

PA ENTERPRISE

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

April 2016

A professional woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a grey blazer over a white shirt. She is smiling and holding a blue pen to her chin, looking directly at the camera.

**Why we say 'Yes'
when we want to
say 'No'**

**How to carry out a
Redundancy Exercise**

**Are you listening
or just hearing?**

**Respect your elders
not your iPad - family
values revealed**

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www.deskdemon.com

Terminal House, Station
Approach, Shepperton,
Middlesex TW17 8AS

Editorial

editoruk@deskdemon.com

Advertising

Tel: 0870 410 4038
mek@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos
Graphic Design
janebigos@deskdemon.com

Kulasekaram Vimalarasa (Raj)
Web Developer
raj@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani
Founder, CEO
mek@deskdemon.com

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Women's careers: What helps? What hinders?



The difference between the salaries of men and women has been in the news again recently, following the government's draft legislation on reporting the gender pay gap. Gill Amos, leadership development and career management specialist from Northamptonshire, has been looking at the reasons behind this pay difference and what can be done about it. Her research report: ***Women's Careers: What helps? What hinders?*** in association with 10Eighty.

Gill Amos conducted detailed interviews with women working in professional and managerial roles in a range of organisations to find out what had helped and hindered them during the course of their careers and what had influenced their career decisions. These factors were divided into extrinsic factors, such as being able to take advantage of early career experiences and opportunities, and intrinsic factors, such as an individual's drive

and determination. Once the main factors had been identified, Gill then applied this to what can be done to improve the prospects of working women – both by women and by organisations.

Gill Amos says: "Whilst it is acknowledged that much progress has been made in career equality, there is still some way to go. Women are still subjected to unconscious and conscious bias and expected to conform to the linear (or male) career model and timings. However, there are so many options to support women in work to stay and progress, which would benefit organisations, individuals and the national economy. It is an economic and social imperative that we use our female talent more effectively. Men can play a key role in this, as it is not solely a women's issue and it should, more realistically, be seen as a business, economic and social issue which men can impact for good. Most men would not want to see their daughters disadvantaged in their career, either in terms of prospects or pay, so it is fitting that both men and women address issues of diversity."



To download a copy of the report go to <http://10eighty.co.uk/go/womens-careers-what-helps-what-hinders>

Managers in the dark about mental health

Over one in four UK managers say they are more comfortable discussing employees' physical health than they are discussing their mental health, according to new research from AXA PPP healthcare.

While it's encouraging that 57% say they're just as comfortable discussing one or the other, the presence of a sizeable minority who aren't indicates there's still work to be done to overcome the discomfort some managers have about talking to employees about their mental health. When asked why they felt more comfortable discussing an employee's physical health, managers cited not knowing enough about mental health compared with physical health (45%), not wanting to upset or offend anyone (43%) and not wanting to say the wrong thing and get in to trouble 34%.

Dr Mark Winwood, Director of Psychological Services for AXA PPP healthcare, commented: "Employers have a duty of care towards their employees' health and safety, and would therefore be wise to provide managers with suitable training and back-up to ensure they are able to support employees whether their health problem relates to physical health or to mental health. There is still a taboo around mental ill health and, as seen by the responses of the managers we polled, some would seem to be more concerned about getting into trouble or upsetting the employee than they are about the employee's mental wellbeing. This should simply not be



the case – managers should be ready, willing and able to hold a sensitive, supportive conversation with any employee they think is showing signs of ill health."

The survey showed that over a quarter (28%) of managers had been diagnosed or treated personally for a mental health related condition such as stress, anxiety or depression by a health professional. A quarter of these (26%) chose to keep this private, with only a fifth (19%) revealing it to their manager. They cited fear of being judged by colleagues or their manager (42% and 32%, respectively), fear for career prospects (25%) and fear of being discriminated against (21%) as reasons for keeping quiet.

Respect your elders not your iPad!

