


PA ENTERPRISE

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

November 2016



What is your
body language
telling colleagues
about you?

The etiquette of sympathy
when a colleague suffers a loss

The importance of
Colour at work

National Minimum Wage: How does the increase affect you?

Mums forced out due to lack of flexible jobs

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Mums forced out due to lack of flexible jobs

Workingmums.co.uk calls for improved education on employment rights and toughening up of legislation

Nearly one in five working mums have been forced to leave their jobs because a flexible working request has been turned down, according to Workingmums.co.uk's annual survey.

The survey of over 2,000 women in Workingmums.co.uk's 10th anniversary year shows that over a quarter of mums in work have had a flexible working request turned down. Some 12% said their employer did not even seem to consider their request at all and over a quarter said the

reason given for turning down the request was not one which is allowable under flexible working legislation.

For women currently on maternity leave the figures were higher: 35% of those who had had a flexible working request turned down had had it rejected on grounds other than reasons which are allowable under flexible working legislation. Some 68% said they did not feel the rejection was justified. However, 79% did not appeal. This was not surprising given only 5% appealed successfully. Some 41% of those on maternity leave said refusal of flexible working would mean they might not return to their job, yet 50% said they had not discussed flexible working before going on maternity leave.

The survey shows that availability of flexible working is the key career development issue for working mums, with some element of homeworking the most valued, particularly for those wanting to work full time. Other barriers included childcare costs - half of women currently on maternity leave said childcare costs could prevent them returning to work.

Many employers are failing to retain the skills of working mums after maternity leave. Some 60% of women said they changed jobs after maternity leave and 58% say they are interested in starting their own business or becoming a franchisee, with 40% of these actively pursuing ideas and plans. Research has shown that the ability to be more in control of their hours - not necessarily to work fewer hours - is a key driver for those women who



want to start businesses after having children.

The survey also showed:

- **Job shares are still not used by many employers. Only 4% of women said they were in a job share, despite 55% wanting to work part time**
- **57% of working mums struggle with holiday and after school childcare**
- **46% use grandparents to reduce childcare costs**
- **38% pay no childcare costs as they use family/friends to cover pick-ups or work school-friendly hours.**

Gillian Nissim, founder of Workingmums.co.uk, said: "When I founded Workingmums.co.uk 10 years ago, it was difficult to find flexible new jobs and many women who were working flexibly felt their careers had been sidelined. We've come a long way and many now see the huge business benefits of creating a more family friendly workforce. Our survey shows 10% of women describe their job as extremely flexible, for instance. But there is still more to be done to create the kind of workplaces that work for people who need flexibility, for whatever reason. That means encouraging and supporting employers to implement flexible working so that they do not lose employees who typically have years of experience in their roles."

Majority of Line Managers are not trained in supporting staff with long term conditions

Four in five (87%) line managers are not given any training on how to support people with long term conditions including cancer, according to new research by Macmillan Cancer Support.

A YouGov survey of 1,010 line managers also revealed a misconception, a quarter thought making reasonable adjustments to allow someone with cancer to keep working would be difficult. However over two thirds (69%) of those who had had to make reasonable adjustments said it was easy to do.

Approximately one in three people living with cancer in the UK are of working age⁵. With improvements in survival rates for cancer and more people working for longer and retiring later, employers need to be able to support the growing numbers of people with cancer in the workplace, predicted to reach 1.7 million by 2030.

Liz Egan, Working Through Cancer Programme Lead at Macmillan Cancer Support, says: "It's vital that managers feel comfortable talking about cancer with employees who are undergoing, or have been through, treatment. And they need to listen to and understand what the employee's needs are including individual adjustments which could enable them to stay in or return to work."

"Supporting staff the right way has business benefits. Not only to fulfil legal obligations, but also in retaining knowledgeable staff, and saving on the costs of recruitment and training. It fosters loyalty, and drives a positive company image to customers and potential employees. Macmillan offers free training and advice to help make this as easy and rewarding as possible."

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



Employers can access information, support and training on managing someone with cancer by visiting www.macmillan.org.uk/work and signing up to Macmillan At Work.

National Minimum Wage: How does the increase affect you?

As the National Minimum Wage for young people in the UK has been increased by the government, the UK200Group warns SME business owners about the changes, what they mean for employers, and some of the most common mistakes made by business owners.



The UK200Group is the UK's leading membership association of independent quality-assured accountancy and law firms, and its member firms act as key business advisers to around 150,000 SMEs across the UK. Because of this, the UK200Group is warning business owners to ensure they don't get in trouble as a result of the new regulations.

Firstly, what is the difference between the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage?

Very little – just that the National Living Wage applies to working people over the age of 25, whereas the National Minimum Wage concerns the earnings of those who are 24 and younger.

