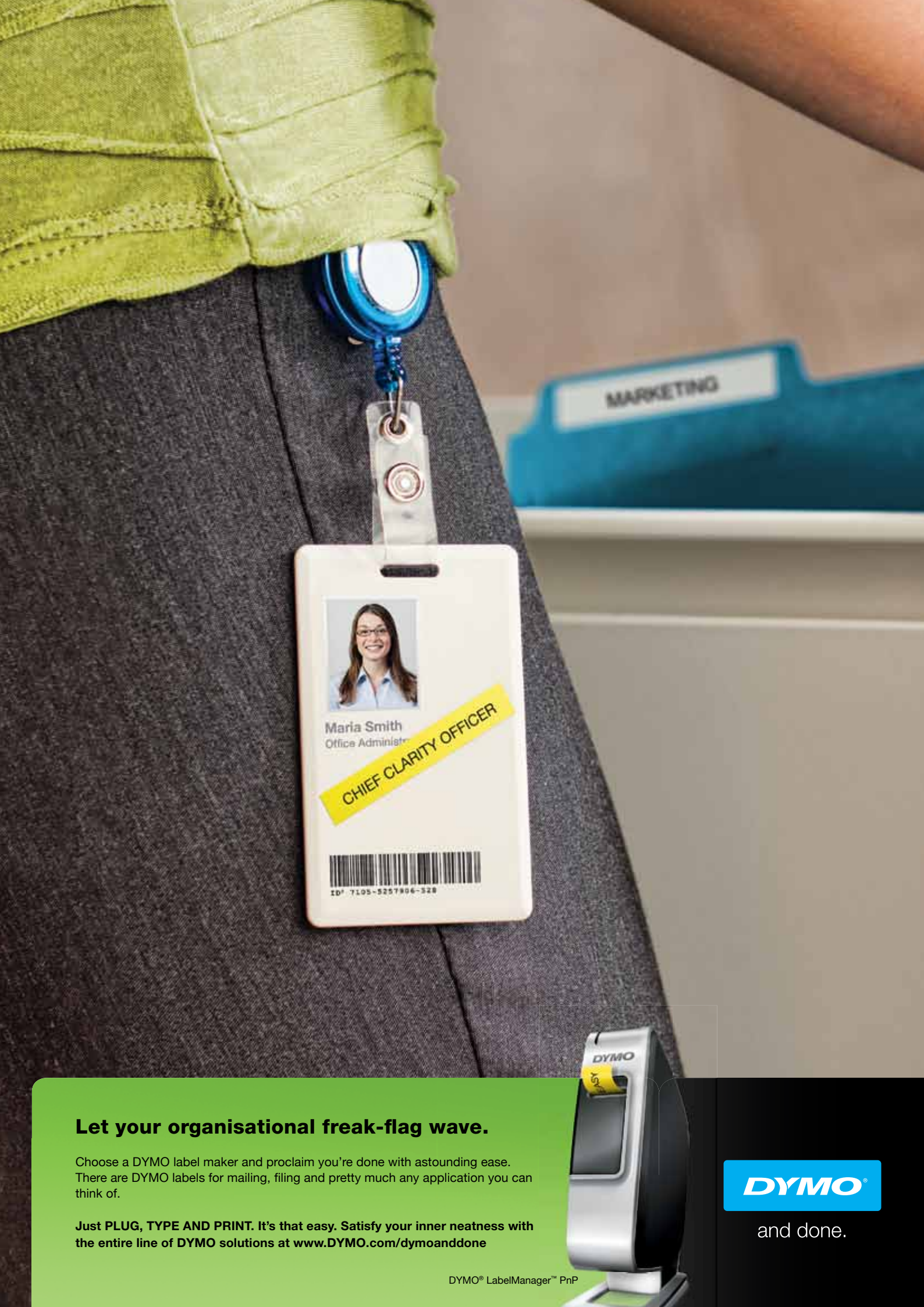
"Hospitality by its very nature is a grey area," says Burbidge-King. "People and companies buy hospitality packages and services to nurture business relationships – it's a sector that has thrived for many years, especially around major sporting events such as football, rugby, horse racing and others.

