

PA ENTERPRISE

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

February 2016

**How fear
affects
business**

**Car trouble?
Help is at
hand**

**Looking for
love in the
workplace**

**Making the most
of co-working**

**Are you getting
enough sleep?
Most women aren't!**

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

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Are UK flight prices too London-Centric?

A report released today by idealo Flights indicates that passengers flying out from non-London airports are at a disadvantage when it comes to getting the best deals on flights.



A comparison of UK routes to Paris:

Route	Price	GBP
Gatwick-CDG:	108	
Luton-CDG:	123	
Heathrow-ORY:	132	
Edinburgh-CDG:	176	
Birmingham-CDG:	179	
London City-ORY:	192	
Cardiff-CDG:	196	
Liverpool-CDG:	200	
Bristol-CDG:	203	
Belfast-CDG:	209	
Newcastle-CDG:	220	
Manchester-CDG:	227	
Glasgow-CDG:	239	
Aberdeen-CDG:	245	
Leeds/Bradford-CDG:	266	

Taking a look at last-minute flights for a Valentine's Weekend getaway, the research reveals that the cost of a return flight to Paris could be up to 146% more expensive when your local airport is not in the London area.

Couples looking to fly out to Paris on Friday 12th February returning Sunday 14th February are much more likely to find a good deal when searching from a London airport.

The most expensive place to fly from was the Yorkshire area, with a return flight costing 266 GBP per person. Other departure airports with steep last-minute prices were Glasgow and Aberdeen – those based in the Edinburgh area get a substantially cheaper fare to the French capital for Valentine's Weekend with tickets from 176 GBP at the time of research.

Half of all city office workers are looking for love in the workplace

A study by Morgan Pryce, London based commercial property agents, reveals that 50% of UK workers are open to the prospect of office romance.

The 2016 study asked those of working age (between 16-65 years) within London and surrounding boroughs if they would consider looking for romance at work.

Over half of those under 34 years old said they would not mix a romantic and business relationship while the older generation, 55 years plus, were more willing to have a work place love interest.

The study also found that men are more likely to be open to the concept of a workplace romance than women, with 64% of men in the poll voting for finding love via work colleagues. Women remained more wary with only 36% saying they would look for a partner at work.

An equal number of city and rural workers were polled in and around London and it was found that a majority of those working inner city voted against work place romance compared to those working in more rural areas such as surrounding boroughs like Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire.

The poll follows on from a recent study



conducted by Morgan Pryce on the areas within London to find the most eligible bachelors. The study found that the complex city was split into areas where more singletons resided than others.

In sickness or in health? Employers can't decide

Bosses don't want employees coming to work unwell but are frustrated by working time lost to doctors' appointments, according to new research by AXA PPP healthcare.

Nearly a third of bosses (owners, directors, senior and middle managers) say they'd prefer employees to take time off sick rather than come to work ill yet a similar proportion say they're frustrated by the working time lost when employees take time off for medical appointments – somewhat surprising since nearly half of the bosses polled agree that having a quick diagnosis backed by information on how to get better would help improve their employees' productivity.

