

PA ENTERPRISE

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

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'Ghosting' in the
workplace

Summertime in the
office – dos and don'ts

How to make your
meetings more
productive and
meaningful

Avoiding those office
fashion faux pas

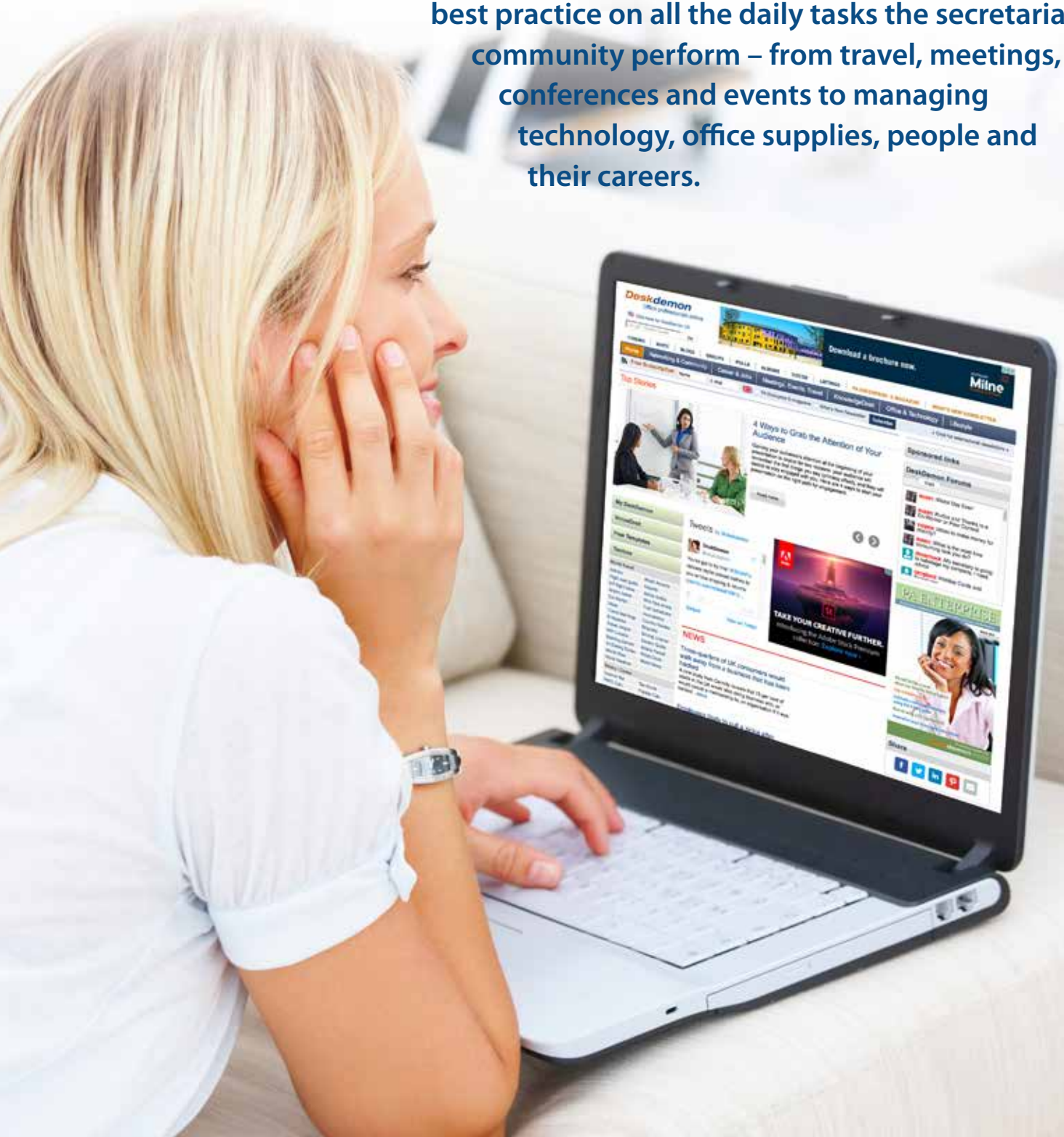
Different management
styles and how to deal
with them

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How 'Ghosting' has moved into the Workplace

In an apparent reverse trend in the workplace, companies worldwide are increasingly witnessing job seekers "ghosting" at work - a behaviour once notoriously linked with HR heads who ignored job applicants or forgot about them after rounds of meeting and interviews.

