

PA ENTERPRISE

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

May 2015

**Salary
negotiations
on the rise**

**Change your
mindset to lose
weight**

**Managing your
email inbox**

**Employers need
to engage older
workers**

**Lost luggage
may be a thing
of the past**

**IT staff
suffering high
stress levels**

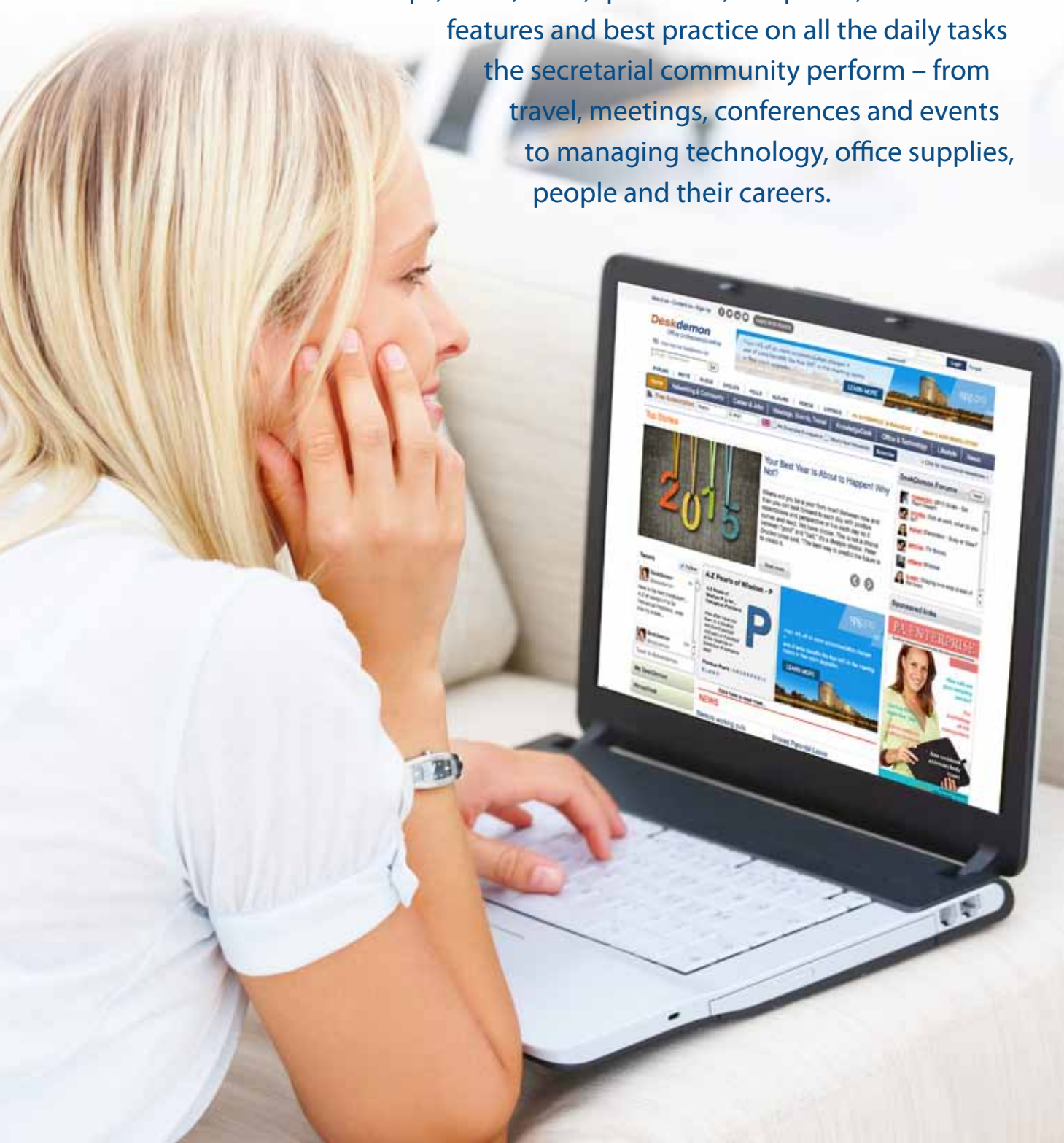
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The World's Largest Website for Executive PAs, Secretaries, Administrators & Office Managers

As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.