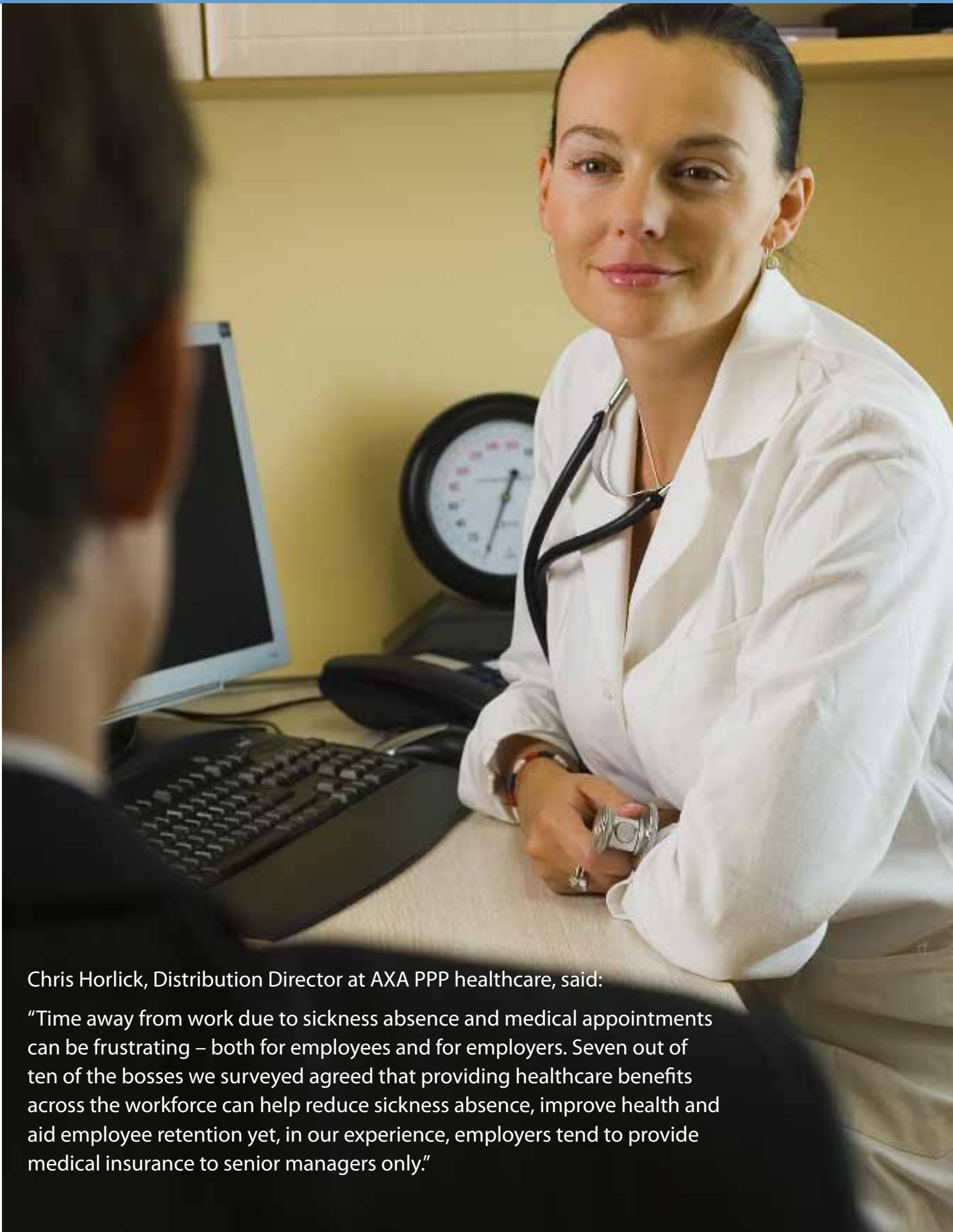
When it comes to how employees handle their own health issues, a quarter admit to waiting for a week to see if they recover before seeking medical advice, while over a third would delay seeking treatment due to work hours and pressures.

The survey findings also highlight that bosses can be pretty demanding when employees need to take time off for GP or hospital appointments, with a quarter saying they try to ask the employee what's wrong in order to find out whether their condition is serious enough to warrant taking time off. Twelve%

say they would ensure that employees who attend medical appointments during working hours make up for the missed time. And nearly one in ten (8%) ask employees to take half a day's holiday to cover for the time they've taken for medical appointments.

Asked on their views on employees taking time off for sickness, only 28% of bosses said they felt that sick employees should take however long is needed for their treatment and recuperation. On the other hand 17% indicated that, although they were sympathetic to employees' plight, they didn't expect them to take more than three days off sick at a time.

It's widely acknowledged that a healthy and productive workforce is good for business and, to help achieve this, a quarter of the managers surveyed agreed that quick referrals to consultants and treatment would be beneficial. Moreover, nearly two fifths (38%) accepted that providing all employees in their workforce with access to healthcare benefits would help reduce sickness absence and improve employee health.



Chris Horlick, Distribution Director at AXA PPP healthcare, said:

"Time away from work due to sickness absence and medical appointments can be frustrating – both for employees and for employers. Seven out of ten of the bosses we surveyed agreed that providing healthcare benefits across the workforce can help reduce sickness absence, improve health and aid employee retention yet, in our experience, employers tend to provide medical insurance to senior managers only."

What will go wrong with your car in 2016?

(and what you can do about it)

A recent study revealed that Brits spent £499 each on Christmas presents this year - that's twice as much as the average European. Well, be that as it may, we'll be spending even more than that just keeping our cars on the road in the next 12 months: every year, £22bn is spent on service and maintenance - that's over £590 per vehicle !