Family values are alive and well in Britain today with table manners, respecting your elders and being honest and truthful, emerging as the most important principles that we now abide by. And according to the new research, social media shutdowns have also now found their way into the modern family home.

The study from Beko of 1,500 young parents, has looked into the moral and practical guidelines set by British families today and revealed a host of 'old fashioned' values which are still very relevant.

According to three quarters of British adults, table manners are the most important value that we can teach our children, followed by being honest and truthful and respecting your elders. Regular quality time together such as eating together also made the cut.

Modern day family values include the importance of recycling, healthy eating, no iPads or iPhones at the dinner table and respecting other religions and cultures.

Not fighting over the remote control and not snooping on another family member's



Facebook account also made the list.

The research also found that 96% of Britons believe that strong family values prepare children for a happy and successful life.

The report also found the average Brits spends 24 hours a week of 'quality time' with their families, with 83% saying family mealtimes are the most important time together.

25 Modern Day British Family Values

1. Having good table manners - 76%
2. Being honest and truthful - 73%
3. Respecting your elders - 69%
4. Not talking with your mouth full - 66%
5. Standing up for those you love - 64%
6. Remembering your Ps and Qs - 59%
7. Washing your hands before dinner - 58%
8. Everyone helping with family chores - 58%
9. The importance of recycling - 53%
10. Regular quality time with all the family - 49%
11. The importance of healthy eating - 48%
12. No iPads or iPhones at the dinner table - 46%
13. Respecting other religions and cultures - 44%
14. Being a team player - 43%
15. Always eating Sunday lunch together - 43%
16. Always looking someone in the eye when meeting them - 40%
17. Thank you emails for birthdays and Christmases - 38%
18. Children should ask to leave the table - 36%
19. Equal childcare from both parents - 36%
20. Equal distribution of chores between both parents - 31%
21. No fighting over the remote control - 29%
22. Having a firm handshake - 26%
23. Not snooping on someone else's Facebook account - 25%
24. Keeping in touch with relatives via FaceTime and Skype - 17%
25. Open phone policies for partners and parents - 15%



Handsome men are rejected for competitive jobs

Handsome men may be rejected for competitive jobs, research from UCL School of Management proves, but are preferred for roles that require cooperation.

Handsome men are seen as more competent, so managers in collaborative workplaces such as R&D departments hire good-looking male candidates over less good-looking ones. Similarly, in workplaces with rewards for team performance, a decision maker prefers handsome male employees, as they help further their own success.

However, in competitive workplaces such as sales departments, good looks signalling competence can make handsome men seem threatening to future colleagues. If decision makers expect to compete, they would rather discriminate against them.

With her co-authors from the University of Maryland, London Business School, and INSEAD, Dr. Lee didn't find the same effect for pretty women as female attractiveness wasn't associated with competence. She believes it's because physical stereotypes interact with gender stereotypes.

"Managers are affected by stereotypes and make hiring decisions to serve their own self-interests," Dr. Lee says, "so organizations may not get the most competent candidates.

"With more companies involving employees in recruitment processes, this important point needs attention. Awareness that hiring



is affected by potential work relationships and stereotyping tendencies can help organisations improve their selection processes. For example, engaging external representatives may improve selection outcomes as outsiders are likely to provide fairer inputs. Also, if organizations make managers more accountable for their decisions, they'll be less motivated to pursue self-interests at the expense of the company."

New government strategy to encourage walking and cycling

A blueprint to encourage more walking and cycling has been launched by the government, which plans to get people to travel on bike or on foot for shorter journeys.

By 2020, the new strategy aims to have people choosing the natural alternative to travelling shorter distances, or as part of a longer journey, by bike or on foot rather than driving or using public transport.

It includes ambitions to double cycling, reverse the decline in walking, reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured and increase the number of children walking to school.

This strategy will be supported through providing safe and attractive infrastructure to encourage people to choose a healthier option of travel for themselves and the environment.

