

PA ENTERPRISE

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

February 2018

**What does it take
for a woman to
become CEO**

**Common career
ruts and how to
get out of them**

**Is your job making
you fat and
unhappy?**

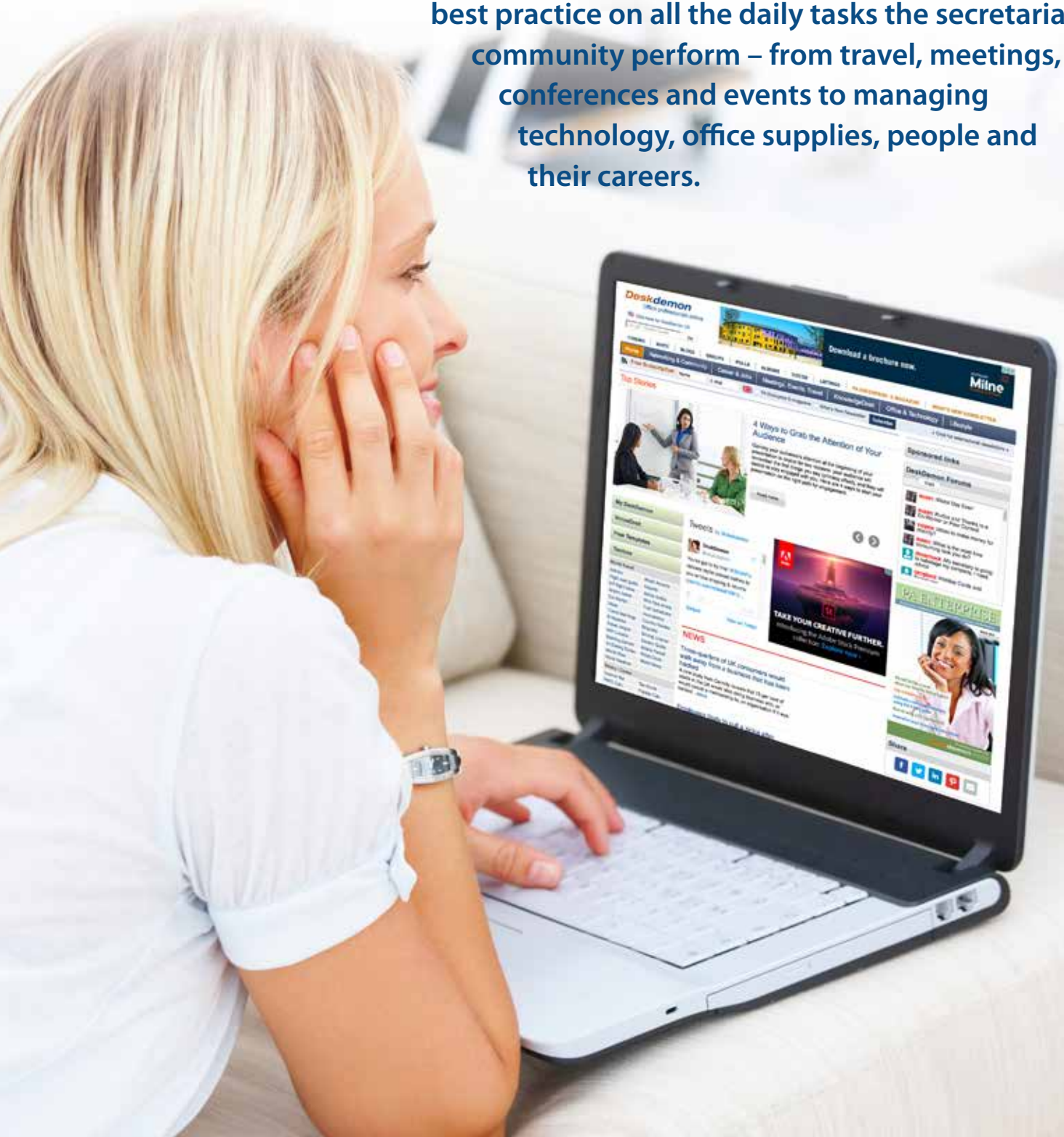
**Employers urged to 'normalise'
menopause in the workplace**

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Working from home is key to productivity

Working from home now accounts for 13% of the UK workforce, but there is potential for many more of us to reap the rewards of home-working. While many companies offer flexible working, or the option to work from home, employees often feel resistant to the idea, opting to stay in the office to 'prove' they're working.