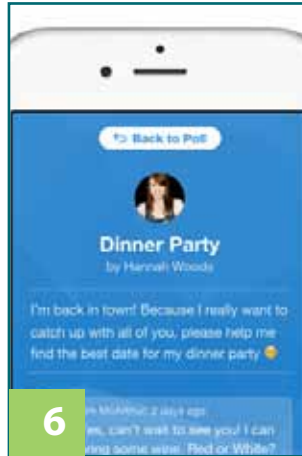




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Employers must engage older workers

With the phasing out of the default retirement age, older workers are set to account for a growing proportion of the UK's working population. Research finds that 15% of tomorrow's would-be retirees – the over fifties – plan to work into their seventies and beyond.



However, nearly a third of over fifties (30%) said they didn't feel they had a career path, compared with (a less pessimistic) 13% of those under fifty. Furthermore, whilst the same proportion, 50%, of employees either side of fifty reported having had a one-to-one meeting with their line manager in the past six months, only 15% of the older workers had discussed their career with their line manager, compared with twice the number (29%) of those under fifty. A third (33%) of the under fifties viewed their career as 'progressing', compared with 12% of respondents aged over fifty. Indeed, 23% of over fifties believe their career path is winding down. All of this leaves one in four of the over fifties considering looking for a new job in the next two years.

James Freeston, sales and marketing director at AXA PPP healthcare, said: "It's crucial for employers to have positive, constructive career discussions with all employees. Our research suggests that this is dropping-off for the over fifty age group and, as such, employers risk leaving this important segment of their workforce feeling under-appreciated and marginalised.

"By maintaining a positive relationship with older workers, not only are employers more likely to keep them fully engaged in their roles, they can make the most of their experience and knowledge – ensuring they remain valued, motivated and productive throughout their working lives."

Salary negotiations on the rise

A new study from recruitment specialist Robert Half, reveals that 67% of HR directors are now more willing to negotiate salaries with leading job candidates compared to this time last year.



This is a clear signal to candidates that as the UK continues to rapidly become a candidate's jobs market, applicants are now in a strong position to push for higher salaries and benefits packages. Half (49%) of HR directors say they are operating in a job market where salaries are increasing.

Key information includes:

- 7% of HR directors now feel the company should always be the first to initiate remuneration discussions
- 21% believe it is appropriate for candidates to initiate remuneration discussions when they apply for a role or during the first interview
- 46% of HR directors believe it is appropriate to raise questions about salary levels in a second or subsequent interview
- Only 28% of HR directors feel candidates should wait until the final interview or offer stage before raising the issue of remuneration
- On average HR directors predict salaries for existing employees will increase by 5.6% in the next 12 months, with almost a quarter (22%) of companies anticipating an average wage increase of over 10%
- HR directors highlighted that employees demonstrating willingness to learn and advance (41%) would be most likely to secure a pay rise
- Other reasons influencing the decision to offer a pay rise include the time period since their last raise (32%), their technical competency and measurable output (31%) followed closely by tenure in the organisation (30%)

Organise your social life with new Doodle App

Doodle, the popular social planning tool, has launched its new app 'doodle-meeting-planner'. The free app ensures you always get a date in the diary for social occasions or business meetings



Trying to get a group of friends, relatives or, even worse, stags and hens to agree on date and time for a social event is a stressful and painful task. In fact,

research shows that 61% of Brits have axed group events after the agonising and drawn-out planning process of sorting out a date. This outcome is perhaps unsurprising when a small gathering of just three people takes on average 30 messages to organise.

The app makes organising a group meet-up simple. After signing in, you set up an event for free, suggest times and dates for your friends. Once friends and family have picked the times they're available, Doodle works out the best slot for everyone and notifies the organiser. The event is organised in just one message, putting a stop to those endless games of planning ping pong.

Michael Brecht, CEO of Doodle, said;



KEY FEATURES

- *Create events and polls anytime, anywhere – and access them just as easily*
- *Hassle free invitation lists using your phone's contacts*
- *Give invitees the option to say Yes, No or Maybe*
- *Discuss your plans with invitees and make changes to events as you need to – with the in app chat function*
- *Stay on top of details/ any changes with Push notification updates*
- *Register or login with your Doodle, Google or Facebook account to stay in touch*
- *Connect your calendars in the App with Premium Doodle*

"Catching up with friends and family is a sure-shot mood booster. Yet, it often feels like a chore when you can't agree on a date and time to meet up. Doodle takes away this organisational headache."