Transport Minister Robert Goodwill said: "Realising our ambition will take sustained investment in cycling and walking infrastructure. That's why we have committed over £300 million to support cycling and walking over this Parliament and this will increase further when spending on enhancing and maintaining existing infrastructure is taken into account.

"Delivering this long term plan will require patience, persistence and a change in attitudes – amongst government, local bodies, businesses, communities and



individuals. We cannot afford not to grasp the opportunities available and we are determined to make this country a cycling and walking nation, comparable to the very best in the world."

The government will issue guidance to local bodies on developing local plans, with individual and tailored interventions identified to fit with local areas.

Why we say *Yes* when we want to say *No*

By Linda Adams

How many times have you said “yes” to things you didn’t really want to do? Saying “no” can be very difficult, especially when we have been used to saying “yes”. When we do say “yes” instead of an honest “no”, we often feel like we let ourselves down and, at the same time, resentful of the person who asked us.



There are lots of reasons why we say “yes” to unacceptable requests. Here are some of them:

Desire to please

“What will she think of me?” “I know it would make them happy.”

Fear of hurting someone

“I don’t want to disappoint her.” “I’m afraid I’ll hurt his feelings if I don’t go.”

Guilt

“I’d feel so selfish.” “How could I turn them down?”

Surprise

“Well, I guess I could do it.” “I don’t know... well, O.K.”

Deference to authority

“She’s the boss.” “Yes, sir!”

Reciprocation

“I may need the same sometime.” “She’d do it for me.”

Duty

“I ought to...” “I should...” “I owe it to them.”

Need for power

“If I say ‘no’, they’ll think I can’t handle it.” “Now he’ll owe me a favor.”

We have a need to see ourselves and have others see us as a “good person”, one who cares about others, who is willing to help out, to make a contribution. At the same time, we want to take care of ourselves and our important needs and wants. When we agree to do things we really don’t want to do, we pay a very high price—increased stress, less

energy, resentment, lower self-esteem. On the other hand, when we say “yes” and we really mean it, we give our full effort, energy, motivation and creativity.

The key here is finding a balance between meeting your own needs and helping other people meet theirs. Ask yourself: “What are my needs?” “How much of my time, energy and resources do I need to meet them?” “What do I genuinely want to do for others?” “How much of my time do I want to give to helping others meet their needs?”

Each person will find different answers to these questions. The important thing is to find the balance that works for you.



How to carry out a Redundancy Exercise

Employment Lawyer David Parry gives an overview of redundancy and of the steps employers must take to get the process, and their decisions, right.

What is redundancy?

Redundancy is essentially where you:

Close your business;

Close a workplace; or

Need fewer employees to do a certain type of work, or to work in a certain place.

Many employers use the word 'redundancy' to describe a redundancy where someone's performance is drifting off a bit, or because they think if they call it 'redundancy' then they don't need to go through the procedures they know exist for misconduct issues. But that can cause problems, because if the dismissal isn't technically a 'redundancy' – as defined above – or you don't follow the correct redundancy process, you can end up struggling to defend an employment tribunal claim.

So you need to get it right. This begins by getting to grips with the situation in which you find yourself, and understanding what redundancy means. Employers can come unstuck when they assume that they are in a redundancy situation when they're not, and vice versa.

If any one of the three situations above apply, you've passed first base. You can begin the

redundancy process. But the rules on how you should go about this, and the steps you need to take, are strict. Even if you are clear that you have a 'redundancy' reason for dismissing staff, the dismissal can quite easily become unfair if you trip up at any of the stages.

Remember that redundancy rules only apply to your employees. They do not apply to agency workers, or self-employed contractors, for example.

There are also special rules which apply if you're thinking about making more than 20 people redundant within a rolling 90-day period. They include notifying the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and holding consultations with a union (if you don't recognise a union, you have to hold an election for employee representatives). These rules are demanding, complex, and carry serious financial consequences if they're not followed.