However over half (53%) of workers feel they'd be more productive if they could work outside the office, being free to work without unnecessary meetings, confusing email chains, or long calls.

General job satisfaction and happiness increases in people who work from home, being in comfortable familiar surroundings where you can enjoy a greater degree of control over your immediate environment.

Working from home also means employees are less likely to be exposed to illnesses, due to avoiding packed public transport, or busy offices where they may be forced to be in close proximity to ill co-workers.

Furthermore, the UK is estimated to lose £300 billion by 2030 due to lost time during traffic congestion. Working from home eliminates this time wastage, helping employees, their employers, and the economy. Reductions in commuting time can help improve worker mental health, reduce tiredness, and increase overall productivity by giving them greater flexibility.



Work From Home Week (15th-21st January) helped to spread the word about the benefits of working from home, with founder Adam Cox championing worker flexibility and increased productivity:

'Technology means that most of what needed to happen in an office can happen at home. While it won't work for certain industries such as catering or building it certainly is viable for most office based sectors. We have found that productivity can actually increase significantly as employees are no longer experiencing the same level of distractions or interruptions.'

- ▶ ***Over half (53%) of workers feel they'd be more productive if they could work outside the office***
- ▶ ***The number of people regularly working from home has risen to 4.2 million in the last decade***
- ▶ ***An additional 1.8 million people would like to work from home but are not given the chance***

One in four workers don't do any exercise at all

New research from CV-Library reveals that while many UK employees want to stay healthy, many struggle to fit workouts around work

From increasing focus at work to reducing the number of sick days, businesses clearly benefit if employees stay healthy. But it seems like a lot of workers struggle to find enough time to hit the gym. In fact, new research from CV-Library, the job board, has revealed that this is something many professionals struggle with.

Having surveyed 1,200 UK workers, CV-Library found that 59.4% of people try to exercise during the working week. However, this may be easier said than done, as 24% of them fail to do any training at all and 31.6% only work up a good sweat once or twice a week at the most. And despite employees' good intentions it seems as if prioritising work often gets in the way, with two-thirds skipping workouts because they've had to stay late at the office.

Given the disparity between professionals' ambitions and the reality of employment, it's hardly surprising that 66% of professionals wish they could exercise more throughout the working week. And four-fifths wish their employer would do more to help them keep fit. For instance, nearly half suggested that their bosses could provide free or discounted gym memberships as a workplace perk. Alternatively, a fifth wish that their employers allowed more flexible working to fit around individual exercise regimens.

Commenting on the research, Lee Biggins, founder of CV-Library, said: "It's clear that professionals are looking to their employers for support when it comes to making their work and lifestyle fit around one another. Though it might not always be possible to offer flexible hours or free gym memberships, it's important you are doing all you can to support your workforce and take their wellbeing into consideration."

Introducing perks like these may initially seem like a superfluous cost. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs can clearly benefit from introducing a workplace culture that prioritises health. Not only can it help employees become more productive but it can also help create a friendlier environment. And who could put a price on that?



Oxford study shows exactly what it takes for a woman to become CEO

Don't wait to be asked, don't count on others, play the long game, actively 'own' your career and develop a unique leadership style – these are the principal recommendations to aspiring women leaders that come out of a study of female CEOs by academics from Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.

'Despite an abundance of organisational initiatives aimed at supporting women's leadership, our research shows that the critical factor in a woman's achieving the top job is still active ownership of her own leadership career,' said Andromachi Athanasopoulou, Associate Fellow at Oxford Saïd and Assistant Professor in Organisational Behaviour at Queen Mary University of London. 'This starts with acknowledging her ambitions and seeing herself as a leader, accepting the work-life compromises she will have to make, and "toughening up" to overcome both personal and external barriers.'

Claiming the corner office: Female CEO careers and implications for leadership development, by Andromachi Athanasopoulou, Amanda Moss-Cowan, Michael Smets, and Timothy Morris, is published in *Human Resource Management*. It draws on in-depth qualitative interviews with 12 female CEOs and 139 male CEOs of global corporations, aimed at exploring what enables some women to become CEOs.