"As part of normal business relationship building, hospitality and entertainment are not envisaged as immediate grounds for prosecution under the Act, despite some scare stories to the contrary."

For businesses wishing to remain on the right side of the law, Interchange has set out some simple rules:

- **Keep hospitality proportionate, appropriate and sensible**
- **Lavish, inappropriate and constant entertainment, focused on a single person or entity might be construed as a bribe if the motive is to unreasonably influence a business decision favouring the giver of the hospitality.**
- **It is also prudent to check the integrity of key subcontractors and suppliers – you need to know whom you are dealing with.**
- **An important note to UK exhibition companies is where they might be setting up an exhibition stand abroad. Exhibitions are just-in-time delivery businesses and vital materials can become 'stuck' in unfriendly foreign customs. Sometimes a small payment (a facilitation payment) may be demanded to resolve the issue. Such payments are illegal under the Bribery Act.**
- **Subcontractors - particularly for key events where there is greater chance of unethical or criminal behaviour - should be vetted, sensibly and proportionate to the risks, to ensure that the company knows the background of whom they are dealing with.**

For further information about bribery, visit: [www.interchange-solutions.co.uk](http://www.interchange-solutions.co.uk)



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# Creating a high performance culture

**In the current tough economic climate you are probably thinking that one of your priorities is to try to get more out of your people or at the very least, to ensure that all employees have individual objectives linked directly to your organisations goals. A simple performance appraisal framework can achieve all of this and more.**

The foundation of an effective performance appraisal framework is a job description for each role. Job descriptions provide clarity over what an employee is responsible for and what is expected of them.

In order to ensure that all of your employees are working towards delivering your company objectives, these need to be set and communicated to the business. A number of different frameworks are available to support this, depending on the size of your organisation. Once the Company objectives are finalised, individual objectives can be agreed and aligned to the organisations goals. This provides clarity, direction and motivates employees about the role they will play in delivering the company objectives.



Once objectives have been set, a process for formal and informal reviews should be implemented. The formal review process or appraisal should be held ideally twice a year, however more regular informal reviews are important to motivate employees and provide feedback on their progress to date. A good appraisal process will include a personal development plan. This will ensure that development activities are linked to the individual's objectives and thus delivery of the organisations goals.

Managing under performance can be hard to do, not least because some people avoid having difficult conversations. There are also a number of employment law issues, however if a fair process is followed, often performance can be improved through support. If an individual's performance does not improve to the required standard,

advice should be taken on the best way to handle it.

In order to retain the high performers and employees with high potential within your organisation, you should give consideration to how you will recognise or reward their success.

An effective performance framework will improve employee engagement, motivation and ultimately support the creation of a high performance culture.

**Suzi Lewis is the founder and director of Spires HR an independent Human Resources Consultancy business, providing HR support to SMEs and HR project support to larger organisations. Suzi has over 15 years HR management experience and is CIPD qualified. Visit the Spires HR website at [www.spireshr.co.uk](http://www.spireshr.co.uk) or email [enquiries@spireshr.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@spireshr.co.uk).**



# Conference Planning Checklist

By Julie Francis

It can be a great challenge to organise a seminar or conference, but for many people who are given this duty to do, it can be a matter of maintaining their job or it may lead to getting a coveted promotion. To plan a successful conference or seminar, an event planner needs a few tools and a fair amount of insight into what is needed.

A timeline needs to be created and the first plan of the event set out fully so that the purpose of the event is clearly understood. Do you need new clients, do you need to brand your company, do you need to spread the word about something new? A company wants an event created that will achieve their purpose, as well as being fun for the participants.

The creation of a conference planning checklist is like the building of a train track.

You start with a map of the terrain, discover where you need to place the track and where to place the

resources to overcome obstacles and then you create a timeline for the event. Along the timeline, you will need a range of conference planning checklists, in place ready to check off at various important stages along the timeline.

It can be very difficult to try and balance organisation duties with the responsibilities of a current job. That is why it is important to have a team (or two or more teams) of helpers that can have jobs delegated to them. To keep track of what each delegated job is and which team are working on it, you need a good schedule system and this information about "which team

- what job" also needs to be placed on the conference planning checklist.