The new minimum wage rates are as follows:

- £6.95 per hour for workers aged 21 – 24
- £5.55 per hour for workers aged 18 – 20
- £4.00 per hour for workers under the age of 18 who have finished compulsory education
- £3.40 per hour for apprentices under 19 years old, or in the first year of their apprenticeship

Jonathan Russell, Managing member of UK200Group member firm ReesRussell, said,

"Increases in minimum wages are inevitable and, short of breaking the law, there is no way around them. There is no excuse for underpaying staff.

"My advice would be that, of course, you must pay your staff the minimum wage. Many business owners complain that this makes their businesses unprofitable, and I would encourage them to look at streamlining other parts of their business. Perhaps processes could be made more efficient by removing bureaucracy, or by grouping them together to increase economies of scale.

"By investing in the productivity of your workforce, you may be able to increase your turnover without having to employ more staff."

One issue that can be easily avoided is a lack of information about wages for apprentices.

Small, owner-managed businesses have sometimes seen an apprenticeship scheme as a great way of giving a young person a start to their career, taking on young talent and paying a relatively low wage for the trouble.

When taking on an apprentice, many don't realise that the minimum wage for an apprentice can rise significantly after one year, depending on age. If the apprentice is aged 16 when taken on, they can be paid the apprenticeship minimum wage until they turn 19. However, if the apprentice is 19 when taken on, after a year of employment they would be entitled to £5.55 per hour, the minimum wage for workers aged 18 to 20.

Another fact which is often overlooked by business owners who take on an apprentice is that the apprentice must be paid for time spent training or studying for a relevant qualification, whether while at work or at a training organisation.

There are risks associated with underpayment of employees: there are knock-on effects such as a potential loss of motivation and productivity, and difficulty in hiring new workers and retaining existing ones. Furthermore, there is potential for the firm's reputation to be damaged, especially by the government, which has the right to 'name and shame' those who underpay their staff.

Spark of Genius at Christmas

If you are looking for a new toy this Christmas that is going to keep everyone in the family entertained, look no further than the new Rubik's Spark by Rubik's Cube.

The new electronic addition to the Rubik's family shares the traditional Rubik's Cube design with a modern twist. The Cube uses lights, sounds and sensor technology and is controlled by tilting, turning and quick movements.

For the past 40 years, Rubik's Cube is world-renowned for its complexity, creating frustration for the players. Following the iconic 80's game, Rubik's Spark allows the player to think three-dimensionally to challenge them with its intelligent design.

There are six different gaming modes with five of them having 26 levels of difficulty to challenge the gamer. Rubik's Spark can be used as a multiplayer game as well as a single player which allows users you to challenge their friends and family.

Chris Trussell of Rubik's Brand Ltd explains 'The Rubik's Spark is the perfect Christmas gift which has a modern and fun feel that appeals to the kid in everyone.'

The Rubik's Spark can be found at toy and games stores or direct from www.rubiks.com



Black Friday & Cyber Monday: How to save the most money on Christmas presents

Two of the biggest days for retail in 2016 will soon be upon us, and UK consumers are after a bargain to kick off their Christmas shopping.



But how can shoppers make the most of the deals they find in store and online on Black Friday and Cyber Monday?

1. Use a price comparison website or app.

On idealo.co.uk, consumers can compare the prices of nearly all the big ticket items on their families' Christmas lists.

Prices for everything from the latest smartphone to top toys, games and other tech items can be scouted out online to ensure the price paid is the best available.

TIP: Download the [idealo](http://idealo.co.uk) app (free) before hitting the high street. Use the barcode scanner to see if your purchase is cheaper online.

2. Found a deal? Double check it!

While Black Friday and Cyber Monday do offer consumers the opportunity to buy hot items at bargain prices, consumers should be vigilant that a deal really is a great deal. Consumer editor at idealo.co.uk, Katy Phillips, advises:

"Don't be tempted to make impulse purchases on Black Friday without first checking what the market price is for a present. The savviest shoppers will have a list of what they are hoping to buy in the Black Friday or Cyber Monday sales, as well as already having their desired price range in mind. This way, you're less likely to buy something 'cheap' on impulse only to then later realise it wasn't much of a deal at all."

3. Black Friday isn't the only option for deal-hunters

If the idea of battling the crowds on Black Friday is a daunting one then fear not. There are bargains to be found on a wide range of gifts right up until the big day itself, especially online. Once shoppers have their list sorted, visit idealo.co.uk and see which shop is offering the best price. If the current best price is still over budget, then setting a Price Alert is a great idea – you'll then be the first to know when the price drops, so you can snap up that coveted present at a price that suits you.

Update your office with innovative, re-positionable, made-to-measure wall murals

A new range of beautiful made-to-measure wall murals that customers can crop, enlarge and even reposition is launched in the UK by innovative wallpaper creators, Pop Walls.