Recruiters and hiring managers are experiencing a surge of workers no-showing interviews, or accepting a job only to never appear for the first day of work, giving no reason, said Chip Cutter, Editor at Large at professional networking platform LinkedIn, in a blog post.

While some accept jobs, only to not appear for the first day of work, others are quitting by walking out and saying nothing.

"The practise is prevalent in the fields ranging from food service to finance and in amongst all age groups, they say.

"The practice is prolonging hiring, forcing companies to overhaul their processes and tormenting recruiters, who find themselves under constant pressure," Cutter wrote.

According to recruiters and hiring managers, a tightening job market and a sustained labour shortage as well as multiple opportunities might have contributed to the trend.

However, candidates who are scarred from years of applying for jobs, spending hours preparing for interviews, only to get form rejections back may not be to blame for going cold, said Peter Cappelli, a management Professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the US.

"I think they have learned it from the employers,"



he said. "Employers were notorious for never getting back to people, and only letting them know what was going on if it turned out they wanted them to go to the next step," Cutter wrote, quoting Cappelli.

HR teams are bemoaning the emotional rollercoaster they've suddenly found themselves on, dealing with the kind of "what just happened?"

Recruiters suggest that if candidates are not serious about taking jobs, or if they do need to drop out of the process, they just need to communicate, instead of turning ghosts

Moreover, it is necessary to be courteous as well as level of professional while communicating, they said.

In an another trend, employees are also leaving firms without formally quitting.

"Instead of formally quitting, enduring a potentially awkward conversation with a manager, some employees leave and never return. Bosses realise they've quit only after a series of unsuccessful attempts to reach them. The hiring process begins anew," said Cutter.

New app enables employers to instantly locate staff in event of terror attack

IncidentEye provides organisations with an effective way to instantly respond in the event of an emergency and monitor the wellbeing of their staff.

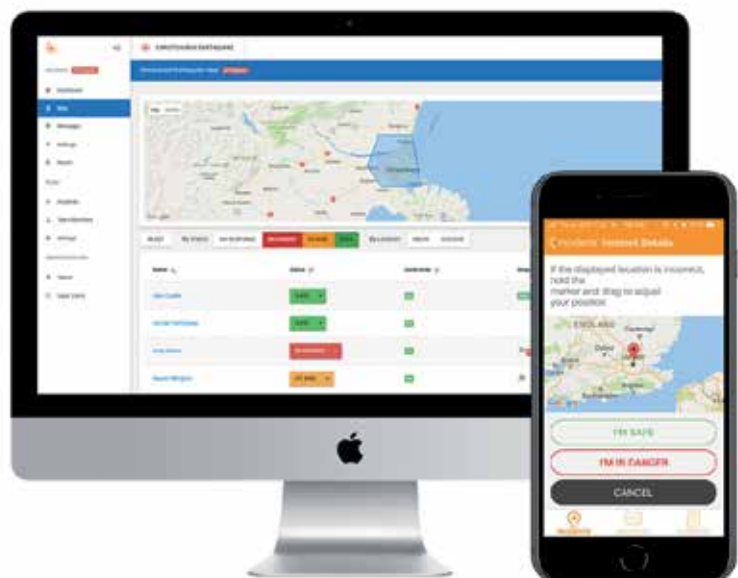
Safety app specialists StaySafe have launched IncidentEye, an app that allows companies to quickly locate and monitor the safety of their staff in the event of a terror attack or other emergency.

The solution has been developed in response to the growing number of incidents, both man-made and natural, that are affecting businesses around the world.

“Recent years have seen a rise in terror attacks and active shooter incidents, whilst climate change experts predict that warmer temperatures and high tides will continue to increase the number of natural disasters occurring” comments Don Cameron, CEO, StaySafe.

“IncidentEye provides organisations with an effective way to instantly respond in the event of an emergency and monitor the wellbeing of their staff.”