Each grouping of jobs needs to be noted on the various different conference planning checklist and linked back to the timeline. Separating starting jobs from completed jobs helps as well.

On the following page are ten steps that might be added to a conference planning checklist when you are engaging speakers for a conference. A similar event planning checklist needs to be constructed for the caterer, or for the DJ. These steps are only guidelines, because each conference or seminar will have a specific agenda particular to your company. That said, most events have some specifics common to all, whether the event is a special event party, a destination wedding, a convention, a conference or a seminar.

The conference planning checklist (or event planning checklist, or seminar planning checklist) is an essential tool to any event co-ordinator and the more detailed the checklist is, the better, as much can go wrong by simply assuming it will all just work out.

When you invite people to an event, their comfort and enjoyment is of prime importance. Anything that needs booking needs booking months in advance. Timing is essential to get everything right. The greater percentage of frequently asked questions need to be considered and answered before they are asked, because during the hectic day when the event is taking place, people are far too busy with other things to make decisions on the fly.



## CONFERENCE

## Conference Planning Checklist: 10 Essentials For Speakers

**So here are 10 examples to consider placing on your conference planning checklist when you are engaging speakers for a seminar or conference.**

- 1** List and make the final confirmation of selected speakers with the committee.
- 2** Contact the chosen speakers to request their participation.
- 3** Send follow-up letters to confirm the speakers commitment, their programme agenda, its title and a description of their session.
- 4** Request the speakers biographies or profile and a photograph.
- 5** Prepare the descriptions of the speakers profiles for your programme and promotional material.
- 6** Send a letter to confirm the exact wording that will appear in the programme description for each speaker.
- 7** Request or prepare photocopies of all handout or promotional materials.
- 8** Book the required audio visual equipment, and check the venue room setup.
- 9** Plan travel and accommodation for the speakers.
- 10** Maintain contact with the resource person just prior to the conference for last minute arrangements.

## Conference Planning Checklist: Essentials for the Evening of the Event:

- 1** Inspect the room arrangements, the equipment, and the handouts.
- 2** Meet with the speakers to introduce fellow committee members or resource people.
- 3** Escort the speakers to their rooms and inform them about meals, etc.
- 4** Be available to facilitate speakers' requests at all times.
- 5** Thank them for their participation before they leave.

The average conference or seminar is generally planned and coordinated by a busy person trying to balance the hosting of the conference or seminar with their regular jobs. That can be a very taxing thing to try to do especially if that person has never done it before. Write up detailed checklists and check everything off and you won't end up with a train wreck. In fact you'll probably get that promotion.

If you want more tips on checklists or timelines or schedules, visit [www.becomeeventplanner.com](http://www.becomeeventplanner.com)

The guide will lead you step by step through the whole process and give you insider tips about hiring caterers, booking destinations, using media and PA equipment and many other issues - so you'll have fewer hitches, even if it's your very first event!







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For more information [click here >](#)



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STAY YOU.™

# Get Organised Competition

## Win a Spa Day and a PnP every week with **DYMO**



Finally, printing a label is fast and easy with the LabelManager™ PnP. There's no software to install - just plug, type and print.

The lightweight, compact label maker is ideal for labelling at your desk or on the go and runs on a battery, recharged directly from your USB connection. Uses 6mm, 9mm and 12mm D1 labels.

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To win one of these fantastic machines every week and for your chance to win a Spa Day worth £250, simply share your best office organisation tip. If you would like to enter more than one tip (and increase your chances of winning), please submit each one separately.

## Could you be a reviewer?

We're looking for two PAs who are super organised, love labelling in the office and think the DYMO Touch Screen could be just what they or their boss need.



Looking to improve efficiency and organisation in your office or home? The DYMO Touch Screen™ label maker helps make it quick and easy. With multiple fonts, built-in symbols and clip art, you can personalize your work with the touch of a finger.

With a wide of range of customisation tools including multiple fonts, built-in symbols and clip art, you can personalise your work with the touch of a finger.

Simply tell us, in no more than 30 words, why you think this product could work for you and/or your boss. We'll pick two reviewers and send each of you a DYMO Touch Screen, which you can keep as a thank you for your feedback. All we ask is that you provide your written review by 28th May 2012, which will be published on DeskDemon for your peers to read.