Think through the process

Plan the redundancy before you start. Map out the steps, the timings and the people from within your business's management that you will need to involve. Remember to



take and keep good, written records of what you've done and how you reached your decisions. There really is no substitute for this.

Factor into the planning process your contracts and policies. Check to see what they say about redundancy, both in terms of company procedure and redundancy payments. You must comply with your policies (or have a very good reason for departing from them). You will also need to underpin every aspect of your planned redundancy process with 'reasonableness', since tribunals are ultimately looking to see if you've acted reasonably in every aspect of the dismissal process. In the redundancy context this broadly means letting staff know where they stand; listening and taking on board suggestions; being fair in who you select for redundancy; looking hard for suitable alternative jobs within your business

for people who are facing redundancy; and offering a meaningful appeal against dismissal.

Define your pool

You may have heard about 'redundancy pools' and 'pools for selection'. These are terms for the groups of people identified as being potentially redundant. Not all will necessarily be made redundant. You will select from these pools the employee or employees who you'll take through the remainder of the process and who you might, ultimately, dismiss for redundancy.

Sometimes it will be easy to decide which employees should make up a pool. There may be just one person whose role has disappeared, in which case they alone can form the pool and no one else need usually

Continued ►

be involved. It's less straightforward if you have people whose roles cross departments, specialisms, projects or contracts, and locations, for example.

Once you have defined the pool, write to the affected employees and tell them that they are at risk of redundancy. It's quite common for employers to meet with these employees collectively. Explain why you're doing what you are doing and invite ideas about ways of reducing the number of people who might ultimately be made redundant, or about ways of avoiding redundancy altogether.

And follow up on suggestions; there could be options available to you that you hadn't thought about. This doesn't mean you have to follow your employees' suggestions – far from it – but you do need to have a credible reason as to why it doesn't make business sense to follow their suggestions. One of the most common reasons why redundancy dismissals are held to be unfair is that the employer can't establish that it followed up on suggestions about avoiding redundancy.

Select

You need to have fair selection criteria, against which you can 'score' employees in the pool (and those with the lowest scores will be those whom you select for redundancy).

What sort of selection criteria should you use? Attendance, experience and skills, disciplinary record and performance (where it can be measured objectively) are fairly standard, but it's up to you to decide the categories that matter most. You are free to give different weightings to different criteria, but be clear and consistent in how you do this.

One of the biggest rules around selection is

to avoid anything that requires you to make a subjective assessment. Your opinion of how reliable an employee is, for example, isn't a valid criterion. You should be able to show how you arrived at the score you did, and that it's backed up by records you hold – appraisal notes, for example.

Be careful to avoid straying into the realms of discrimination. Selecting an employee for redundancy because you think they're too old, or too young, will be direct discrimination. Dismissing someone because they are pregnant or on maternity leave will be automatically unfair. But there are less obvious discrimination traps too. Tread carefully where you are using 'last in, first out' ('LIFO') as a scoring mechanism. It may seem like the fairest way to select staff, but it can be tainted with age discrimination (and sex discrimination too), so you would be risking an unfair dismissal and an indirect discrimination finding against you unless you combined LIFO with other objective criteria.

Scoring people on their attendance, too, can cause difficulties where the employer doesn't take account of the reasons for an employee's low score. Maternity leave and disability-related absence are common reasons to bear in mind.

That said, people with a protected characteristic (age, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation etc) are not immune from selection for redundancy. You will, however, be expected not to treat them any less favourably than their colleagues. The same applies to part-time workers, who have a right to be treated no less favourably than full-timers. So it is unwise to focus on part-time employees, or those who have flexible

working agreements, as those to be dismissed during a redundancy process.

Consult

As a pre-cursor to consultation, it is usually worth asking whether any of the employees in the pool would be interested in applying for voluntary redundancy. Remember that if you ask for volunteers, their dismissal will still be for redundancy and so they're entitled to the usual payments and other terms.