Interior designers, office designers and home decorating enthusiasts can choose one of seven exclusive new collections created by some of London's most exciting artists. The designs can be customized by zooming and cropping online, for printing and home delivery.

Chris Hobbs, Creative Director of Pop Walls, explains:

"The artists that we have exclusively collaborated with to design our wall murals are some of Britain's most exciting artists and we're very proud to be bringing their work into people's homes."

"Our Pop Paper is very practical as well as high quality. Customers can resize and crop their chosen design online, and then order for home delivery for only £45 a square metre."

The artists that Pop Walls has chosen to work with have produced exclusive collections and are some of London's best-loved illustrators. Artists include Rob Lowe, whose mesmeric illustrations have been published worldwide, Mariana Rodrigues whose work expresses her love of nature, and Jo Bird, noted for her black and white illustrations reminiscent of pen and ink drawings.

Says Chris Hobbs, "For someone who wants to redecorate their home or office in an original way, the process is easy. They choose an artist whose design matches their personality, then simply customise the wallpaper online and use the built-in calculator until it's a perfect fit."

"When their design is delivered a few days later, they apply it to the walls without paste and can reposition it as many times as they like. There is no mess and no waste. Our customers can even move their wall mural to another room if they feel like it."



The collections can be seen at www.popwalls.co.uk

Increased mobility for office workers could literally save lives

Mobility is increasingly important in the modern office, offering a range of benefits from decreased commuting and flexible work schedules to improved communication and personal productivity. But this flexibility could be far more important than comfort and convenience. Sennheiser, a leading provider of premium headsets and speakerphone solutions, looks at how effective use of mobile headsets could help us stay active and healthy.



A new research paper published in The Lancet suggests the World Health Organisation's previously recommended 150 minutes of exercise a week may not be enough. Experts found that those who sat for eight or more hours per day, common in many offices around the world, saw a 30% increased risk of dying during a follow up period of 2 to 18 years than those who sat for less than four hours and spent one hour active each day. The message is clear – getting up and staying active daily is a vital part of staying healthy.

Fortunately this is something that's being acknowledged by more and more companies in the UK, and awareness generated by events such as Vitality's Britain's Healthiest Workplace can only help to raise awareness of the importance of employee health and wellbeing. But for some workers these goals can be difficult to achieve, with many associating with 'being tied to a desk' in order to hit targets and effectively communicate with clients and customers. Fortunately, modern technology is able to add increased mobility to any workforce without affecting productivity, ensuring that these issues can be addressed.

"The risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle are not new, but this research puts an added emphasis on finding ways to remain active every day, especially for office workers," said Jane Craven, Sales Director, Sennheiser Telecommunications. "Many may think they don't have the time to take these sorts of breaks, but there

are a number of ways modern headsets and a change of habits can help."

One option is to consider opportunities to build exercise into a working day while remaining in touch through a headset. This might include parking a little further from the office, taking a full lunch break rather than eating at a desk, and walking around the office and between departments rather than being reliant on emails and phone calls to communicate.

"Modern forms of communication now make it far easier for people to stay in contact without being tied to a desk," Craven continued. "For example, a Bluetooth headset can seamlessly switch between softphone and mobile, allowing someone to initiate a call and stay connected while moving around both in and outside of the office."

And it's not just physical exercise that's important – a further study co-commissioned by Public Health England stresses that office workers should spend a minimum of two hours, and ideally four hours, on their feet at work. The study's authors called for changes in the workplace to encourage standing, such as sit/stand desks, but so far take up has been slow in the UK.

"Even for employees who have no call to leave the office as part of their work, there are opportunities to adopt a healthy lifestyle simply by standing and moving around the immediate area," said Craven. "Wireless headsets or wired headsets with dual-connectivity offer far more freedom than tethered models, and can help to actively discourage people from sitting for an undue length of time. Mobility has an important role to play in helping people to stay in touch on the move, but also in staying active without affecting productivity."

UK's first Matcha Tea blended especially for exercise

T-tox has launched the UK's first ever blended Matcha tea especially formulated for improved wellbeing, health and fitness.

The T-tox blended Matcha tea range is made using only the best ceremonial grade Matcha. The benefits of Matcha are well documented, it is evidenced to boost metabolism, burn calories, naturally detoxify, calm the mind, relax the body, enhance mood, aid concentration, promote healthy skin tone and lower blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol.