[Click here to enter](#)

# How to go green in the office

Public health and safety organisation NSF International, has developed a list of 12 ways to be greener at work. The tips are designed to help workers make more environmentally conscious choices while on the job.

## 1. Green Your Air

Plants do more than just pretty up your work space. They can also absorb indoor air pollution and increase the flow of oxygen and can help prevent "Sick Building Syndrome" - a condition where office decor, carpeting and furniture can release odours or fumes into the air that can cause illnesses such as upper-respiratory colds, allergies and eye infections. When possible, encourage your office manager to buy sustainable office furniture and carpeting to keep your indoor air cleaner.

## 2. Use Green Cleaning Supplies

When cleaning your desk, choose products that are certified for "green cleaning." These products will still be hard on germs but easy on the environment.

## 3. Drink Smart

The Natural Resource Defense Council suggests coffee itself is less sustainable than the coffee

pot. Look for coffee that is organic, shade grown and fair traded. Using stainless steel filters rather than paper filters, unplugging the pot when not in use, and bringing reusable mugs and glasses to work will also cut down on waste.

## 4. Bring Your Lunch

Bringing lunch to work in reusable containers is more sustainable for the environment and for your purse - and it also encourages healthier eating. If your workplace has a cafeteria, encourage use of washable trays, serving dishes and utensils rather than disposable containers or plastic utensils. If you do choose to order food, tell the vendor to forgo the plastic utensils and paper plates. If the vendor is offsite, consider walking to the location to pick up your order rather than have it delivered.

## 5. Don't Be a Paper Pusher

The Sierra Club estimates that the average U.S. office worker uses 10,000 sheets of copy paper a year.

Instead of printing out copies of important documents or agendas for meetings, save those documents on a shared drive and pull them up for everyone to view collectively.

## 6. Revamp Your To-Do List

If you prefer to write out daily lists and cross items off as completed, you can make this method more sustainable by writing them on a smartphone, computer or even a dry erase board, which allows you to organise your tasks without harming trees. You can even purchase refillable dry erase markers.

## 7. Reduce over Reuse

Recycling office paper is good, but reducing the amount of paper waste altogether is an even better move because it cuts down on the amount of material that needs to be collected, transported and processed. If you're not ready to ditch the printouts completely, use recycled paper. Producing recycled paper uses 55 percent less water compared to virgin paper and it





uses 60-70 percent less energy to produce than paper from virgin pulp.

## 8. Adjust Your Print Settings.

Colour printing generally uses more ink, so print in black and white when you can or in draft mode to conserve even more ink. Reducing your margin and font settings to fit more text on a single page will help save paper. Also, change your default print settings to duplex or double-sided.

## 9. Use Paperclips Instead of Staples

Paper clips are sustainable by design. Many today are produced from recycled materials or materials

such as traditional plain aluminum that are readily recyclable. Make sure to recycle your paper clips when you have exhausted their use and reuse them if people leave them in meetings.

## 10. Forget the Screen Saver

Screen savers use excess energy when you are away from your desk so removing them is a simple way to save energy. Change your screen settings to "hibernate" or "sleep" when you're away from your computer for more than 10 minutes.

## 11. Avoid Hidden Power Usage

Many devices have "standby" settings that draw power —

sometimes as much as 15 or 20 watts — even when they're turned off. To make sure that your computer, monitor, printer, photocopy machine and other office equipment are completely off, pull the plug rather than flipping the switch before heading out the door. To make it easier, try plugging hardware into a power strip with an on/off switch (or a smart power strip) so the whole desktop setup can be turned off at once.

## 12. Turn Out the Lights

When you leave your office for meetings, shut all lights off, including task lighting or overhead lights. It's surprising how much energy can be saved by this small gesture.



## STABILO SMARTball

Ergonomic ballpoint pen with  
intergrated touchscreen stylus



For your chance to win one of 5 STABILO SMARTball to try yourself, email [marketing.uk@stabilo.com](mailto:marketing.uk@stabilo.com) with "DeskDemon" in the subject line by April 15th 2012, along with whether you are left or right handed.