Women in leadership



The UK may have avoided quotas but is the progress just tokenism? Global Diversity in the boardroom still has a long way to go

In the UK, much has been made of the latest Women on Boards Davies Review Report which boasts that: "Representation of women on FTSE 100 boards now stands at 23.5%, with 18% women's representation on FTSE 250 boards. British business is well on its way to achieving the 25% target by the end of the year.

However, as Paul Hunt, Managing Director of Search firm, Healy Hunt, a member of INAC, points out: "This is, on the face of it, good news. But I think it is disappointing that this is an average figure across executive and non-executive directors and in fact only 8.6% of executive directors are women – and that's only up from 6.8% last year - so is this just tokenism?"

In the US, which could feasibly see a female President in the not too distant future, only 17% of Fortune 500 board seats are held

by women. In Latin America, only 28% of companies have a gender equality policy at executive level. In Australia, while there are no formal targets, almost a quarter of directors the top 50 ASX listed companies are female and every single one has female directors on the board.

There were some interesting anomalies. Turkey is among the top 15 countries in the world for female board members although it still fell behind its European counterparts when it came to the percentage of women participating in the workforce. This was due mainly to the high number of female entrepreneurs running micro businesses. And while Norway is often seen as one of the most progressive countries, having implemented boardroom quotas in 2003, the number of female CEOs in the region is still very small.

The potential mess of email receipts



For many businesses email can often be the 'silent assassin' of incoming mail management. While the visual cues of sky high piles of paper is enough to make us stand up and take action, email inboxes are a lot easier to ignore.

But as one of a business' most vital channels of communication, a failure to develop a clear and structured process for handling emails can result in everything from missed sales to a damaged reputation and possible compliance issues.

Understanding the risks of email without structure

When we think of incoming mail processes, we usually think of the traditional mailroom, along with mail trolleys and pigeon holes. But although your business wouldn't think twice about putting in a structure and dedicated process to deal with the deluge of physical items you receive, could you say the same for email?

If the answer is no, then consider where the differences lie:

- If your business was struggling to deal with the physical mail volume it would know about it – how does it know when it cannot cope with an excessive volume of emails? Could handling of important documents such as invoices or sales orders get delayed or overlooked?
- Customer interaction by letter offers a visible trace of communications – how do you know who in your business is dealing with things such as complaints over email and when and how they are dealing with them?
- Mail items are usually processed in one central facility. But with many businesses utilising individual responsibility for email communication, how are digital mailpieces allocated, prioritised and audited?

Although functions such as invoicing,

complaints and sales orders are now being commonly processed digitally, many businesses are failing to apply the same processes and structures used within email processing. Without a robust process for handling incoming email, a business' service offering can suffer on a number of levels.

How a lack of structure can affect your operations

Email communications continue to represent the backbone of a modern business' communications. But without a set methodology for processing, auditing and monitoring email, a range of potential problems can occur. All too often emails arrive in a split second but the speed advantage disappears because the email is unread or is printed and becomes part of a slow manual process!

With nearly 59% of customers who receive invoices via email requiring a reminder to pay, it's plain to see just how easy it is for emails to be forgotten, misfiled or simply lost. For organisations forgetting to pay an invoice is bad business, but taken further, it reveals just how a lack of email handling processes can have an impact. If that was an incoming paid invoice, or a customer complaint the effects on cash flow or reputation could be disastrous.

Understanding the solutions available

Sophisticated Electronic Document Management systems (EDM) have the ability to add processing and automation to not just physical mail, but also email, providing an auditable trail and workflow rules to a communication medium that has hitherto,

Communication

been organised on an ad hoc basis. Such systems offer a range of benefits:

Improved efficiency

Taking the time to read emails, attribute them to necessary departments and define an appropriate course of action can be time consuming. High end EDM software can identify whether an email is an invoice or correspondence at the source – meaning you can process enquiries quicker. Data is extracted automatically for processing so there is no need to print and manually process

Reduced process times

Once an email has been defined, EDM allocates the mail item to one or multiple people for further action – helping to lower the time it takes you to process everything from complaints to invoices.