Matcha Energise (pre-workout)

Better prepares you for activity and exertion by blending Japanese Matcha green tea powder, Ginger powder, Guarana powder, Ginseng powder and Gingko Biloba powder. RRP £25 for 40g (63p per cup)

Matcha Recovery (post workout)

Improves recovery from activity and exertion by blending Japanese Matcha green tea powder, Peppermint powder, Nettle powder, Milk Thistle powder, Spirulina and Lavender powder. RRP £25 for 40g (63p per cup)

Matcha Health (everyday drinking)

Overall active day performance improvement by blending Japanese Matcha green tea powder and Moringa powder. RRP £25 for 40g (63p per cup)

All available from www.t-tox.com

What is your Body Language telling colleagues about you?

Have you ever thought about what you're saying to your colleagues when you're not speaking or typing an email to them? Your body language can nonverbally communicate your feelings, whether that is positive or negative, and can affect how your co-workers perceive you.

By Shannon Gausepohl, Business News Daily

Psychology Today reports that people's needs, feelings, thoughts and intentions are processed by the limbic brain and expressed in our body language. For example, whether a baby lives in Boston or Borneo, she'll purse or pucker her lips if she doesn't like a certain food, and her eyes will dilate when she sees her mother. These expressions are very simple and binary, displaying either comfort or discomfort. From the time we are born, we show through our facial and body gestures whether we are warm or cold, contented or displeased, happy or sad — even if we don't say it in words.

"Through our body language, we alter the perception of a word," said body language expert and author Greg Williams. "For instance, we can say the same thing multiple ways and project a different meaning with each of those pronouncements based on the body language gestures that accompany our sentiments."

Examples of body language in action

Most people are oblivious to the subtle signals they send and receive via nonverbal cues, Williams said. "It's unfortunate because if they were more aware of such signals, they'd uncover undisclosed meanings that they might use to benefit their plight in life," he added.

Williams gave examples of everyday signals that affect how people perceive what we say:

Forehead. When someone wrinkles their forehead, it's a sign of stress. Thus, the absence of wrinkles is a sign of calm and easygoingness.

Eyes (wide open versus closed and narrow).

Wide-eyes indicate someone's attentiveness, interest and open-mindedness. A narrowing of the eyes signals a higher degree of focus on the subject, which is usually accompanied with a furled brow/forehead.

Smile. A genuine smile is denoted by turned up corners of the lips.

Hand placement. When hands are held close to the body, they tend to convey a need to protect the body. When hands are held away from the body, they convey more of a sense of openness, trust and approachability.

Foot placement. When the feet of two people engaged in a conversation are facing one another, the individuals are mentally engaged in their conversation. When one person turns a foot away, that usually means that individual has mentally begun to disengage in the conversation and soon he or she will exit in that direction.

Body language in the workplace

The above examples can also be found in an office setting, though there are certain cues to keep in mind when in the workplace.

"When you're in a business environment ... there



tends to be a more serious mindset that one has about him or herself, along with a heightened sense of body language gestures,” Williams said.

He added that co-workers are often “looking for certain things” to denote what hidden meaning might be associated with the way something is stated. A person’s inflection might disclose a different meaning than the word conveyed, or there may be a sense of trepidation that is perceived based on a body language gesture.

According to Psych Central, these body language gestures can be detrimental at work:

Seeming uninterested. When we’re feeling friendly and comfortable with the people we’re interacting with, we tend to angle our bodies toward them and subtly match their movements. Be cognizant of where your body is positioned and that you’re not angled toward the door when engaged in conversation with people. This shows a lack of interest and distraction. Instead, subtly mirror or mimic their gestures. For example, without being too obvious, place your hands on the table if theirs are, or lean slightly back in your

chair if they are doing the same. This expresses harmoniousness and alignment.


Nervous gestures. Leg jiggling, hair twirling, face touching — any motion you do when nervous or bored — indicates insecurity. These gestures can cost you the trust you’ve built with your supervisors. If you’re prone to hand movements, find a place for them to rest instead.

Eye contact. Your boss can tell a lot about your emotional intelligence just by the way you look at people, including how much you respect, appreciate and are interested in them and your work. A good formula for maintaining eye contact that’s confident and certain (read: not creepy) is to hold a person’s gaze for approximately 50 to 60 percent of the time you’re interacting with him or her.

Williams reminded workers to take the time to recognise what your body is doing in day-to-day interactions in the office. It may change the way you perceive what others are saying to you and vice versa.

The importance of colour in business

In business many of us who present, network and work with teams internally and externally are memorable. But are we memorable for all the right reasons?



Are we perceived as unique, presentable professionals in our people-centered work environment? Do we confidently engage with clients, prospects and colleagues with an authentic message and personal presence? Do we consider the impact of colour on how we progress in business?

Helen Venables, Managing Director of House of Colour does; every day with her clients and 100-person team in fact. "What people say about your business and your brand is reinforced by your interactions with others and so being memorable, conveying the right messages about ourselves, but also differentiating ourselves is increasingly important.