The authors found that working with the 'self' is vital for women in getting and doing the job of CEO. Self-acceptance, self-development, and self-management form three stages in female candidates' gradual progress towards the corner office.

Self-acceptance

The female CEOs in the study described the way they recognised their leadership ambition and potential as a moment of 'acceptance' rather than celebration.

'All leaders face difficult work-life trade-offs, but women are often still judged for prioritising career over family. For a woman to recognise her leadership ambition requires making a conscious and effortful choice about what she will become, what she will give up, and the criticisms she will face,' said Amanda Moss-Cowan, Research Associate at Oxford Saïd and Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Rhode Island College of Business Administration. 'While our CEOs took work-life balance issues seriously, they framed work-life decisions like other business decisions: recognise the need to make trade-offs, make a choice, accept the responsibilities that come with it, and move on.'

'Overcoming confidence barriers (their own as well as barriers set by others) is also important. This is why our CEOs encouraged young women not to wait until they feel completely ready for a job. Instead, they should seek stretch assignments for their development: that is, take active ownership of their career progress.'

Self-development

This is how female CEOs learn to lead. Because women typically have limited access to suitable formal development programmes, they rely on self-development, drawing on resources from their environment. This includes actively developing networks that help their careers and help them become better leaders as well as seeking out mentors.

There is a strong transformational theme in how these female CEOs lead others that involves nurturing and communicative behaviour, seen as stereotypically feminine, as well as role modelling. However, the research found that as part of their self-development they concentrated on developing leadership skills and behaviours that are usually thought of as stereotypically masculine – such as ‘seeing the big picture’, developing ‘vision’, and other strategic capabilities. They treated these as additional and complementary to the stereotypically female transformational style in which their own leadership was anchored. That is, they neither attempted to mimic a ‘male’ leadership style nor presented themselves as ‘female’ leaders, but created a rounded and distinctive blend of leadership skills and behaviours that put the feminine first.

Self-management

The research found that, even once they have become CEOs, female leaders have to work hard at self-management in order to balance competing expectations and demands. For example, they have to ‘be the boss’ while, at the same time, appear ‘not too pushy’.

‘Even the successful female CEOs in our sample admitted that it could be difficult to feel authentic when adopting some “masculine” leadership behaviours, and that there was a risk that people would react negatively when they did so,’ said Michael Smets, Associate Professor in Management and Organisation Studies at Oxford Saïd. ‘So what they did was blend the different types of behaviours and translate them into something entirely new – and stereotype-free.

Instead of being assertive in one situation and empathetic in another, for example, the leaders in our study found a way to be empathetically assertive.’

‘It remains true that aspiring women leaders face a range of gender-related barriers at both personal and contextual levels that are simply unknown to their male peers,’ said Tim Morris, Professor of Management Studies at Oxford Saïd. ‘Our study found that it is possible for women to overcome these, but only through an enormous amount of “self-work”, starting early in their careers. Significantly, we discovered that the successful female CEOs we interviewed dealt with the challenge of gender stereotypes not by subverting them but by transcending them. This has important implications for HR departments, those working in leadership development, and for all women who have leadership ambitions.’



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD Saïd Business School

5

tips for becoming a woman CEO

- Don't wait to be asked
- Don't count on others
- Play the long game
- Actively 'own' your career
- Develop a unique leadership style

Employers urged to 'normalise' menopause in the workplace

Employers need to do more to "normalise conversations" about the menopause in the workplace, say experts. The comments came after a BBC survey found 70% of respondents did not tell their bosses they were experiencing symptoms.

Some firms have brought in menopause-specific policies but experts said for many it was still a taboo subject. GP and menopause expert Louise Newson said it was a "silent issue for too many organisations".

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally as oestrogen levels decline. It usually affects women between the ages of 45 and 55 and includes symptoms such as poor sleep, hot flushes, anxiety, and poor memory.

Experts said employers did not necessarily have to make costly adjustments, but changes such as flexible working or having a desk fan could be helpful.

Professor Amanda Griffiths, a psychologist specialising in mid-life and older people's health and wellbeing at work, said: "Employers can help by communicating to their workforce that health-related problems such as the menopause are normal. I have heard of cases where women have not admitted the cause of their problems until matters have reached disciplinary stages at work."

She said organisations could access online guidance and advice on the issue from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and also from

trade unions.