The app, which lies dormant on staff phones until an incident is triggered by their employer, uses location data to establish if any employees are in the danger zone and prompt them to check in safely. The app can then be used to communicate with affected staff, sharing up to date safety information and warning any near-by employees to avoid the area until the incident is resolved.



Owen Loeffellechner, Chief Safety & Security Officer at Bank of New Zealand is one of the first clients to go live with the new app. “The safety and well-being of our people is paramount and so we are continuously looking at ways we can exercise our duty of care better” states Loeffellechner.

“As a business, we have a large national footprint consisting of many locations, including an active mobile workforce. The combination of these elements, industry related risks and a country that can be subjected to earthquakes means emergency communication is essential.”

Summertime in the office: the dos and don'ts

When the weather warms up and holidays are edging closer, it can be all too tempting to relax and let your professional guard down. If this is something you identify with, then you aren't alone.

Workplace data suggests that productivity drops 20% during the summer months, with 45% of employees admitting that they're more distracted. This could be down to excitement over upcoming holiday plans, the shift in team stability due to holiday absences or hot weather causing a lull in concentration.

Here are some basic summer dos and don'ts for the workplace, so you can keep focused and on-track, while still making time to enjoy the nice weather.

Do: enjoy the weather

It's no fun being indoors when the weather is nice. Make the most of the season by taking time to enjoy the sunshine, so you can stay focussed while you're at work. Lunchtime strolls, picnics or walking to and from the office are all easy ways to do this.

Don't: relax your wardrobe too much

Hot weather can leave you feeling stifled and uncomfortable, both in the office and on your commute. Where possible, avoid the temptation to bare all or resort to inappropriate office attire.

Flipflops, strapless dresses, sheer blouses or anything you'd normally wear to the beach are

fashion don'ts for summer. If you really can't get out of the heavy suits and thick fabrics, keep cool with desk fans and by drinking plenty of water.

Do: stop to assess your career progress

Summer brings you neatly into the middle half of the year and that makes it a great time to stop and reassess your continual learning plan. Book some time with your manager to look at the targets you've achieved and what you'd like to get out of the final 6 months. It'll help you stay on track and will show you just how far you've come already.

Don't: skip your holiday

We all need a good work-life balance to stay happy but getting into the habit of skipping holidays is something many of us are guilty of. Research shows that the average employee only takes 77% of their allotted annual leave, with only 12% of 16-24 year olds using the full amount. Even when we do take time off, 44% of us admit to working while away.

Using the summer season to take time off is essential for recharging your batteries and can also be great for your career, too. Taking proper breaks leads to higher rates of productivity. If you're worried about missing an opportunity or causing a work backlog, try checking with



your manager regarding upcoming busy period and projects so you can plan your holiday more effectively.

Do: use the season as another way to connect with your teammates

You don't need the HR department or a large budget to arrange fun office activities for summer with your teammates. Try starting an 'ice cream happy hour' or inviting your team out to lunch in the park rather than sitting in the canteen.

Arranging a casual after-work sporting match or friendly game is a great way of keeping active and gives you the chance to bond with other employees that you wouldn't normally get a chance to talk to.

It is possible to achieve a healthy work-life balance during the summer months, without the weather putting your professionalism or workplace happiness at risk. Try a few of these suggestions and strike the perfect balance this year.

Article by robert half.co.uk

The best interview questions to ask

You have to ask some questions, that much we know. It shows that you are interested and engaged above all else. But what are the ideal questions to ask? What questions will tell you more about the role or could reveal a detail that will affect your decision to continue or not? We've asked this question too and below are the top seven questions that we have come up with that should tell you everything you need to know before making your decision. Let's begin.

Why has this position become available?

This is a great question to help you really understand the role and the company. If it is a new role, then you might have the opportunity to make it your own. If you are replacing someone, there might have been a dispute that could have been as a result of the way that individual worked, or the way the company operates.

Will there be opportunities to gain further experience or qualifications?

Some industries and professions will require you to hold specific qualifications if you are to progress, others will give you the opportunity to acquire these new skills through experience. Being able to achieve these whilst you are working can be of great benefit. You can also get some insight into how dedicated the company or department are to the development of their staff.