HISTORY OF COLOUR ANALYSIS

In the 20th century the Swiss artist Johannes Itten is attributed with being the first person to associate colours with four types of people and the twelve point colour wheel which is widely used today on paint charts for home decorators, in dyeing kits and in hairdressers' colour charts.

Itten and others established that each individual has a basic skin pigment which falls into one of four groupings which are defined by the unique combination of depth, hue and tone; in colour analysis these have become known as Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter because of the pattern of colours found in each group. Two of these groups reflect warm-based colours which complement Spring and Autumn; the other two reflect cool-based colours which enhance Summer and Winter.

"Your brand exists through the people who deliver it. Enabling personalities to shine through whilst being congruent with your product, brand or service is key and that is why personal styling and wearing colours that allow you to look your best is a vital part of your business's image and brand."

So how does it work? House of Colour personal stylists use a selection of drapes to test what colours suits each client. Colours are compared with the pigments that sit underneath a client's skin to determine which colours of clothing and accessories lift the face, and which ones are more unflattering. Styling is also a key part of the process to find shapes that flatter not hide. And don't be fooled into thinking this is just for the ladies. Venables says: "You will be amazed about how the right coloured shirt, jacket or tie can change the look of our male clients. But with either sex you will see the difference instantly. That moment when a colour lights up a face is often an absolute lightbulb moment that changes our clients and enables them to be far more visible in their workplace for all the right reasons."

In fact, Venables and her team believe wearing the right colours and style determines how your day will progress from the moment you get dressed in the morning, as the right clothes not only make you more visible but empowers, sets the right tone and enables personal growth.

House of Colour Marketing Director Brian Coyle himself a stylist, had a very successful corporate career which started as a graduate at BT but he was ambitious and wanted to get promoted. It was suggested to him that he was styled by House of Colour which he was delighted to try because he loved clothes. His subsequent change in style meant there were more compliments, conversations, confidence and inclusivity in his work life. Much greater visibility to senior management followed, which lead to two promotions in three years.

He says: "Colour is key to every part of our lives and we see every day how what you wear can affect how you feel and how you are perceived. The right colours make us feel positive about ourselves and make us visible, whilst the wrong ones can make us look drained and unapproachable and can alter our moods negatively. Through what we wear we can influence how we feel and how others feel about us."

'House of Colour in Business' sessions take place all over the country - from individual to small, focused sessions, or interactive workshops through to entertaining key note events. All sessions are enlightening and friendly and are run by the most thoroughly trained, highly qualified personal stylists in the country.

www.houseofcolour.co.uk



Pressure at work damages our relationships, says new report

Charities call for employers to offer flexible working and relationship support

Research has highlighted the immense pressure felt by UK employees to prioritise work ahead of relationships. One in three workers says their boss thinks work should come before family life, and a third also say their employer thinks the ideal employee should be available 24 hours a day. This is according to a new report from Relate and Relationships Scotland, which concludes that overworked employees' relationships suffer as the build-up of stress at work takes its toll.

The research also found that:

- **33% of employees say their employer thinks work should be the top priority in their lives.**
- **30% of employees say they feel pressured to work by their manager even when they are ill.**
- **21% of employees say attending to care responsibilities is frowned upon at work.**
- **27% of employees say they work longer hours than they would choose and this is damaging their physical or mental wellbeing.**
- **25% of employees agree that stress at home adversely affects them at work.**
- **43% of employees say they would like their employer to offer relationship support.**