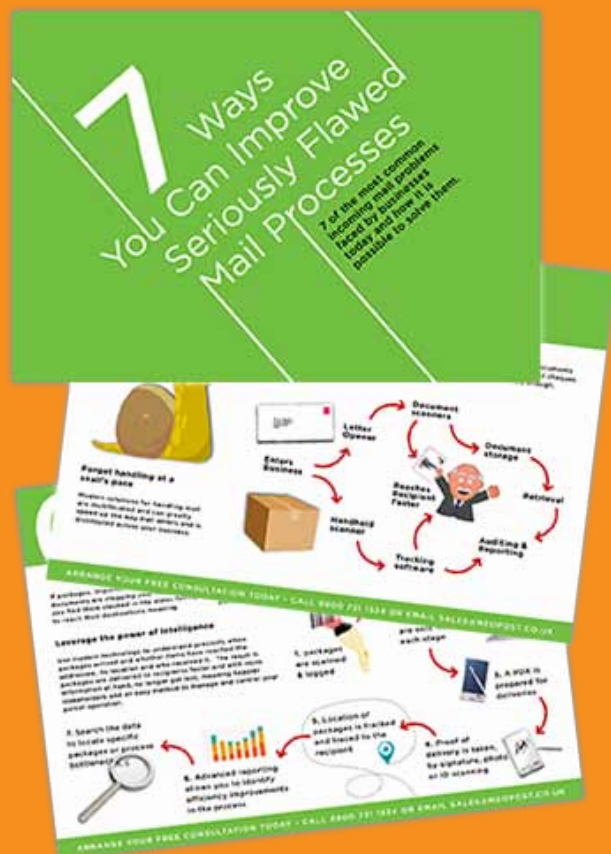
Traceability you can rely on

When disputes and problems arise, manually processing dozens of emails to establish the root of the issue can be a huge drain on resources. EDM helps to make trailing through snaking email chains a thing of the past with automatic audit trail records

Consistency across all channels

EDM software can process incoming mail from online and offline channels – affording your business a uniform structure for both letters and emails.

Adding structure to the way your business handles email might seem like a low priority. But with the risk of missed invoices, unanswered customer complaints and a sluggish sales process all threatening to eat away at your bottom line, managing your incoming email has never been more important.



Want to learn more about how a poor mail process might be affecting your profit margins?

Download Neopost's new guide, *7 Signs Your Business Has Seriously Flawed Mail Processes*, for solutions to some of the most common problems.

www2.neopost.co.uk/incoming-mail/landing

Virgin Trains stops lost luggage in its tracks

Virgin Trains is launching a trial of an innovative new service that could spell the end of lost luggage. The introduction of HomingPIN™ to Virgin Trains marks the first time in the world that a railway operator has adopted the lost property recovery system to reunite customers with their belongings.

HomingPIN™ puts customers' minds at ease, removing the worry of losing something important by safeguarding their belongings while on the move. The handy system works on whatever the customer chooses to protect, from phones, cameras and wallets through to passports, keys and bags.

Up to one thousand Virgin Trains' customers will take part in the trial, with each receiving a unique PIN code to register on the secure website, HomingPIN.com, together with a phone number and email address, which are never shared. Customers also receive a luggage loop, key ring and a set of labels – each with their unique code printed on – which can be attached to their possessions. If a lost item is found by a member of Virgin Trains staff or member of the public, they simply enter the PIN code on the website, which is then matched back to the owner. In



just a few moments, a text message or email alert is sent to the property's owner, who can then contact the finder to arrange the safe return of their belongings in a quick and convenient way.

The service will be available for those who contact Virgin Trains directly by calling customer relations on 03331 031 031 and will also be offered as a trial to JourneyCare customers, who have mobility impairment or other disabilities.