Treat compulsory redundancy as the last resort. You should allow plenty of opportunity for people within your organisation – including the employees directly affected – to come up with ideas of ways to avoid redundancy dismissals. Sharing information with employees and inviting them to give their views can sometimes lead to solutions that reshape the proposed redundancy. Perhaps part-time working, salary sacrifices or adjusting your use of agency workers, for example, could provide solutions.

There are specific rules that apply if you are proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees within 90 days. If the number is lower than 20, you still need to consult, but it's not governed by legislation in the same way. Don't take that to mean that consultation can be skirted over in cases of smaller-scale redundancies; it's regarded by tribunals as a really important part of a fair redundancy process.

Write to the employees you've provisionally selected for redundancy. Tell them that dismissal is a possibility and that you would like to meet with them individually to discuss their selection, their selection score, any ideas they may have for avoiding redundancy and alternative roles you may be able to offer them.

You don't have to allow employees to be accompanied at these meetings unless your contracts or policies say so, but many employers do allow it. Also, if they ask to take a colleague or a union representative along, you should allow it.

Show the employee their selection score and explain how you arrived at it. They'll probably question aspects of this, so be prepared to explain your reasoning and even to adjust your scoring if need be. You won't usually be required to share with the employee their colleagues' detailed scores, but it is usually a good idea to let them know how their total score compares with others in the selection pool. You could anonymise the scores of their colleagues, making sure that individuals can't be identified, and share them in that way.

Suitable alternative employment

You have a duty to look for suitable alternative employment for employees who you're about to make redundant. This duty is an ongoing one, lasting until the employee has been dismissed.

The duty is to look for another role that is suitable. This doesn't mean that you necessarily have to offer the employee a role – perhaps there just isn't anything suitable – but you must look and you shouldn't assume that the employee wouldn't be interested in taking a lower grade position. Your idea of suitable may be different to theirs, hence there are frequent legal arguments about when this duty has, and hasn't, been met.

One significant point to bear in mind here: if the potentially redundant employee is on maternity or adoption leave then they have

Continued ►

a special entitlement when it comes to offers of suitable alternative employment (generally, they trump other employees). This is an area where you should take legal advice.

Dismiss?

Once you have gone through the full process and have decided there is no option other than to make the employee redundant, you should meet with them to confirm this. Again, many employers allow staff to be accompanied at these meetings. Write to them after the meeting. Your letter should deal with any issues that arose during consultation. It should also set out the terms on which they'll leave. These include, if they have at least two years' service, a statutory redundancy payment. Staff may also have contractual entitlements – for example, notice pay (if you do not require them to work their notice periods) and any holiday pay.

You also need to offer a right of appeal. Just as in a disciplinary dismissal scenario, appoint a new (usually more senior) appeal officer, listen to the employee, and adjourn to consider everything and to explore any new avenues that may have opened up. Then either reverse the dismissal decision or confirm it in writing.

You may want to consider negotiating a settlement agreement to buy out claims that the employee has and to draw a line under their employment, particularly if you are offering enhanced redundancy payments.

David Parry Employment Law
www.parryemploymentlaw.com

Top Tips

- Do everything you can to avoid having to make staff redundant. You may have options; take them seriously.
- Get to grips with what redundancy means in law, and what it would mean for you and your employees.
- Check redundancy provisions in your contracts and policies.
- Do the maths. Be clear about the costs and the benefits.
- Be prepared. Plan the redundancy thoroughly before you embark on it.
- Keep an open mind throughout. Don't pre-judge and don't be seen to have made up your mind about anything before you've taken the necessary steps.
- Consider all potential ramifications of your decisions before you make them. You could discriminate unwittingly.
- Level the playing field to avoid less favourable treatment.
- Continually ask yourself: is this the reasonable thing to do? Remember that a legally safe redundancy requires (a) a genuine redundancy situation; and (2) a fair process.
- Keep good notes of everything, including your thought processes. Seemingly insignificant details can win and lose cases.
- Don't forget the staff left behind – they will have concerns at a time of stress and anxiety.
- Finally, don't forget your clients or customers – they will need to know who is going to look after them if their main point of contact has left.