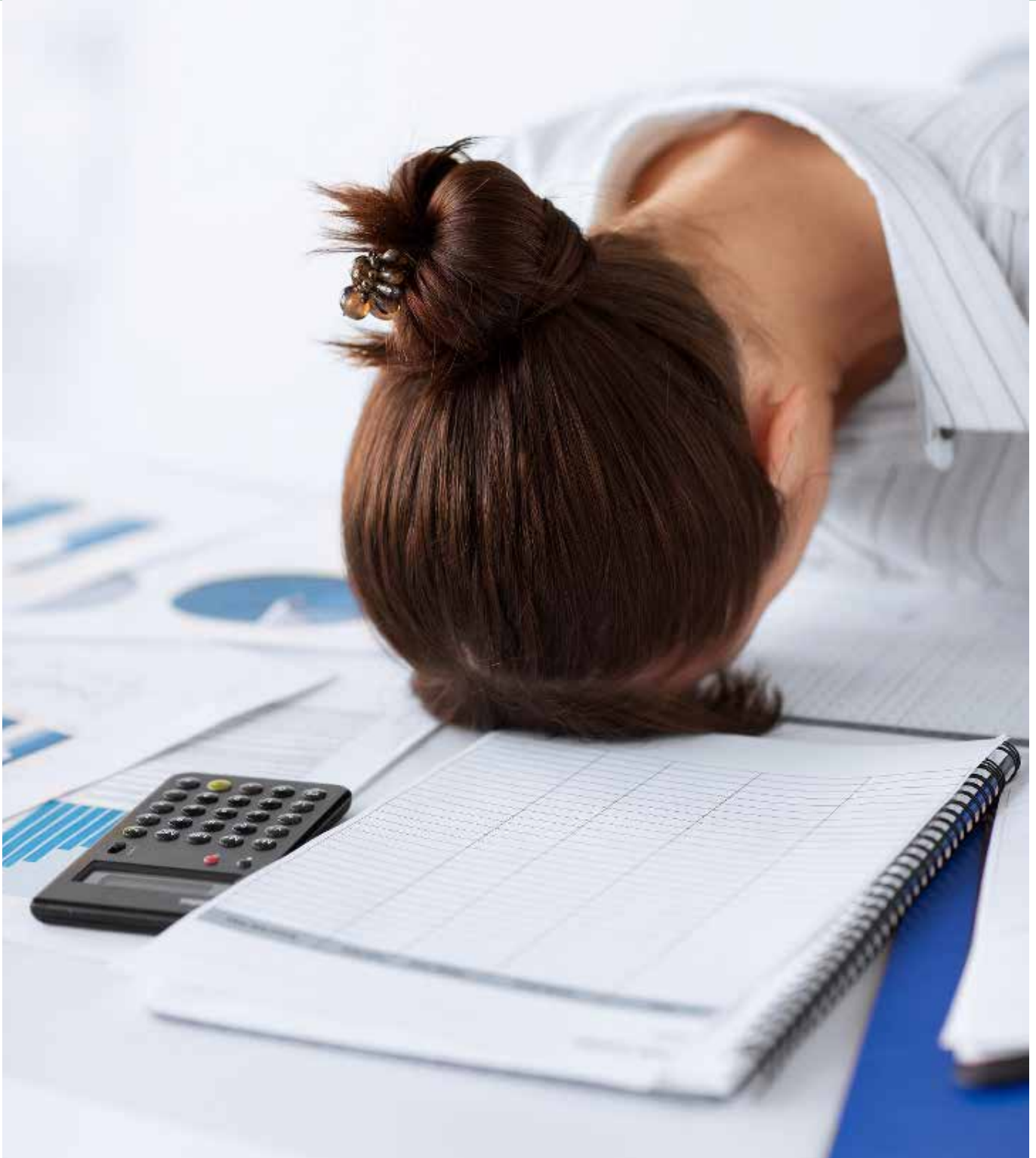
Relationship counsellors believe work-life balance is the third biggest strain on couple relationships (after affairs and not understanding each other, and ahead of money worries and different sex drives).

Employees struggling to balance work and family are more likely to become ill, perform less well and resign; but those satisfied with work and work-life balance are more likely to perform better and be more productive. The Labour of Love or Love vs Labour report calls for employers to aspire to offer flexible working arrangements as default and to provide free relationship support as part of Employee Assistance Programmes.

Manchester University's Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, President of Relate, said: "As this study highlights, work-life balance in this country is shockingly poor and this is hugely damaging for our relationships and overall wellbeing - as well as for productivity. Employers need to take more responsibility for the pressure that stress and lack of work-life balance can put on relationships at home."

As well as the impact of work pressures on relationships at home, the report also looks at workplace relationships with colleagues and bosses. Worryingly, the study reveals an undercurrent of bullying, with 12% of employees saying that their boss behaves in an intimidating way towards them. But the good news is that 63% of employees say they have a good relationship with their boss and three quarters of employees (75%) reported good relationships with colleagues.

Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE continued: "It's reassuring that on the whole people have



good relationships with their colleagues. However, given the alarming undercurrent of workplace bullying highlighted by the study, we also suggest employers think carefully about how they can better foster good workplace relationships."

Labour of Love or Love vs Labour is the first in a series of reports from a major piece of research by Relate and Relationships Scotland. Over 5000 UK adults were surveyed as part of The Way We Are Now study, providing a unique window into the current state of the nation's relationships.

Less family time and more stress as workloads soar in UK offices

New research suggests that workloads in offices around the UK have gone up markedly over the last year, resulting in increased stress levels as employees work longer hours and have less time for their families and holidays.

These are the key findings of an independent survey, commissioned by collaboration and work management platform Wrike, about digital working culture and its impact on the lives of office workers in the UK, France and Germany.