**To find out more information visit
www.homingPIN.com**

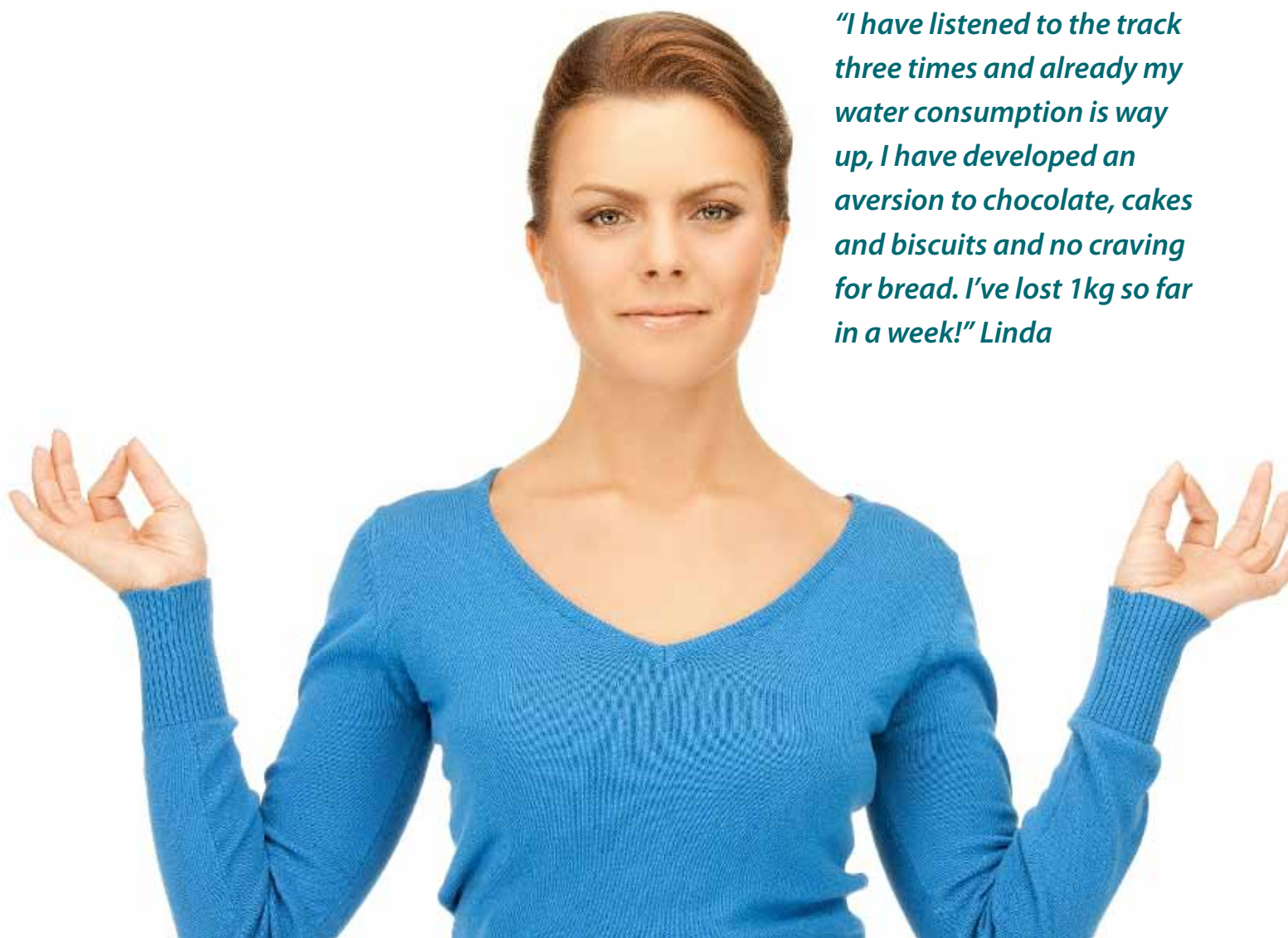
Change your mind to lose weight

A new and easy way to lose weight with the help of hypnosis and mindfulness

Reducing levels of obesity, improving the quality of what we eat and managing stress are some of the most important issues facing the health of the nation today.

For most of us, losing weight, changing our eating habits and learning to distress are challenges that we face and ironically are challenges that most of us find stressful and hard work in themselves!