And it gets worse: while Christmas shopping takes place within a planned, manageable timeframe, car trouble can strike at any time... right? Well, not quite. Now, for the first time, WhoCanFixMyCar.com, the fast-growing comparison site for car servicing and repairs, are revealing what goes wrong, when. Thousands of drivers use WhoCanFixMyCar.com to find a great local garage or mechanic every week, so they've plenty of data to draw on. Want to know what to expect from your car next year, and what you can do to prevent it? Then read on.

1. Prepare for electrical trouble

You may be aware that cold weather increases strain on batteries and other electrical components. You'll have more systems running (such as rear screen demisters and headlights) and batteries are less efficient in frosty conditions... but by how much? Well, you're 2.4 times more likely to suffer electrical trouble in January than June, as a direct result of short days and cold nights. And it's not just batteries that cause trouble. Alternators, lighting and other electrical faults or gremlins also play up during the winter.

What can you do? Any local garage can test the health of your battery in moments. You may want to fit a new one as a preventative measure.

2. Potholes have a knock-on effect - literally - in the spring...

Potholes develop in winter, when rainwater enters cracks in the road and freezes,

weakening the asphalt surface until it eventually disintegrates, creating a pothole and causing a remarkable £2.8bn of vehicle damage every year! As well as well-publicised effects on alloy wheels and tyres, potholes can also cause more significant mechanical damage: Suspension and Steering Repairs (such as shock absorbers or wheel tracking) increase by around 75% in March/April (noting that a cold snap early in the winter may cause an actual pothole weeks later, and it may not be repaired right away.)

What can you do? Slow down and keep your eyes peeled! Avoid potholes, and avoid being part of that £2.8bn annual repair bill.

3. Speaking of knocks...

It's not just potholes that drivers need to watch out for. Reduced daylight hours, rain, ice, snow and mist are all hallmarks of a typical British winter, and it's hardly surprising that these conditions lead to more accidents. WhoCanFixMyCar.com sees 70% more requests for bodywork repairs at this time of year, compared to the autumn, and that's right across the spectrum: from full-on crash repairs to bumper scuffs and dings.

What can you do? Take care, and consider your journeys. Do you really need to travel in treacherous conditions?

4. Sun's out - is your car ready to 'cruise'?

When the clocks go forward and you feel the warm sun on your back for the first time, your car will be on your mind once more - but

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this time it's all about style. Come spring and early summer, we spend 2.5x more on upgrading our stereos, sprucing up upholstery and interior trim and the like.

What can you do? Looking to upgrade your stereo? Don't wait 'til summer - bag a bargain in the January sales. You'll often find free fitment deals at this time of year too.

5. Are you keeping your 'cool'?

However, that's nothing compared to the demand seen for Air-Conditioning repair work, which increases ten-fold compared to midwinter. Exactly as you'd expect, the higher the mercury, the more people switch on their air-con, only to discover that it's not up to the job. Finally spare a thought for arguably the biggest 'cruisers' of them all - the 2.5% of Brits who drive a convertible, who typically discover roof issues on the first warm day of the year: April sees 8x more of this sort of work than December.

What can you do? Both air-con and convertible roofs respond well to regular use - make sure to give both an occasional workout in winter and you'll be less likely to face a repair bill (often a large one where roof mechanisms are involved) in the summer.

Workforce div boosted by recommending



iversity

g a friend

Referring friends and associates for job vacancies can help to create a diverse workforce, according to a new study from the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University



Word-of-mouth recruitment, the most common way to fill jobs, has previously been thought to cause segregation at work: women tend to reach out to other women in their networks, and men do likewise.

But Professor Brian Rubineau has found a way to use word-of-mouth recruiting to integrate rather than segregate. Groups who recruit more actively tend to increase their numbers in their companies, even groups starting out in the minority. This finding can help various minority groups within companies, including those based on ethnicity.

Rubineau says: "These findings give organisations a potential tool to achieve diversity goals. Most big employers track how people come into their organisations, so they have data on how many arrive as word-of-mouth applicants as well as other modes. By tracking the referral behaviour of their employees, organisations can get a better handle on whether word-

of-mouth recruitment is furthering integration or segregation.

"Just as job ads often encourage women and visible minorities to apply, companies can encourage their employees to reach out to minorities within their contact networks."