'Stay at home'

The BBC survey asked 1,009 women aged 50 to 60 how their experience of the menopause had affected their work and relationships and what their symptoms and treatment were.

The poll, by Comres for BBC Radio Sheffield and Radio 4's Woman's Hour, found 70% of women did not make their employer aware they were experiencing symptoms, while nearly a third said they had not visited their GP.

Nearly half of respondents said the menopause had affected their mental health, while a quarter said it made them want to stay at home.

Sue's story

Former Nottingham Police chief constable Sue Fish was responsible for introducing the force's menopause policy.

"I was horrified to find out women were leaving early because of the severity of their symptoms. Some had been rebuffed by line managers or they'd chosen not to talk about what they were going through.

"It was such a waste of all that talent and experience that these women had in serving the public. Bringing in a policy was absolutely the right thing to do. Talking about it helped build a culture of openness.

"I also had my own experiences of the menopause to draw on and I talked about it very candidly. There was me, at the top of an organisation making difficult decisions, and I didn't want anyone blaming those decisions on irrationality. It was quite a challenge to overcome."

Ms Newson works with West Midlands Police and the fire service to give advice and support on the menopause and its impact on work.

She said: "Is enough being done to address it in the workplace? No. It's still a silent issue for too many organisations. We don't talk about the menopause. We don't get taught it at school and it's not standard to learn about it in medical training either."

An ageing population and an increasing number of women in the workforce means in the future there will be a higher proportion of working women at menopausal age.

A similar study is being carried out at Kings College London in collaboration with the University of Nottingham, looking to improve the menopausal experience for working women.

Dr Claire Hardy is the lead author. She said: "It might be possible to make some adjustments at work, things like having a desk fan, or moving to a desk that is near a window that can be opened to cool down.

"Or even having some flexible working. The woman might have been having difficulty sleeping so having a later start to work might be feasible for some women, or just to miss the rush hour as well."

'Thirty years behind'

Employment lawyer Jenny Arrowsmith from Irwin Mitchell said greater openness in the workplace would help women feel supported.



She said: "Just as many employers now have a stress policy, some employers have brought in a menopause specific policy which provides guidance for managers and reassurance for employees on how menopause related issues will be managed and what support is available."

Professor Jo Brewis, who authored a government report on the issue, said: "I feel like we're 30 years behind where we should be.

"The menopause needs to be normalised in the same way that it is standard to talk about pregnancy. Every woman will experience it differently so there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

"Not all women will want to talk about it at work and that is fine. The main thing they need is understanding and flexibility and an awareness that the support is there if needed."

Is your job making you fat and unhappy?

One in three UK professionals say that their jobs are making them fat and unhappy, and may be on the look out for new opportunities in 2018.



New research reveals that close to 30% of UK workers blame their jobs as the main reason for their weight gain and general malaise. Independent job board, CV-Library, surveyed 1,200 workers to explore the link between work, health, and happiness. Of those that admit that they have gained weight because of their current job, three quarters said that this has left them feeling unhappy. These professionals identified a number of causes for weight gain at work

The top five reasons include:

- **Sitting at a desk all day – 50%**
- **Working long days that don't leave time to fit in exercise – 40%**
- **Snacking a lot at work – 40%**
- **Eating more due to stress at work – 31%**
- **Colleagues bringing in unhealthy snacks to share – 28%**

“Living a healthy lifestyle can sometimes feel like a job in itself, so it’s unsurprising to see that work has an impact on the eating and exercise habits of many of the nation’s professionals. That said, it’s worrying to learn that such a high percentage are unhappy as a result,” Lee Biggins, managing director of CV-Library said. “Weight gain at work is understandable, particularly if you sit at a desk all day and struggle to fit in going to the gym or taking part in exercise before or after work.”

“While it can be tricky, as ultimately the lifestyle choices of your employees are out of your hands, try to encourage healthy habits. Walk or cycle to work schemes are always a great way to get help staff fit in exercise around their working day. What’s more, inexpensive perks like healthy snacks and team lunches, or discounted gym membership are positive ways to encourage your staff to look after themselves. After all, unhealthy and unhappy staff are going to be less motivated, and as a result, less productive.”

What’s more, 53% of the nation’s workers revealed that there are other aspects of their job that made them feel unhappy. For one in three, it is because they are overworked, closely followed by having a poor work-life balance, working for a company with a poor culture, long commutes, and not enjoying their daily tasks.