Why go round when you can go 'sqround'?



NESCAFÉ® launches 'The Simply Better Tin' – making the workplace coffee break that little bit simpler...



The traditional design has been replaced with a curvy newcomer that merges the benefits of 'square' with 'round' and is at the forefront of ease and convenience for the workplace coffee sector, meaning no more 'lost lids' or 'hard to grasp' tins. The new, ground-breaking packaging offers a contemporary look and is simple to hold, pour and store, while the hinged lid seals in flavour.

Lynn Little, Standard Ingredients Lead at Nestlé Professional® explains that the inspiration for sqround has stemmed from research and insights. She says "At Nestlé Professional®, we're continually looking for fresh reinvigoration in the category and sometimes the simplest ideas make the biggest impact. We've listened to customer feedback to develop solutions to seal in flavour and streamline efficiency and ease of use."

"Our new 'sqround' tin will completely transform how users are able to serve, store and present coffee. From 'lost lids' to 'hard to grasp' tins, we know from our workplace customers that it's the small things that often

present irritating challenges, but the new tin means these frustrations will now be a thing of the past.

The new NESCAFÉ® 'Simply Better Tin' is available now across all the most popular ranges including NESCAFÉ® Original®, NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND® and NESCAFÉ® AZERA®.

The innovative new packaging will offer the following benefits:

- A more convenient way to make coffee
- A click to close, hinged lid which never goes missing
- Seals in the flavour cup after cup

For further information, go to www.simplybettertin.co.uk or call the NESCAFÉ® Consumer Services line on 0800 745 845



Just because you're hearing doesn't mean you're listening

By Linda Adams

Use this short test to assess yourself, responding "Yes" or "No" to each one:

- I use humour to help team members or co-workers who are upset get their minds off of what's troubling them.
- When my children share problems with me, I reassure them that things will be okay.
- When team members tell me about problems they're having with someone, I offer advice from my own experience.
- I ask pertinent questions to get more information so I can determine what solutions are likely to work best for co-workers who tell me about their problems.
- When people share problems with me, I try to analyse what's wrong and give them some suggestions.

If you answered "Yes" to any of these, I urge you to read on to learn how to improve your listening skills.

Barriers to communication

Most people are surprised to learn that reassuring, asking questions, giving advice and the like are not helpful responses when

someone else—team member, co-worker, manager, spouse, or child—has a problem. In fact, they are major barriers—they block the other person from talking further about what's bothering them and getting clarity or resolution to it.

Let's say a co-worker sighs, looks dejected and says to you: "I'll never make it! These new quotas are ridiculous!" This is a clear signal that this person is upset, distressed, has a problem and needs to be listened to and understood.

Most of us probably would react by reassuring our co-worker, "You're a pro. I wouldn't worry about it" or by suggesting, "I think it would be a good idea to talk to your supervisor about this" or by asking "How high are they?" Responses such as these, well intentioned as they may be, generally do more harm than good. None of them does anything to help the other person get relief from distress; none communicates understanding. Instead, they cause him/her to feel frustrated, misunderstood, patronised, and unaccepted. In effect, these responses communicate: "It's not okay for you to feel this way" or "I'm not comfortable hearing that



you're upset so here's how to get over it."

Listening, not just hearing

Active Listening, on the other hand, communicates to your co-worker that you understand and accept his/her feelings. (This process was first called "reflection of feelings" by the eminent psychologist, Dr. Carl Rogers who espoused it as the best way for psychotherapists to respond to their clients. In the early 60s, Rogers' student, Dr. Thomas Gordon, brought this skill into the mainstream by teaching parents how to Active Listen to their children in his Parent Effectiveness Training {PET} program.)