"I have listened to the track three times and already my water consumption is way up, I have developed an aversion to chocolate, cakes and biscuits and no craving for bread. I've lost 1kg so far in a week!" Linda



"As a confirmed chocoholic with a serious biscuit addition I was sceptical about how well this would work. However after just listening to the track once I found myself indulging in apples, craving vegetables and generally eating less and moving more. My energy levels have increased, and along side my weight watchers tracking I'm discovering a whole new me – over a stone in weight has easily been lost and I feel like I'm changing habits of a lifetime in a positive way." Deb Cooper

If you can relate to that, then here is a new, accessible way to make the challenge so much easier and more achievable. The new Lose weight through healthy choices download or CD teaches you effective hypnosis and mindfulness techniques, both of which have been clinically proven to change eating habits, reduce stress and help with weight loss, and will help you feel more in control, stop unwanted habits, de stress and make healthier choices.

The Lose weight through healthy choices has been developed by one of the Uks leading Hypnotherapists Maggie Howell: "For many people, the reasons they over eat have little to do with hunger or their actual need for energy. It is often for reasons such as stress, boredom, habit, addiction to sugar and even dehydration. Many people feel they are unable to consciously control the desire to eat certain types of food and have ingrained negative thought patterns around food. It is often these negative associations with food coupled with lack of will

Weight Loss through Heathy Choices helps you to:

- Be more in control of what, when and how much you eat
- Be more aware of the reasons you used to eat unnecessarily
- Change your thinking patterns about food
- Be attracted to the right types of food and drink which increase your health and vitality
- Increase your intake of water
- Reduce any cravings for sweet of fatty food
- Use simple triggers to prevent snacking
- Use positive language, images and metaphors to be more in control of your thoughts and actions
- Listen to your body's signals so you stop eating when you are full
- See, feel imagine yourself at a time in the future when you are at a weight and size that pleases you

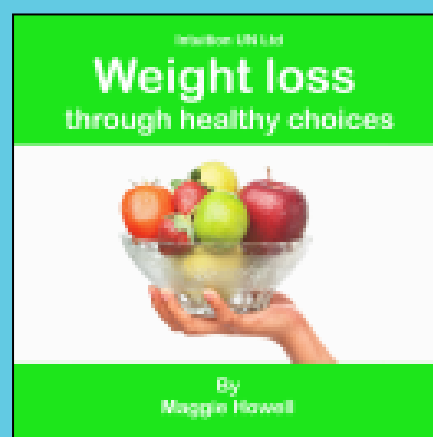
"I love this track! It really removes all of the pressure and anxiety about being 'on a diet'. It aims to do what is most important - make healthy choices. It gives you control over your behaviours and doesn't lead to the same guilt that you have when you eat something on a diet that you 'can't have'. I also like the 'me time' I get when listening to the track. It helps me feel like I'm doing something good for me and looking after myself." Yvonne Hopkinson

power or control that prevent them from making the necessary changes to reduce their weight."

The process of hypnosis and mindfulness enables powerful communication between your conscious and subconscious and so by listening to and absorbing the words and suggestions, you are able to easily change patterns, thoughts, beliefs and habits at both a conscious as well as deeper subconscious level. Using these kind of techniques to change your thoughts, patterns and eating habits is becoming more and more popular with celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, Geri Haliwell, Sophie Dahl and Lilly Allen using them to help reduce and manage their weight.

As the saying goes – there is no diet that will do what healthy eating day in and day out does. There is a great deal of evidence that diets do not actually work in the long term. It is only by changing your thoughts, triggers and eating habits to ones which are healthy and beneficial for you that you will reduce your weight and size to one which is right for you.

By listening to this track once a day for 7 days, you will soon notice a change in your patterns, you will be drinking more water, feel less cravings, enjoy the food you do eat and feel more in control of your choices.



**Available as a CD (£11.99)
or MP3 (£7.99) from www.hypnosisforhealthychoices.co.uk.
The track is also available on itunes.**

Ditching the kettle for quality office coffee

The latest hot drinks survey from the Office Coffee Company reveals a shift in offices using a traditional kettle to make hot drinks towards hot water boilers/urns and coffee machines.

More offices are making their hot drinks with a filter machine, coffee pod machine or fresh bean-to-cup coffee machine.

The 2015 survey highlighted a strong shift towards coffee being the favourite hot drink of office workers. "The choice of drinks on the high street is now being replicated in the home, and the office," comments Richard Doherty, managing director at the Office Coffee Company. He adds "there's no escaping the need for choice as coffee drinkers are split in their preference for a Cappuccino, Latte, Americano, Flat White or Espresso. We even found a desire amongst 10% of office workers for hot chocolate."