Eight in ten of those who are unhappy with aspects of their job admit that they do proactively try to make themselves feel better. In fact, almost two-thirds talk to their colleagues when they’re feeling down, 18% take regular breaks and 12% browse social media.

“We spend a lot of our time at work, so it’s important that our job makes us happy,” Biggins added. “While it’s good to see that some professionals are taking positive steps to make themselves feel better at work, if they’re suffering from a poor work-life balance, long commutes or are working somewhere that has a poor culture, it’s unlikely that regular breaks or browsing Facebook will solve the problem in the long term.”

Plus these are costly solutions from a business perspective, who could be losing hours from employees browsing social media or stopping to chat, according to Biggins. “Instead, if you recognise that a member of the team seems unhappy, arrange a meeting to sit down and discuss what’s bothering them. This will help you to nip it in the bud right away. What’s more, work hard to create a fun and creative company culture, where staff get along, but also feel they can approach you if they’re experiencing any problems.”

Latte levy proposal

MPs are calling for a 25p “latte levy” on disposable coffee cups - and a total ban unless recycling improves.

A report by the Environmental Audit Committee says the tax should be used to improve the UK’s recycling and reprocessing facilities.



The figures released show that at least 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups are used each year in the UK and only 1 in 400 of these are recycled.

Although discounts are often given to those with a reusable cup, this is not widely known and as research has shown, coffee lovers are more responsive to a charge than a discount.

Starbucks has said it will try out a 5p cup charge in 20 to 25 central London outlets.

“We will begin the trial in February and initially it will last for three months,” the firm said, adding that it continued to offer a 25p discount to customers who brought their own reusable cups.

5 common career ruts and how to get out!

Being stuck in a rut sucks. If there's one thing I could wish for you, it's that you never have to deal with a situation that holds you back from being happy, successful, or fulfilled. That, unfortunately, is an unrealistic wish. Because like failure, ruts are inevitable. And the good news about that not-so-fun fact is that they ultimately help make us stronger, smarter, and more successful individuals.

by Alyse Kalish, themuse.com

Just look at a few people in your life who you admire—how many of them went through a struggle that forced them to reevaluate their goals or path? Since I'm someone who doesn't love surprises, I'm going to tell you right now exactly which ruts you'll find yourself in throughout your career.

1. Being Bored

No matter how much you love your job, how many hours you work, or how large the pile of to-dos is on your desk, there will come a time when you will find yourself suddenly underwhelmed, unmotivated, or unstimulated at your job for days on end.

It could be for a number of reasons. Maybe your boss has stopped challenging you. Or, maybe you're making the mistake of not seeking out challenges, or looking for exciting projects. Or, maybe you've found yourself in a new role that isn't as exciting as you thought it would be.

Whatever the reason, boredom is usually pretty fixable. You can ask your boss for better projects, or see if you can chip in on what other teams are working on, or find ways to keep learning, like taking online classes or attending conferences related to your industry. If that still leaves you no

better than you were before, it may be time to move on and find a role that's more engaging.

2. Feeling Unhappy

Unhappiness is a more serious sign to keep an eye on. Why is it so much more common than we realise? Because for one, we're fickle beings – we're always changing our minds and shifting our priorities. Which means the things we want in our careers now may change one, two, five years from now. That's OK!

The other reason is because sometimes we're really bad at recognising when we're miserable. We'll place the blame on other things (woke up on the wrong side of the bed, had a bad commute, a crazy boss) rather than accept that something bigger is affecting us. Figure out what is making you unhappy and use that information to decide what your next steps will be.

Maybe it means transferring roles internally, changing companies, or switching industries entirely. Or maybe it's even more simple than that. Maybe it's talking to your boss about an overwhelming workload. Or asking your colleague to stop talking to you when you're working at your desk. Whatever the cause, take the time to identify it and start making moves to solve it.



3. Doubting Your Career Path

Unless you're very lucky, you won't find yourself satisfied in the same role in the same industry throughout your entire career.

Don't beat yourself up if you're unsure about what you want to do next – even if you've spent 10 years in your role and are now doubting everything. The good news is that it's never too late to make a change, whatever that means for you. The even better news is that you don't have to have it all figured out when you're 30, 40, 50.