How would you describe the team dynamic?

This is an important question, most would agree that different departments and teams operate in completely different ways, regardless of working for the same company. It is because of this that you can find out much more by diving into the

dynamic of the team, then the workings of the company.

If my application were successful, where would you see me in five years' time?

You want to know that if you take on this role, you're not going to be stagnant in what you do for years to come. For some roles this will be a forgone conclusion but this is not always clear. If you find that you're quite a driven person this will also not be a great fit for you.

What do you see the person in this role achieving?

When coming up with this role your interviewer would have had a specific target or goal in mind. This can be a good question to find out what that might be. You might find that whilst your skills and experience fit what the role requires, what you and the role want to accomplish might be very different.

What skills do you see as the most important for this role?

This can be a good question to find out what skills you have that they value the most for the



role, and also what skills you don't have. You might find out that you failed to mention some skills or experiences that they would be interested in hearing about. Or, that the role will require you to develop some of your skills prior to starting.

When can I expect to hear from you?

You want to know how long you can expect to wait before they will contact you about your applications progress. Knowing the answer can help you continue with your job search knowing fully well that you might have to dedicate you time back to a single job application.

That is what the basics of the question is asking,

but in actual fact, the way they answer can also tell you something more about the relationship that exists between the company and their staff. Is their open communication? or in actual fact, do they only communicate with staff when they have made a decision that impacts them?

It is also still very common for unsuccessful applicants, even those who have had interviews, to not be contacted when their application has been unsuccessful. This is poor practise but unfortunately still occurs.

By Harry Doherty
www.thegrocer.co.uk

How to make your meetings more productive and meaningful

Do you groan each time another meeting request pops into your inbox? Another pointless meeting designed to waste your time and put you further behind schedule on proper work. Unfortunately, this is a popular mindset.



A new study showed that 65% of senior managers felt that meetings kept them from getting work done. Just under three quarters (71%) said that they felt meetings were unproductive and inefficient. Researchers at Georgetown have suggested that frequent interruptions, such as meetings, disturb 'deep work' (our ability to mentally focus on a challenging task). Not only do unstructured meetings cost us our productivity, they're also bad for the business' bottom line.

So, is it really possible to make meetings productive again? Absolutely. Here are a few changes you can make to your meetings to increase productivity and innovation, rather than leave the whole room wishing they were elsewhere.

Create an open forum

People are unlikely to feel inspired or motivated when they anticipate being talked over or not listened to. If you truly want to innovate your meetings, make an effort to create an open forum in which all opinions are welcome and nothing is 'wrong' or 'stupid'. New ideas often come from unexpected places!

Introduce a laptop ban wherever possible

Laptops can be a great tool for meeting productivity, but more often than not, they're a distraction. It has been recognised that laptops are linked with a 'task-switching' mentality, rather than a 'multitasking' one. Meeting attendees only give half their attention to the meeting they're in, while simultaneously using a laptop to work on other things. If your meeting can be done with pen, paper and discussion, try banishing laptops (and phones) and see how it goes.

Ensure that an agenda is circulated in advance of the meeting

Without an outlined agenda, it's hard for meeting attendees to know what to expect. Let them know which points you'll be hitting, what they'll need to do in order to prepare and the input/action points you want to get out of it.

Catch unproductive talk and steer it 'offline'

Unfortunately, meetings have the capacity to turn into a forum for passive aggression and complaining. It's also not uncommon for talk to turn off on a tangent which isn't conducive to the original meeting agenda. If you find this happening, put a pin in it and ask attendees to meet about it separately while you continue with the original meeting outline.

Listen more

You've called a meeting to discuss an agenda, but that doesn't mean you can't also listen. If you've asked for input, give your meeting attendees room to articulate their ideas, thoughts and concerns.

Avoid last minute rescheduling wherever possible

Cancelling and moving a meeting last minute or calling one with little notice can hurt productivity for two main reasons: attendees have little chance to prepare and may forget the meeting altogether! Avoid last-minute changes if you can help it.

Agree action points and deliverables before you adjourn

Before you call the meeting to a close, make sure everyone understands what their action points are and when they need to be delivered by. Each attendee should be able to leave the meeting feeling like they've come away with a meaningful task and a clear set of expectations.