Rising workloads due to staff shortages

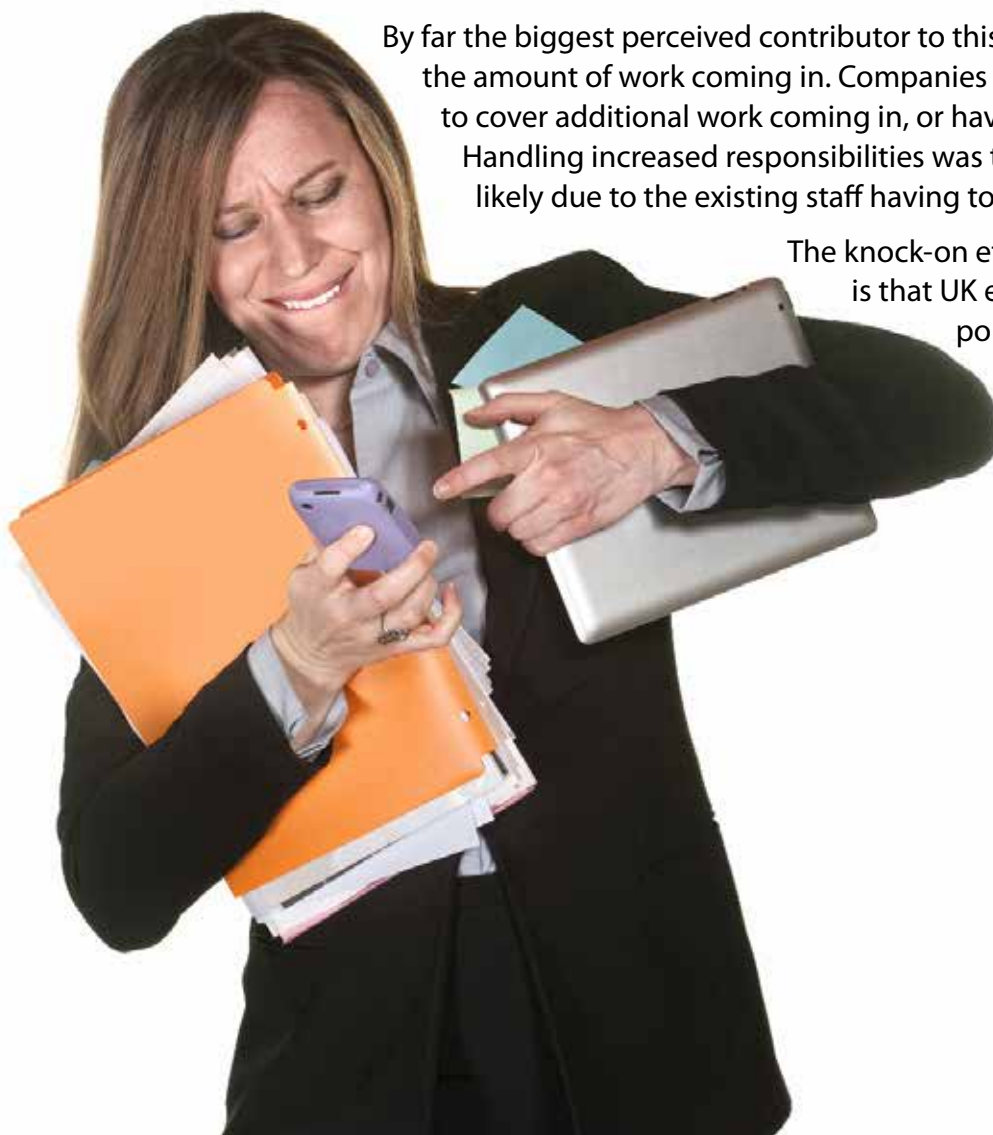
Nearly six in ten (58%) felt that their workload had gone up to some extent, with a fifth stating it had gone up 'significantly.'

By far the biggest perceived contributor to this is that staffing does not match the amount of work coming in. Companies are either not hiring more staff to cover additional work coming in, or have had to cut their workforce. Handling increased responsibilities was the third most frequent cause, likely due to the existing staff having to pick up the slack.

The knock-on effect of changing workloads is that UK employees across all sectors polled work longer hours to get the job done (47%) than a year ago, with a third of managers confirming that they expect workers to put in extra time and take fewer breaks to tick off their growing task lists.

Stress levels mount as time off is harder to come by

The biggest impact of this changing workload culturally was an increase in perceived stress levels: nearly two thirds of respondents concerned stated that they were feeling more stressed compared to a year ago (62%). This put the UK second only to Germany,



where two-thirds felt their stress level had increased, and slightly ahead of France (60%).

The Wrike survey also reveals that changing workload has a dramatic effect on time available for family and holidays. It shows that close to a third of those affected now spend less time with their family than a year ago, 28% have less time available to take for holidays and a quarter now work more at weekends than they used to.

Perhaps we can take some comfort in knowing that this drop in personal time was felt even more strongly in the other markets, with more than half the respondents concerned in Germany and well over a third in France stating that their family time had decreased.