4. Feeling Like Nothing's Going Right

Ever have those months when nothing's going right? You keep messing up basic tasks, your manager keeps sending your work back with heavy revisions, your colleagues keep shutting down your ideas?

It could be your fault – if you're job searching, for example, and getting nowhere, it might be worth reconsidering your approach.

But it could also be due to external forces, like a company restructuring or a bad boss. If so, it's

worth figuring out whether these can be fixed, and if not, what steps you can take to better set yourself up for success.

5. Having to Deal With a (Big) Change

Your company just went through a huge merger, half your department got laid off, you got laid off, they brought in a new boss, or you've moved to an entirely new city for a job.

One day, something major will happen that will shake up how you do things and think about your career. While it's practically impossible to prepare for something like this, remember that it's common. And, that it's salvageable. And, that the feelings of loss and doubt and frustration and sadness won't last forever. And, that you'll come out stronger and more equipped to handle anything that comes your way.

It's easy to feel alone when you're in these ruts, or that no one understands what you're going through. But I can confidently tell you that everyone experiences these. So, don't be afraid to admit when you're in one – if you don't, you'll regret not making a change sooner.

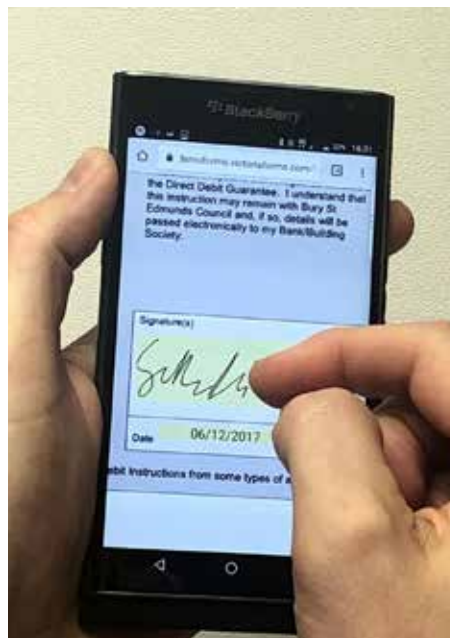
New software enables anyone to create online forms without technical training

Many sectors such as HR, local and central government, health and recruitment, are crying out for this practical, affordable technology. A new business software package, recently launched, enables anyone familiar with Microsoft Word to create professional, interactive online eForms without having to bring in expensive web developers or internal IT help.

VF Creator, from leading eForm provider, Victoria Forms, enables anyone to design and customise forms within Microsoft Word before the new software converts them into professional-looking online forms. This means that anyone in any department can now create online forms without having to learn how to use specialist eForms software.

Public and private organisations generate many thousands of forms each year for many different functions such as job applications, housing applications, pension forms and registration forms. Despite a push towards digitalisation, they are still awash with forms in paper, PDF or Word format.

They risk creating a poor impression and user



experience amongst customers and staff alike. What's more, they slow down business, add to administration costs and increase the likelihood of human error and lost data.

Duncan Bayne, the owner and founder of Victoria Forms, explains: "In today's digital society, there is an expectation that all forms can be completed online, at any time, through multiple devices including smartphones. Paper (or PDF-style) forms are easy to create,

but are expensive to administer and they create a negative impression of a company for customers, potential employees and existing staff."

Until now, creating online forms has been a time-intensive and expensive process. Traditionally,

online forms required either an IT specialist or a third party to carry out the eForms design work. This can be very expensive and time consuming, especially for organisations that need to produce a lot of different forms, who have to make regular amendments, or who have limited in-house IT expertise and support.

VF Creator eForms can be accessed by users 24/7 and there is no need for printing or posting. The VF Creator eForms helps and guides the user through the form, intelligently switching sections on or off depending on relevancy, making it much easier to fill in. The eForm also checks itself for errors, ensuring high quality data the first time around, reducing administration time. Users can sign forms on screen, make the process 100% paper free. The software can also be integrated with back-office systems, getting rid of the need for re-keying information by staff.

Duncan continues: "As it is an extension to Microsoft Word, VF Creator can be used by anyone with very little guidance or training. Many sectors such as HR, local and central government, health and recruitment, are crying out for this practical, affordable technology."

To book a demonstration or to find out further information visit: www.victoriaforms.com.