"Having a diverse workforce has been proven to have a positive effect on a company's bottom line," says Michael Bennett, managing director and co-founder of Rethink Group, a specialist talent management consultancy.

"Any idea that can prompt organisations to do so should be welcomed. Many firms opt to formalise their hiring strategy in order to hire professionals from minority backgrounds, however it's encouraging to see that something as simple as an employee referral can result in greater workforce diversity."

This study, carried out with the MIT Sloan School of Management, was published in the journal *Organization Science*.

Making the most of co-working

Leading management Associate Professor Vareska van de Vrande from the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, says that people could benefit more from co-working spaces. These are her three top tips for professionals and entrepreneurs.



1. Talk to the people around you

Talk to as many people as you can. Associate Professor van de Vrande says this is the key to gaining new and beneficial knowledge. Furthermore, talking to people about your expertise and the projects you've worked on can help in finding a new gig or a temporary project.

2. Create a community feeling

The more people feel they are part of a community, the more likely they are to collaborate and develop their products or services. Feeling part of a professional network will encourage you to learn new entrepreneurial skills, advance your creativity and strengthen your chances of learning new business techniques. Use the lunches and coffee areas at co-working spaces as the perfect opportunity to speak with new people and get involved.

3. Take the public transport to the co-working space

Co-working spaces contribute to a healthier working lifestyle as they are located in central and easy to access locations. Walking or taking the bike will not only help you stay in shape but will also help to tackle wider issues such as pollution and congestion.

Associate Professor Vareska van de Vrande says: "These communities of innovation can play a powerful role in developing businesses and entrepreneurial skills, but also in the development of cities and regions as a whole. People need to show an interest in their environment and what's happening around them, then have a willingness to contribute to the development of that community if they are to see genuine value manifest from the co-worker lifestyle."

New Buyers Guide to Cloud Phone Systems for Growing Businesses

The Guide focuses on the business trends in 2016 that will

shape decisions about what type of cloud phone system to buy and provides top tips



With more companies switching out their traditional telephone system in favour of a modern cloud based alternative, Foehn has produced a free and downloadable Buyers Guide for small and medium size businesses that are growing and considering a cloud phone system.

Cloud Phone Systems for Growing Businesses sets out why traditional business phone systems limit a company's ability to grow as quickly and easily as they would like and explains how companies can take more control of the management and administration of their communications. The Guide also focuses on the business trends in 2016 that will shape decisions about what type of cloud phone system to buy and provides top tips and considerations for businesses.

For further information, visit
www.foehn.co.uk



HOW FEAR AFFECTS BUSINESS

With oil price at record lows, increasing competition from China and emerging economies, the threat of terrorism, and the slow recovery from recession, cognitive neuroscientist and psychologist Dr Lynda Shaw argues that business leaders are feeling a surge in anxiety that they are not equipped to deal with and are less likely to take even calculated risks.

"Fear can be helpful because it alerts us to danger, whether justified or not, however fear can also wreak havoc on a business by choking creativity and ambition. As humans we are unconsciously programmed to avoid pain, physical or mental, if it interferes with

our chances at survival. When we are on fear alert we close down our focus in order to concentrate on the perceived threat. Excellent if we are truly in danger, but under normal business circumstances by narrowing our attention we are neglecting the bigger

picture and can't think creatively 'outside the box'. We stunt real progress and a lot of time and energy is wasted."

At the core of fear in business, is the fear of failing. "Whilst many successful business people have failed and will fail again, what makes them different to those who won't take risk is they either allow the time to examine a problem clearly regardless of complexity and make a strategic decision, or approach the challenge in a heuristic fashion using their mental shortcuts based upon past experience in a similar situation. Both methods are well thought out and to a certain extent still need a leap of faith in one's own ability and confidence.

On a personal level whether it is a small hiccup or a huge mistake most people will tell you the same thing; that these failures enabled learning. But that is all well and good if you are the only one affected. What if an entire business is affected by a poor decision?

Dr Shaw says: 'Fear is a major stumbling block for many business leaders. Fear itself can cause them to make decisions which seriously sabotage their chances of success. Failure can also become a self-fulfilling prophecy if a decision is not seen through properly. Moreover, another threat to an organisation's success is the fear that lives within its own walls. Business leaders can feel a strong need to protect themselves even if the psychological protective walls they build around themselves are actually making it harder for them to succeed.' At its extreme the clinical term for fear of failure, Atychiphobia, is an abnormal, persistent fear of failure, but fear as we all know at any level, can be insidious.