You Active Listen by consciously suspending your own agenda, ideas and judgments and putting yourself in the other's shoes. You pay complete attention to the other person, focusing on understanding their feelings. You then reflect or mirror back to them

“While listening with empathy sounds simple, it isn’t. Doing it well requires conscious awareness, strong intention and practice.”

what you hear, leaving your own feelings and opinions out of the listening process. Let me say that again: leave your own feelings and opinions out. Yes, I know easier said than done. But read on.

For example your Active Listening response to “I’ll never make it! These new quotas are ridiculous!” would be something like: “You sound pretty upset” or “You’re concerned that they’re way too high,” or “The new quotas are making you really nervous.” Empathic responses such as these communicate to the other person that you understand and accept their feeling as they do. Further, reflecting back what you hear encourages the flow of communication. Now your co-worker can confirm that you heard accurately (or not) and move deeper into the problem. With continued on-target Active Listening, often he or she will experience relief, even catharsis. If you have experienced being deeply understood by another person, you know the sense of relief and well-being that results.

It’s a Learnable Skill

While listening with empathy sounds simple, it isn’t. Doing it well requires conscious awareness, strong intention and practice. Four different steps are involved:

1 First, become aware of the cues people with whom you live and work give to signal

that they have a problem.

2 When you see or hear those signals and decide to listen, it’s hugely important to avoid responding with one of the Roadblocks to Communication, i.e., interrupting, suggesting, questioning, advising, reassuring (there are 12 categories of these barriers to avoid).

3 Then give full attention to the other person and reflect back to them what you hear them saying and feeling; if the Active Listening is off target, they’ll say so. and you can try again.

4 If they feel understood, usually they will keep talking and often find relief from or resolution to the concern or problem.

You might be thinking, “But I don’t have time to listen to someone’s problems.” The reality is that people are faced with adversity and problems every day; that’s an inevitable part of life. In order for us to be as productive and creative as we can be, we need to have the opportunity to vent, to talk through and solve problems that crop up and keep us from functioning at our full capacity.

Given an opportunity to be heard, people will often get clarity and ultimately resolution to what is bothering them and then can move forward—often with renewed energy and focus.

Build efficient meetings with MeetingSquared app

MeetingSquared, a new app for anyone who organises or attends meetings aims to bring an end to inefficient preparation, scheduling and management of meetings.



MeetingSquared comes with a host of features to make the entire meeting process easier – before, during and after.

“Meetings are an elephant in the room within business – many of them are inefficient, take too long to prepare for and don’t run smoothly when they are under way,” said Alister Esam, CEO, eShare. “The whole meeting process is broken and MeetingSquared is aiming to fix that for anyone that organises or attends meetings, saving time and resource wherever it is used, while the collaboration with Microsoft means it can be easily accessed via Office 365 or SharePoint.”

The new meeting management tool includes a Microsoft Outlook integration, which allows users to book meetings in participants’ Outlook agenda, and allows seamless integration with Outlook. MeetingSquared means the organiser can check that everyone has space in their diary to the meeting, and create a simple agenda that all participants can access.

Each attendee can access all relevant supporting documentation for the meeting, bringing an end to bringing reams of paper to the meeting. When a meeting is taking

place, all participants can have the required information to hand on any phone or tablet, and can annotate and share with other attendees as they see fit.

“MeetingSquared will be of use to anyone that runs or attends a meeting, but with compliance increasingly on the agenda, it also provides an audit trail for each meeting it is used in,” continued Alister Esam, eShare. “The ability to capture notes against the agenda items and any actions that are taken, means users can remain on top of any governance requirements and be more transparent in all elements of meeting administration.”

MeetingSquared features allow a meeting organiser to:

- **Create boards and committees**
- **Create meetings**
- **Build agendas**
- **Invite attendees**
- **Upload documents to the agenda**
- **Record decisions made during the meeting**
- **Use Outlook to add agenda items and people to the meeting**