The image shows two overlapping forms. The top form is a 'Course Registration Form' with sections for 'Personal Information' (Name, Title, Address, etc.), 'Course Details' (Course Name, Fee, etc.), and 'Accommodation' (Yes/No options). The bottom form is an 'American Bakery INVOICE' with a header including the bakery's name and address, a table for 'ITEMS' with columns for 'QUANTITY', 'DESCRIPTION', 'UNIT PRICE', and 'TOTAL', and a footer with contact information and a 'THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS' message.

Highlights of VF Creator

- Use all of the features within Word to create forms: fonts/colours, tables, shapes, word-art, images, columns, grammar and spell checking, etc
- Forms are intelligent – they help and guide the user through them
- Forms check for errors prior to submission
- PDF and data export
- Forms can automatically adapt their display to small screen smartphones
- App for 100% offline forms available
- Integration with your other systems
- Electronic Signature capture
- Accessibility: Forms are fully accessible for visually impaired users

One in five British workplaces allow pets in the office

According to new research, one-fifth of British workplaces now allow employees to bring pets into the office, yet a similar proportion (22%) of workers have complained about the furry companions.



The survey by online job board CV-Library found that when it comes to the personal effect of animals in the workplace, there is clear evidence of a “gender pet gap”. According to the data there is a stark difference in opinion between males and females with nearly half (46%) of women believe that having a pet at work eases stress and helps relaxation, compared to 29% of men.

21% of women believes it makes them feel more friendly or approachable, compared to 14% of men and 40% of men accuse pets of being distracting in the workplace, in contrast to 30%

of women. Finally, nearly one-fifth of men (19%) go as far to call pets annoying in the workplace

The result of the “gender pet gap” led to a shocking 12% of British men admitting to complaining about pets at work, in stark contrast to virtually no female complaints (one%).

In the eternal battle between cats and dogs, canines rule the workplace – making up 87% of all “professional” pets. Cats are clearly an unpopular option at work with only five% admitting to having a feline in the workplace, and rabbits coming in third with two%.

Across the country, London, with its influx of co-working spaces, leads pet allowance in the office with 27% of workers admitting to having them in the office. The South East (24%), Wales (22%) and Northern Ireland (22%) follow close behind. The East Midlands and the North East are the keenest to keep pets at home, with 91% and 87% of workplaces saying no.

In general, nearly half of Brits would like to see more workplaces allowing pets, but 20% suggest that strict policies from HR should be in place.

With bringing animals into the office becoming a growing trend, employers should sit up and take notice. 28% of Brits suggested that they'd be more likely to apply for a job if they have, or were allowed to bring in, pets in their working environment.

Lee Biggins, founder and managing director of CV-Library comments:

"With one in two households owning a pet in the UK1, it's clear to see the attraction and convenience of bringing them with you to work."

"Our new research shines a light on the latest HR trend that many businesses are implementing to stand out from the crowd and attract the very best recruits. It seems to be working, with women being more favorable to the trend. As long as clear protocols are in place for pet ownership, it is set to have a positive benefit to employees and those around them."



Hypnosis could help to beat junk food addiction

New research has found that the UK has the unhealthiest diet in Europe. 50% of the average person's diet in the UK is processed food, which increases the risk of heart disease and strokes.

This kind of processed junk food can be as addictive as hard drugs, with salt and sugar being habit-forming substances that create positive feedback loops in the brain. Eating any food triggers the release of dopamine in the brain, however certain sugars, fats, and processed chemicals can have the same effect as cocaine, flooding our brain with more dopamine than it is used to, thus overriding dopamine pathways to only release the neurochemical when we eat those unhealthy foods, which causes an addiction. This



leads to cravings, which are distinctly different from hunger. Hunger is when our body needs sustenance; cravings are when our bodies want a reward. Dopamine is not necessary for maintenance of the body, only as a reward which makes us repeat behaviour. This is why some people eat junk food even when they're not hungry.

Eating less of these foods can eventually reset our dopamine levels and responses, but this is easier said than done. Fighting addiction is one of the toughest things a person can do, especially when combined with the fact that so much of what we eat is the very thing we're trying to cut out of our system. Hypnosis can bypass the addiction by tapping into the power of the subconscious mind, meaning people eat less junk food without exerting any effort.