One solution to flushing out unwarranted fear is for leaders to break down the barriers and create a working environment that encourages employees to be brave, creative and positively engaged. Shaw believes having a series of goals which have to be achieved one by one helps with battling fear. "Even if your worst fears have become a reality, shrinking away from new business opportunities won't help you or your business.

Tips for Overcoming Fear in Business

1. Play Out the Worst Case Scenarios

When you refuse to think about your fears, they grow in your subconscious. Instead of letting that happen, drag them into the light of day and rationalise them. How likely are they to happen? It is important to contain fear and then find a way to work with it.

2. Break it down

Looking at the 'big picture' can feel overwhelming. So break down the risks and fears into small chunks and consult your experts along the way.

3. Create a support and mentoring system

Talk to someone with more experience than you, they might have some good ideas to help you move through it. Communicate your fears with your peers.

4. Accept failure

Failure is unavoidable. Keep in mind that one failure, or even a list of failures, doesn't mean that you're a failure.

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5. Reduce your stress

Take a few minutes to collect your thoughts if you are feeling very anxious. Fear is like a bully, you may believe it has a strong power over you but truly it is a coward and when you confront it, it should slowly fade away.

6. Control your fear

There is a part of the brain that is responsible for processing facial expressions and it picks up fear in others almost immediately. Control your fear, because others will notice if you don't.

7. Be positive

There is no greater rush than doing something positive that you were afraid of doing, whether it be giving a presentation or hiking up Kilimanjaro. Don't let fear deny you that pleasure. Have you ever heard someone say they regret doing a parachute jump?

8. You can make mistakes

As Winston Churchill said "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts", so don't be afraid of making mistakes. Mistakes give you knowledge and makes you stronger.

9. Promote success

Try and surround yourself with people who want you to succeed. This will help you be more determined and persevere despite your fears.

10. Preparation is key

Especially if you are making a speech or presentation. The more prepared you are the less likely you are to make a mistake or be asked a question you cannot answer. Don't rush difficult decisions.

www.drlyndashaw.com

Costa Book Awards 2015

Costa has announced the Costa Book Awards 2015 winners in the First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book categories.

The Costa Book Awards is the only major UK book prize that is open solely to authors resident in the UK and Ireland and also, uniquely, recognises the most enjoyable books across five categories – First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book - published in the last year.

The five winning authors who will now compete for the 2015 Costa Book of the Year are:

- Debut author **Andrew Michael Hurley** collects the Costa First Novel Award for *The Loney*, described by Stephen King as 'an amazing piece of fiction'
- **Kate Atkinson** wins the Costa Novel Award – for the second time in three years – with her ninth novel, *A God in Ruins*
- **Andrea Wulf** claims the Costa Biography Award for *The Invention of Nature: The Adventures of Alexander Von Humboldt, The Lost Hero of Science*, her biography of the great 'lost' scientist and explorer who inspired Darwin, foresaw the destructive impact of man on the world, and after whom more things have been named than anyone who has ever lived
- Scottish poet, writer and musician **Don Paterson** takes the Costa Poetry Award for his latest collection, *40 Sonnets*
- *The Lie Tree*, a Victorian murder mystery by children's writer **Frances Hardinge**, scoops the Costa Children's Book Award



The five Costa Book Award winners, each of whom will receive £5,000, were selected from 638 entries, and the books are now eligible for the ultimate prize - the 2015 Costa Book of the Year.

For additional information go to www.costa.co.uk/costa-book-awards.

The Quick Guide to Choosing The Right Vehicles For Your Fleet

It goes without saying they need to be reliable, economical, and above all, fit for purpose. It's strange then—but not unsurprising—to see many organisations base their decisions according to superficial factors like make, model, and lease cost.

This behaviour is known to lead to problems related to unsuitability and maintenance issues further down the line, or even early terminations or disputes around the lease agreement.

To make sure you avoid any of this hassle and find the right vehicles first time around, there are a few things you can do.

Firstly, define what you need in a vehicle by looking to managers and drivers and other key personnel who can help to pin down the exact HR roles and operational objectives it will support. By putting together a clear idea of your requirements before considering leasing costs, you'll have a much higher chance of finding vehicles to perform successfully over the long term.

A good fleet leasing and management

company will then work with you to help you understand the options and which vehicles best fit your requirements.

But hold on a minute, how do you come up with a requirement list?