The survey also revealed that 47% of office workers are leaving the office during the working day to purchase coffee from the high street.

The Office Coffee Company, a provider of ethical, beverages and coffee machines for businesses, is on a mission to ensure nobody has a bad coffee at work ever again. They are also passionate about sustainability issues and uniquely offer Coffee from Cool Earth, a unique charity that protects the rainforests.



**Office
Coffee
Co.®**



Stress levels rise sharply for IT staff in 2015

High workplace stress levels for IT professionals are dramatically impacting both employees and employers

GFI Software™ has released the findings of its fourth IT Admin Stress Survey, revealing a large jump in the number of IT professionals feeling both the impact of job-related stress and a desire to quit their current job due to stress. The study found that 88% of those surveyed are experiencing workplace stress, while almost 90% of respondents actively considering leaving their current IT job due to workplace stress and dissatisfaction with working conditions, up from 68% in 2014.

For the fourth year running, high workplace stress levels for IT professionals are dramatically impacting both employees and employers. These impacts are illustrated by increases in those staff looking to find another job, and in those working increasing amounts of unpaid overtime to cope with workloads. A growing number of IT staff are also experiencing substantial disruption to their personal lives as a result of work demands.

Key findings from the survey include:

- **88% of all UK IT staff surveyed consider their job stressful – up from 67% in 2014**
- **Nearly half have missed social functions due to overrunning issues and tight deadlines at work, up from 36% in 2014**
- **A further 37% also report missing time with their children due to work demands imposing on their personal time**
- **Nearly one third of IT staff regularly lose sleep due to work pressures**
- **The number of respondents experiencing stress-related illnesses increased slightly to 17%, down from 19% in 2014**
- **Nonetheless, a further 15% continue to report feeling in poor physical condition due to work demands, the same as last year**



1 IS YOUR JOB AS AN IT ADMINISTRATOR STRESSFUL?



2 WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST SOURCE OF STRESS?



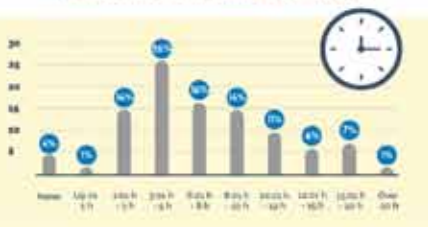
3 HOW MUCH STRESS DO YOU THINK YOUR JOB GIVES YOU COMPARED TO OTHERS IN YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE?



4 HOW HAS YOUR JOB IMPACTED YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?



5 IN AN AVERAGE WEEK, HOW MANY HOURS OVERTIME DO YOU WORK?



6 HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED SWITCHING CAREERS BECAUSE OF ON-THE-JOB STRESS?



Management and users

Pressure and unreasonable demands from management clearly emerged as the biggest contributing factor to workplace stress, but was down considerably from last year. In 2015, one third of those surveyed singled out management as their biggest point of stress, down from over 50% last year. Up considerably on last year was stress caused by the users that IT staff look after, jumping from 11% to 21%.

Work pressures on relationships

The 2015 stress study revealed a disappointing rise in the number of respondents reporting that a relationship or friendship had failed or been severely damaged due to work commitments intruding on personal life. Over 26% experienced this in the last year, up from 16.5% last year and a new high in the four years of the survey.

"Even in an industry like IT that's well-known for being extremely stressful and highly demanding of its workforce, the findings make for worrying reading. The 2015 results clearly show a substantial deterioration of the work/life balance and job satisfaction among the UK's IT workforce. This is concerning reading at a time when the IT sector is playing such a pivotal role in the growth of the UK economy," said Sergio Galindo, general manager of GFI Software.

"Smart employers understand that an over-stressed and unhappy workforce means less productivity, and the higher levels of illness, mistakes and staff turnover directly related to stress can significantly impact the bottom line. Investing in worker happiness and in systems to simplify the job of the IT department is often far cheaper than replacing over-stressed or unhappy staff," Galindo added.

Unpaid overtime

This year's survey revealed a jump in the amount of unpaid overtime required by IT staff to meet deadlines and manage deployments. 40% work up to five unpaid hours of overtime a week, with a mean average of 7.3 hours a week of unpaid overtime worked – the highest in four years. The 48-hour maximum working week set down in the EU Working Time Directive is therefore often exceeded.