Hypnosis expert Adam Cox says: "For people with processed food addiction I use hypnosis to help them believe that junk food is toxic or poisonous. People respond to foods differently if they associate them with being dangerous. Since junk food is responsible for so many health issues from obesity to Type 2 diabetes it's not difficult for the unconscious mind to accept that junk food is genuinely dangerous."

Adam has created an audio download that can help people destroy their cravings for unhealthy food. The audio download costs £19.99 and is available on www.hypnoslimming.com.

The highs and lows of the British family

Each year, the average British family will have 452 arguments, kiss each other 1,492 times, watch 489 hours of TV, spend almost 14 hours waiting for the kettle to boil – and order 60 takeaways, according to a new study.

A nationwide poll of 2,000 British families with children living at home by Virgin Money Life Insurance has revealed some fascinating insights into the highs and lows of the average household.

According to the report, we are generally a happy bunch – with 62% describing themselves as a “very happy family” and a further 36% claiming to be “happy most of the time” – that’s despite a whopping 452 arguments and 515 bouts of tears in an average year.

On the bright side, every year we share on average 1,435 hugs, 1,492 kisses, 972 fits of laughter and 489 bouts of dancing around the house – with close to nine in 10 of those polled saying that family is the most important thing in their life.

The survey also showed how much time British families spend together, with a total of 301 hours a year snuggled up on the sofa together, 265 hours watching movies – and a staggering 489 hours watching the telly.

Unsurprisingly, given the amount of time we spend in front of the box – Brits will spend eight hours and 24 minutes of every year hunting for the TV remote control.

When it comes to general family life, two thirds of parents polled said they simply couldn’t manage without the help and support of their partner, while a further three in ten said they couldn’t cope without the support of their mum.

Jayne Warner, Head of Life Insurance at Virgin Money, said: “We all lead such busy lives – with parents in particular having to carefully balance the demands of working life with the daily challenges that come with running a family home. Despite this, the research shows families still make time to love, laugh and have fun together.

“These survey findings also reflect how much we depend on each other to keep family life running smoothly. We’re struck by how hard it would be for many families to cope without the support of their partner and/or their wider family. It emphasises how crucial it is to ensure that we have plans in place to keep family life going no matter what life throws at us.”

Asked what change would most benefit their family life, some opted for practical improvements, with 53% of those studied saying more money would be most beneficial, 27% saying they needed a bigger house and 14% saying they would love to have the luxury of a cleaner.

However, many of those polled plumped for more family-focused life changes, with four in ten saying in an ideal world they would have more quality time together and 17% saying they’d like to work less. 7% of respondents felt more time with grandparents would be the most beneficial change for their family life.

When it comes to food consumed, the survey revealed we will each tuck into a whopping 66



roast dinners a year, order 60 takeaways and eat 102 plates of pasta.

The research also found that we will make our way through 60 boxes of teabags, drink 220 pints of milk and chomp 116 loaves of bread, the equivalent of 2,320 slices of toast.

The adults in the family will also consume 65 bottles of wine each year.

171 hours (over one week per year) is spent ferrying children to and from clubs and parties, we'll spend 317 hours on social media and 13 hours and 48 minutes waiting for the kettle to boil.

A further SIX hours will be spent searching high and low for the car keys and we will while away seven hours waiting to use the bathroom – with mums emerging as the worst culprits for bathroom hogging.

THE AVERAGE FAMILY IN A YEAR

Arguments 452

Slammed doors 432

Bouts of tears 520

Hugs 1,435

Kisses 1,492

Fits of laughter 972

Bouts of dancing around the kitchen table 489

Saying 'I love you' 1,036

Roast dinners eaten 66

Take-aways ordered 60

Hours of TV watched 489

Hours of homework 166

Hours watching movies 265

Hours on social media 317

Hours snuggling on the sofa 301

Hours of washing-up 208

Hours ferrying children to parties, clubs 171

Boxes of cereal consumed 72

Loaves of bread eaten 116

Boxes of teabags (80 bags) used 60

Tubs of butter / margarine eaten 60

Bottles of ketchup used 48

Pints of milk drunk 220

Bottles of wine drunk 65

Hours spent searching for the remote control 8 hours and 24 minutes

Hours spent searching for car keys 6 hours

Hours spent waiting for the kettle to boil 13 hours and 48 minutes

Hours spent waiting for the bathroom 7 hours