Article by robert half.co.uk

Office Fashion Faux Pas

It's not always easy to decide whether an outfit is work-appropriate...

Whilst what you can (and can't) wear is entirely dependent on your company's dress code, you still might find there's some blurred lines in the rule book. Are shorts ever OK for the office? How much skin is too much skin? And what about sandals?

By Michael Cheary
www.reed.co.uk

To avoid any embarrassing fashion fails, here's a list of what not to wear to work (and what to cover up):

Flip-flops/Sandals/Crocs

There are some things that should never be seen in the office. Flip flops are one of them. And Crocs, well, they probably shouldn't be seen anywhere.

However, that's not to say sandals are completely out of the question. With a variety of smarter options available (e.g. wedges or heeled sandals), you might be able to pull them off. As long as you avoid socks at all costs.

Alternatively, pumps and wedges are a great way to stay cool in the summer months, while guys should stick with boat shoes/trainers.

Bottom line: even if your office is casual, there's a time and a place for flip flops.

Too much flesh

The saying 'if you've got it, flaunt it' doesn't really apply in the workplace.

For example, plunging necklines, short skirts, short shorts, and crop tops are all perfectly good options for a night out or a day at the beach, but they may not be appropriate for the workplace.

Instead, keep it conservative. Girls can keep cool in loose fitting blouses and maxi dresses/skirts, whilst





guys can go for chinos and a light shirt (or t-shirt, if your employer allows it).

Bottom line: be memorable, but not for the wrong reasons.

Shorts

Ah, the never-ending 'is it OK to wear shorts at work?' debate.

Some employers allow staff to wear shorts. In fact, some professions actively encourage it (e.g. postman, fitness instructor, shorts model). But most don't – especially if your office is particularly formal.

If you're unsure of company policy, ask a colleague or get in touch with the HR department.

Bottom line: dress like you're ready for work, not like you're ready for the beach.

Too much fake tan

No one likes to look overly pale, but there's a time and a place for a fake bake.

Sure, it's fine to add a bit of colour here and there, but be careful not to overdo it. The last thing you want is to be one who turns up to the meeting looking like an extra from *The Only Way is Essex*.

Bottom line: you work with these people every day. You're not fooling anyone.

Continued ►

Sunglasses inside

Are you trying to sleep at work without being caught? Got some questionable eye-bags to hide? Just want to start a new trend?

Sunglasses probably aren't the answer – not just because they are literally designed for sun (the clue's in the name), but also because they don't exactly scream professional.

Unless of course, it's Halloween. And your outfit is a play on a certain 1980s classic (#Jake&Elwood).

Bottom line: stop trying to make sunglasses inside happen. They're not going to happen.

Offensive slogan tees/bags/vests

No matter how hilariously witty a slogan may be, that doesn't mean it's work-appropriate. Especially if the topic is particularly sensitive (e.g. race, religion, gender), or it includes any kind of profanity.

Not only could you risk offending people, you may also develop a negative reputation amongst your colleagues.

Bottom line: whether it's on a tote bag or a t-shirt, leave the one-liners at home.

Excessive aftershave or perfume

If you've ever been literally figuratively suffocated by strong-smelling aftershave or perfume, you're probably aware that when used excessively, its effects aren't always pleasant.

And whilst the odd spray or two before work isn't likely to cause any problems, covering yourself with it at every available opportunity probably will.

Bottom line: subtlety is your best friend. You are not a walking bar of soap.

Tracksuits

OK, so we know 'fitness chic' is totally in right now, but that doesn't mean you can sport a full tracksuit to work. No matter how much you think you can pull off that Kim Kardashian look.

The same goes for crop tops and stretchy leggings. Sure, they're comfy, flattering, and let's face it, totally fashionable, but this is a workplace – not a treadmill.

Bottom line: if you could wear it to the gym, you probably can't wear it to work.

Stained/dirty/unironed clothes

We've all heard of the 'chair' – the place your clothes visit between the wardrobe and the washing basket. But whilst many garments placed here may be clean enough to wear another day, some of them may not be.