For that, there are eight steps to consider, each with their own set of questions to ask yourself and ensure you find exactly the right vehicles for your fleet—guaranteed.

1. Passengers, Loads & Additional Features

- How many passengers will the vehicle carry on a regular basis?
- What loads will the car or van need to carry on a regular basis?
- What additional features are needed? (safety, luxuries)



- Are there any specific considerations that need to be made? (For vans, racking etc.)
- Does the vehicle have ergonomic features appropriate to the job? (ease of access, safe for mounting heavy loads).

2. Operating Cycle

- Where will the vehicle be driven? (motorways, town centres, country roads)
- What is the length of their journeys?
- How often will journeys be carried out?

3. Vehicle Efficiency

- Is the vehicle low in CO2 emissions and therefore low on tax? (Try our company car tax calculator [here](#))

4. The Drivers

- Have you ensured drivers have an input into the vehicle selection decision?
- Can you obtain manufacturer demonstrator vehicle to ensure they are suitable?
- Do your drivers have sufficient experience to drive the vehicle?
- Is the vehicle an appropriate choice over the long term? (Changing staff etc.)

5. Number of Vehicles

- What are your business expansion plans over the next five years?
- Will the company cover a larger geographical area or focus on other territories?

6. Costs

- Have you considered the whole life costs? (including fuel, tax, and maintenance)
- Are time limited or manufacturers specials unfairly influencing your decision?

7. Timing

- Do you need all vehicles in the first instance?
- Are you fully prepared to take delivery and get them on the road?

8. Seek Support

- If you change your decision in the future, will you have the opportunity to test drive alternative vehicles?
- What information and support is at your disposal during the leasing agreement?

Almost half of women across the UK not getting enough sleep

Impact of sleep problems and low awareness of sleep apnoea revealed by 'Reclaim Your Sleep' survey



Almost half of British women say they are not getting enough sleep and don't feel well-rested when they wake up. According to the findings from a survey of over 4,100 UK adults, supported by the Sleep Apnoea Trust Association, women are more likely than men to:

- **Have trouble sleeping (46% versus 36%)**
- **Wake up during the night and not be able to get back to sleep (36% versus 23%)**
- **Become irritable during the day because of their sleep problems (60% versus 47%)**
- **Feel less confidence in their appearance as a result of a bad night's sleep (33% versus 20%)**

Despite the extent of their sleep problems, only a minority of women visit their GP about sleep issues such as difficulty sleeping (25%) and snoring (6%)¹. These might be symptoms of a sleep disorder called sleep apnoea which if left untreated could lead to other more serious health problems such as stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is a debilitating condition affecting around 1.5 million adults in the UK. Pregnancy and the menopause can increase a woman's risk of having sleep apnoea, yet the majority of women in the UK are unaware of this. The symptoms present differently in women than men and include: softer snoring, lower report of sleepiness, insomnia, restless legs, fatigue/day-time sleepiness, depression, headaches and muscle pain. The low level of awareness of the symptoms, risk factors and impact of untreated sleep apnoea also revealed in the survey could be hindering effective diagnosis amongst this high risk group.

Professor John Stradling, a sleep expert from Oxford University says, "Often women think that feeling exhausted is just part of modern life when in fact it could be something more serious. Many are not aware that they may have sleep apnoea meaning that they are missing out on the medical advice or treatment that they need. Remaining untreated leaves women at risk of reduced quality of life and serious health conditions, so it is important that they speak to their GP about any sleep problems that they have – the sooner their sleep issues are addressed by a sleep expert, the better."

The impact of sleep deprivation on appearance is much more prominent in women than men with women admitting that sleeping problems have caused them to put on weight and made their skin look less healthy.

Bill Johnston, Chairman, from the Sleep Apnoea Trust Association says, "Sleep issues could be a sign of sleep apnoea. The overall lack of awareness around sleep apnoea symptoms and its impact on a person's health may mean that many are suffering in silence so it is important that we work with healthcare professionals to uncover this missing group and help minimise the impact of sleep problems on their lives. Women also need to help their doctor understand how they sleep to avoid misdiagnosis. Discussing their sleep quality, and any difficulties sleeping (such as insomnia, frequent awakenings, snoring and sleepiness or tiredness during the day), will really help."

Women can visit <http://reclaimyoursleep.resmed.com/en-gb.html> to find out more about sleep and dealing with sleep problems.