Part-time working is a pipe dream

Taken together, only a fifth of UK workers think their working hours are fine, and three in five (59%) would work fewer hours – either if they could afford it financially or their workloads could be adjusted accordingly.

Technology as a saviour?

Technology is perceived by the majority as being key to helping workers stay abreast of their expanding task list, making it easier to work remotely, share information, and increase productivity. In fact, in spite of rising workloads, more than a quarter of workers felt they and their teams had become more productive over the last year.

Andrew Filev, founder and CEO of Wrike, commented: "Much has been made of the blurring of lines between work and private life. Our study shows that it's not so much a blurring of those worlds but a progressive decline of personal time in favour of work time.

"The problem is that workloads are growing exponentially, but the systems and processes we have are not keeping up - and that is taking a toll on workers. They need better ways of managing the sheer volume of work requests and demands. At the same time, business leaders need a clear

view of workloads – and realistic expectations as to the amount of work staff can handle at once, without burning out.

"You wouldn't overload a piece of machinery and expect it to last long without failure. The same principles apply to humans, especially if you expect them to produce high quality work on a consistent basis."

The results in detail

- Workloads have gone up over the last year for 58% of UK respondents, 72% in Germany and 77% in France
- Working hours had gone up for 47% over the last year, compared to 56% in France and 61% in Germany.
- 62% of UK respondents with changed workloads stated that they were feeling more stressed compared to a year ago. Those with the highest perceived increases in workload were also the most stressed (83%). The most stressed country in the survey was Germany (66%), with the UK ranking second (62%) and France third (60%).
- In the UK, close to a third (31%) now spend less time with their family than a year ago, 28% have less time available to take for holidays and a quarter (25%) now work more at weekends than they used to, due to their changed workload. By contrast, 51% of respondents in Germany and 41% in France stated that their family time had decreased.
- UK employees believe that their line manager expects them to work longer hours (34%) and to take fewer breaks (27%) to get the job done.
- Those perceptions appear to be on the mark, with 40% of managers saying they now expect their employees to work longer hours and 33% saying they need to take fewer breaks to meet that increase in demand on them.

The Etiquette of Sympathy: when a colleague or client suffers a loss

When a colleague, co-worker or business associate loses a family member, do you find yourself stuck on the etiquette of sympathy? Do you wonder how you should handle this kind of situation? Do you worry that you will use the wrong words or that you will intrude on the other person's grief?

By: Lydia Ramsey



As a result of not knowing how best to handle the situation, how often have you ended up not doing or saying anything and later regretting it?

When someone you work with suffers a loss, the kindest thing you can do is to acknowledge the event and show that you care. It is just as important to show your sorrow in a business relationship as it is in a personal one. Don't withhold your support because you are uncomfortable. It's not about you.

When you see the family, don't be afraid to mention the name of the deceased. In spite of what you may think, this doesn't make people feel any worse. You are honoring their loss.

Acknowledge all the family members

Introduce yourself and spend time with them, not just the people you know. No one should have to guess who you are and what your connection is to their loss. Be prepared to introduce yourself and explain your relation to the deceased.

Share your fondest memories of the deceased with the family

This is a time when people need to hear stories about the person they have just lost. Laughter and happy stories are healing and are in no way disrespectful to anyone.

It is not unusual to go the funeral or visitation when you did not know the person who died. You are going for your colleague or friend, the survivor, who is suffering.

Be prepared to listen

The bereaved relative may want to share feelings. A lengthy verbal response from you is not required. All that is needed is an available ear and a sympathetic nod. It's all right to say, "How are you feeling?" When you do, be sure you listen for the answer.

Attend the service if you can, no matter what is on your schedule

It is comforting for family to see the people who

care about their loss.

Write a note of condolence in addition to attending the service

People will keep those handwritten expressions of sympathy and treasure them for many years.

Whatever you do, don't send your sympathy via e-mail unless you are in Outer Mongolia and that is your only option. Electronic mail lacks the personal touch that this painful time deserves.

Offer to help in whatever way you can in order to leave the family free to grieve

The most mundane chores like walking the dog or mowing the grass can be a tremendous help.

Once the funeral is over, stay in touch

Reaching out as time goes by can be more meaningful than your initial response at the time of the death.

Forget what people say about a year of grief- grief lasts longer than a year

Mark the date of the death on your calendar. Call, visit or send a note on the anniversary of the loss

Part of building business relationships can be sharing the saddest of times. If you know what is expected, you will be more confident and more likely to do what serves others best.

About the Author:

Lydia Ramsey is a business etiquette and modern manners expert who helps individuals and organisations add the polish that builds profits. Thousands of people have attended her keynote presentations, seminars and conference breakout sessions.

Sign up for her free monthly newsletter at www.lydiaramsey.com and receive *The 21 Commandments Of Business Etiquette For The 21st Century* free.