And whether you turn up to work with unnoticed stains, creases, or a questionable odour, it won't say a lot about your personal hygiene, let alone your professionalism.

Bottom line: check yourself before you wreck yourself and/or leave the house.

Final thoughts

If you are going for an interview, play it safe. Business dress is usually fine, and you can't go far wrong with the classic 'suited and booted' look. If you're still unsure, try travelling to the employers offices first and see how members of staff are dressed (this will also ensure that you're on time, and your route won't provide you with any surprises).

When first impressions count for so much, it's important to get it right. Play it safe, keep it simple and don't let your standards slip.

So leave the flip flops and shorts in your suitcase. Dress to impress, and dress for success.

Management styles: What you need to know

If you've been working for the same company for a while, it can be all too easy to slip into autopilot when it comes to communication with your boss. But knowing how to work with them effectively could be key to your progression – and a lot of it comes down to understanding their style.

To help you sort your autocratic leaders from your Laissez-Faire, here are five of the most common management styles you might find in your office (and how to deal with them).

Autocratic

Who they are:

Managers who make decisions on their own, with very little input from other members of the team. Autocratic managers don't ask your opinion; they tell you it. If they were a country, they'd probably be nearer to North Korea than Nepal.

Advantages:

Good for people who want to work with clear direction, and in situations where a decision needs to be made quickly. Extremely effective when implemented by a natural leader.

Disadvantages:

Will depend on who's in charge. Can be demoralising, discourage open communication and stifle creativity. Modern workers tend not to react well to autocratic leaders.

How to handle it:

Never challenge an autocratic manager directly, and avoid springing any surprises. If you've got an issue, feed information to them bit-by-bit, then allow them to make the necessary changes

themselves. That doesn't mean saying 'yes' to everything – it just means thinking of a more creative way to say no (usually by emphasising what's in it for them if they take your advice).

Democratic

Who they are:

Reverse of autocratic leaders; these bosses actually want to know your thoughts. Everyone has the opportunity to contribute ideas, and any decisions are agreed upon by the majority. They're like the cool hippy Dad of management.

Advantages:

Encourages creativity, communication and collaboration. Gives a sense of autonomy to employees, and often leads to greater job satisfaction.

Disadvantages:

Can take a long time for the team to make decisions, and sometimes leads to uncertainty. As there is no clear leader, can end up with too many opinions i.e. 'too many stakeholders spoil

Continued ►

the broth' (or something along these lines which makes more sense).

How to handle it:

This style hinges on employees being as open as possible. Tell your democratic manager your thoughts when they ask; they're not just being polite; they really want to know. Even if your ideas aren't fully formed, someone else in the team might be able to build on them – so never be afraid to start speaking up.

Laissez-Faire

Who they are:

Huh? That's fine...like, whatever. Laissez-Faire literally translates as 'let them do' and, essentially, that's what these managers do. Practically the definition of hands-off, preferring to wait and see what happens than make any actual decisions. Usually disengaged to a fault.

Advantages:

Effective when working with especially skilled individuals, who might work better under their own direction. Great for when the staff have certain expertise that their manager doesn't. Also leads to a sense of autonomy.

Disadvantages:

Projects can lose their sense of direction. And doesn't work well for staff who may require more guidance, or need help to complete tasks and meet deadlines.

How to handle it:

Enjoy the responsibility and sense of trust placed in you, and be confident in your own abilities. If you struggle, lean on other members of the team to lend support – not your boss. Essentially, Laissez-Faire managers just want you to get on with the job. Do that.

Transactional

Who they are:

Like the annoying game show hosts of management. Sure, they'll offer you a treat for doing your job. But get the answer wrong, and your punishment will inevitably follow. Like a

stressed out parent with an unpredictable child, they make it clear they've got a reward at the ready. But you'll only get it if you behave...

Advantages:

Can be a powerful motivator. Especially if employees are goal-orientated. Clear and easy to follow, and means staff are always aware of the benefits of doing a good job.

Disadvantages:

Goals can be set too high or may be unrealistic, leading to greater pressure, demotivation and a bad working environment. Can also be detrimental to the team dynamic, as everyone is looking out for their own interests.