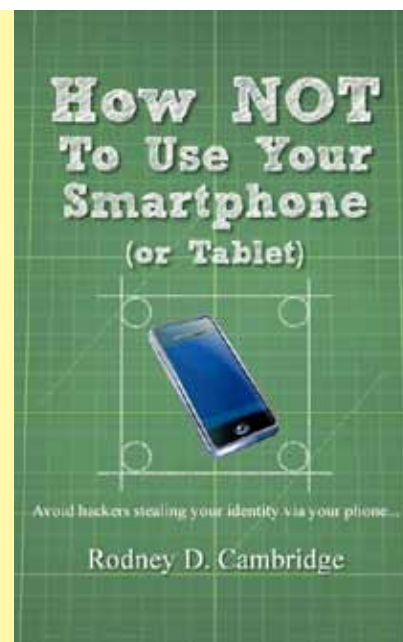
## New smartphone safety eBook released in paperback form

Rod Cambridge, the author of *How NOT To Use Your Smartphone* has released a paperback version of his eBook.

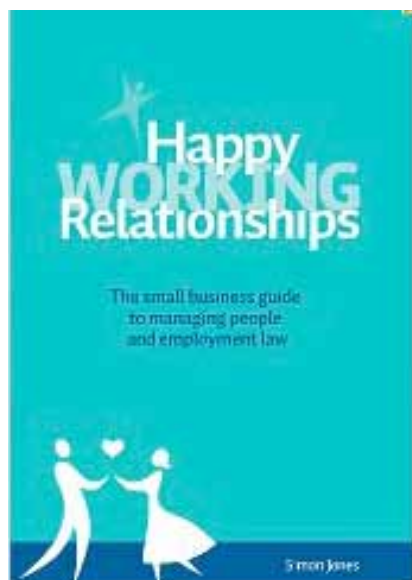
Increasingly, smartphone users are being hacked because they don't understand how to configure or use their devices safely. The hackers can trick smartphone owners into connecting to insecure Wi-Fi networks where their credentials and other private information becomes exposed. They can drop malware onto a device without the user realising, or make the smartphone call or text premium numbers that the bad guys own, pocketing the cash while the user ends up with huge bills. All too often the victims of hackers also have to deal with financial, banking, credit card, and utilities fraud, loss of social and professional reputation, and more.

In this book, computer security professional Rod Cambridge highlights the dangers of mobile computing and provides solutions, tips, and advice to help the user avoid being hacked through their smartphone.

"Smartphone and tablet users just don't realise how vulnerable they are to ID theft" said Rod, "the bad guys know that users often engage in the risky usage practices that I highlight in the book, so they now have smartphones and tablets firmly in their sights - especially as these devices typically contain valuable information such as contacts, addresses, passwords, and account details."



## HR expert's guide to happy working relationships



In recent months, there have been calls from ministers and influential MPs to reduce employees' legal protection and create a "Hire and Fire" culture as a way to boost economic growth.

But experienced HR consultant and businessman Simon Jones believes the real issue for many businesses, charities and social enterprises is a lack of knowledge of employment regulations and an incorrect assumption that the law prevents them from running their business effectively.

In his recently published book, *Happy Working Relationships* – the small business guide to managing people and employment law he argues that employers who behave in a positive manner will achieve greater staff motivation and business success.

Simon says: 'There are plenty of business owners and managers who're terrified at the idea of staff issues. Words like "TUPE", "constructive dismissal" and "tribunal" strike fear into the hearts of many bosses, but most of the time there's nothing to fear if you make sure you follow a few simple guidelines, use some

common sense and exercise a bit of compassion. The book's designed to demystify some of those scary HR terms and make sure employers get the best out of their most valuable assets – their employees.

Caroline Hinds, HR and Operations Manager of Creative England described the book as "A very clear outline of the working relationship process, with a very clever use of analogies to ensure clear understanding rather than confusing legal jargon. I'd recommend this book to anyone who has preconceptions of employees having the ultimate right in holding a business to ransom. It explains that a positive approach to people management is always the best option"

*Happy Working Relationships – the small business guide to managing people and employment law* is published by Wordscapes, and is available online, or via Amazon, priced at £12.99.