How to handle it:

Transactional managers need to feel that you appreciate their sentiments. Do your work, receive your reward and say thank you. It's (almost) that simple. And if goals are set too high, try and sit down with your manager to talk through why you think that may be the case.

Transformational

Who they are:

The most inspiring type of manager, transformational managers identify the need for change. They work on a variety of different levels at one time, tricking people into believing they're having a good time instead of working and pulling incentives and new opportunities out of hats like rabbits (yes, essentially, they're magicians).

Advantages:

Always provide positive reinforcement and encourage personal growth. Work especially well in companies with low morale amongst employees, and can help create the vision that inspires change.

Disadvantages:

Can sometimes be blinded by passion and instinct, rather than having their ideas rooted in reality. May also over-reward people based on charisma, rather than hard work.



How to handle it:

Transformational managers want you to succeed. You won't go wrong with these guys if you listen to their advice, input your ideas and work with them towards a shared vision (when you get the chance).

How to deal with different management styles

Rightly or wrongly, a huge amount of our time at work is spent trying to please our boss.

Understanding different management styles and how they affect your day-to-day tasks is vital if you want to get on in your current employment and feel that those hours in the office are well spent.

Of course, there will always be the exceptions to the rule; the bosses who don't quite fit the mould. Notice which styles they most frequently use and adjust accordingly.

If you're aware of the management style which your boss favours, then you'll understand the most effective way to work with them, not to mention make yourself a candidate for advancement within the company.

And if you can't deal with it? Be honest, and talk to your boss directly about your concerns.

Because no one deserves to deal with a horrible boss on a daily basis...

By Michael Cheary
www.reed.co.uk

3 questions to ask yourself after a bad day (that'll make you feel better)

There's no other way to say it: You've had an absolutely horrible day. You're ready to head home, wallow in your own self-pity, and then leave this day behind you.

You spilled coffee all over yourself during your commute and then showed up late to your meeting with a giant stain on your shirt. Your boss gave you a ton of not-so-great feedback on a recent project you spent weeks on. And, to top it all off, your desk mate decided that everybody should be able to hear her favorite playlist over and over again on full volume.

Pressing pause for at least a little bit of reflection can help you not only move on – but also prevent you from having more bad days just like this one.

1. Will This Day Have a Lasting Impact?

When your day was nothing but awful, it's easy to send yourself into a downward spiral of despair. You make mountains out of molehills and become convinced that this one brief rough patch will be the demise of your entire career and reputation.

Rest assured, that's hardly ever the case – and this question will help you step back and get some much-needed perspective.

Of course, there will be some days that had so much go wrong they will require some further action to patch things up. But, most of the time? You'll be able to start fresh tomorrow morning

without any sort of ill effects from the previous day.

So, chin up! More likely than not, everything that happened today probably won't matter too much next year (or even the next day).

2. What Would You Do Differently?

Are you the eternal winner of the blame game? I can relate. When things don't work out as planned, it's easy to place all of the responsibility on your shoulders – regardless of whether you had any control over those circumstances or not.

This is why it can be so helpful to identify what – if anything – you'd do differently if you magically had a do-over of your day.

Not only will you be able to show yourself some grace and quit blaming yourself for things you had nothing to do with (really, what power did you have over your train being late?), but you'll also learn from any mistakes you actually did make – and then avoid doing them in the future.

3. What Went Well Today?

Alright, you're so wrapped up in everything that went wrong that you're convinced today was so terrible it's worthy of being the plot of a horror



film. However, even the worst days have at least a few bright spots.

Obsessing over the bad things is probably only going to send your mood into more of a nosedive. So, ask yourself this question to pull out a few of the positives.

Even if it's something as small as the fact that you got your favorite bagel sandwich for lunch or your colleague complimented your haircut, think of the things that actually went right today (trust me, there are a few of them!).

It's a great way to put those negative things behind you and boost your mood.

Unfortunately, bad days are inescapable every now and then. They can be frustrating and emotionally trying, but they can also be enlightening.

Before you park yourself on your couch and drown your sorrows for the evening, take the time to think through these three key questions—and you'll be back up and at 'em in no time.

By Kat Boogaard www.themuse.com