# Travel Advice from Suzy Lamplugh Trust

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers some invaluable advice we should all follow when travelling alone

It's a dark wintery day around 5pm and your thinking of going home soon, putting your feet up, calling your partner - who's away on business, before settling down to a cheesy lasagna that you managed to remember to take out of the freezer that morning, when your boss suddenly appears at your desk and asks you to drop some vital paperwork to a customer's office in ten minutes.

The customer's office is kind of on your way home, it means you get out a bit early and you haven't been working at the company long and are keen to make a good impression. So, before you know it you are in the back of a deserted poorly lit trading estate, which is in the middle of nowhere trying to work out just what to do. Apart from the customer's name and address - you have no idea where to go. You park and decide to investigate on foot, these documents must be delivered by 5.30pm. Realising you have wandered quite a way from your car, which you forgot to lock, you go through the nearest door, hoping you can ask for directions. You can hear voices (including a female) at the end of the building around a corner, you merrily set off, and when you get there you realise the voices

are coming from the radio and there is just one man on his own in this vast building.

A little of the above is made up - but I found myself in a similar situation and not only was I pretty scared, I realised it was my duty to look after my safety and if only I had a bit of preparation I wouldn't been feeling so trapped. I was so keen to do a good job, that all thoughts of where I was going and what I might be walking in to didn't enter my head. Only my boss knew where I was, and I wouldn't see him until the next morning, if anything, no one would miss me for hours. But it wasn't my boss's fault, the customer was new and he was keen for the business, as was I.

If this happens to you, make you sure you are prepared and remember at all times to consider your safety when travelling alone. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust website has a wealth of invaluable information on many situations you may find yourself in.

Below are some details that you may want to store on your PC or print off and keep safe and put into practice should you need to travel alone:

Always tell someone where you

are going and when you will be back, and check in with them when you finish your appointment, or at another pre-defined time.

## Public Transport

- Obtain timetable and fare information before travelling to prevent you waiting around for long periods at bus stops or stations.
- When waiting for public transport after dark, try to wait in well-lit areas and near emergency alarms and CCTV cameras.
- If you work for an organisation that receives unwelcome attention from the public, try to hide anything that would make you identifiable as an employee of that organisation.

## Walking

- Plan ahead. Before you go out, think about how you are going to get home, e.g. What time does the last bus/train leave?
- Avoid danger spots like quiet or badly-lit alleyways, subways or isolated car parks. Walk down the middle of the pavement if the street is deserted.

- Try to use well-lit, busy streets and use the route you know best.
- Try to walk against oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.
- If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. It may be better to move away before a problem arises.

## Driving

- Put together an emergency kit for your car. This might include an extra coat, bottle water, a torch, spare change and an emergency mobile telephone charger.
- When driving to meetings, try to plan where you will park before you go. Park as close to your destination as possible. If you will be returning after dark, consider what the area will be like then and try to park near street lights.
- When parking in a car park, consider where the entrances and exits are. Try to avoid having to walk across a lonely car park to get to your car. Park away from pillars/barriers. If you can, reverse into your space so you can drive away easily.
- When approaching your car, be aware of your surroundings, have your keys ready and check that no one is inside before entering quickly.
- If you break down, check out your surroundings and only get out of your car when and if you feel it is safe to do so.
- Road rage incidents are rare and can often be avoided by not responding to aggression from other drivers.
- If the driver of another car forces you to stop and then gets out of his/her car, stay in your car, keep



the engine running and if you need to, reverse to get away.

## Taxis & Minicabs

- Ask your employer to put together a list of licensed taxi or minicab companies or contact your local council for details for such firms in your area.
- Make sure you keep the details of several taxi or mini cab firms with you in case the first firm you call is busy or your booking does not arrive.
- When making a booking ask for the driver and/or car details and confirm them when the cab arrives. Also ask the driver whose

name the taxi/cab is booked under.

- When you are in the cab, avoid giving out any personal details.
- If the driver makes you feel uneasy for any reason, trust your instincts and ask them to stop in a busy area and let you out.
- Remember Always book your minicab in advance. Un-booked cabs are illegal and potentially very dangerous.

This advice is published with kind permission from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Please visit [www.suzylamplugh.org/to](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/to) find out more on safety in the office, while travelling at home and abroad and much more.