


PA ENTERPRISE

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

May 2018



How to prepare for a crucial interview

UK office workers waste over 1million hours a week searching for documents

When 'living for the weekend' is a huge red flag

How to manage your personal and professional development

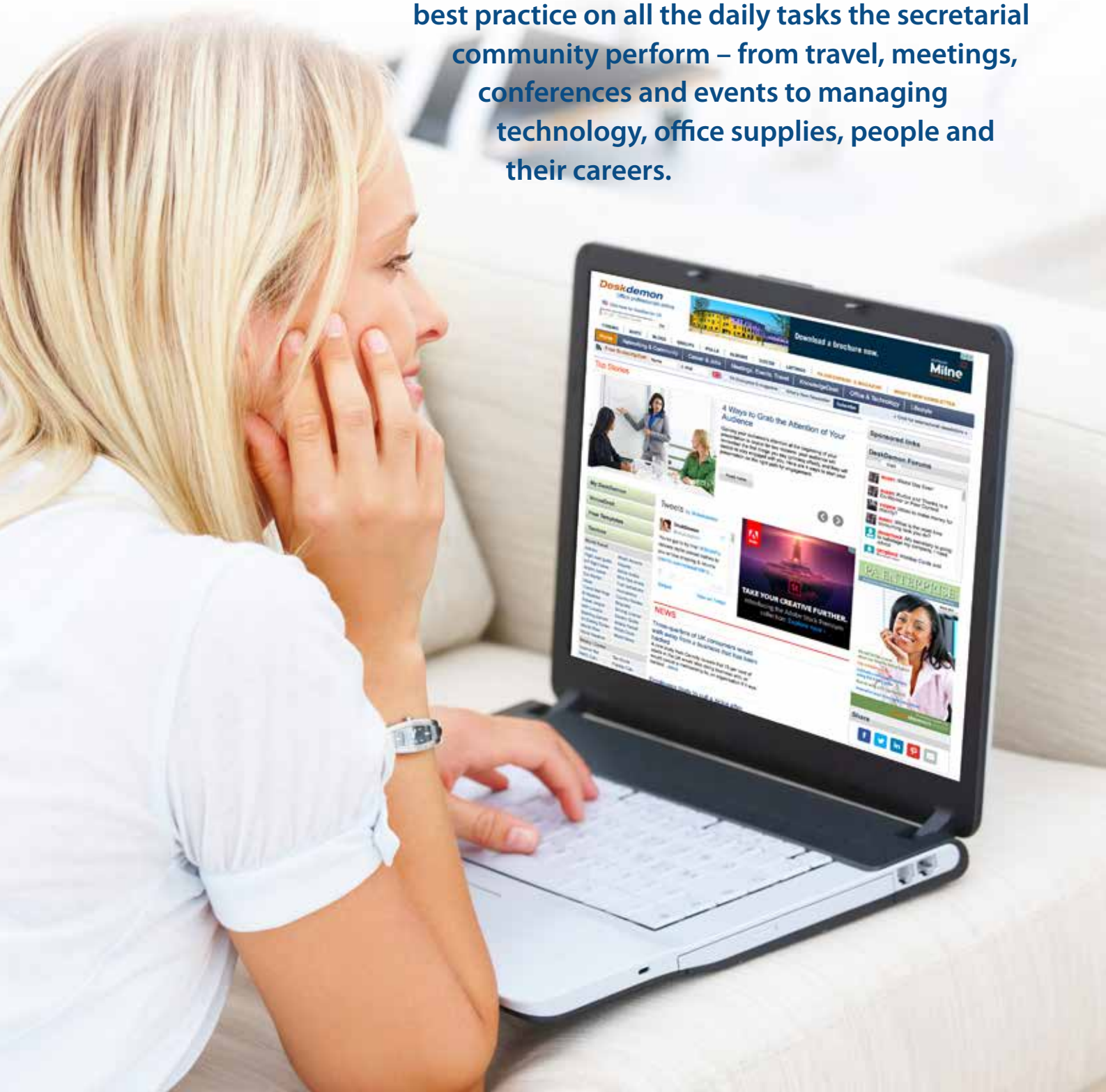
Clutter and productivity: why being tidy at work matters

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Four in ten working Brits wake in the night to check emails

New research of UK employees has looked into the stresses and strains of modern working life and found a third (34 percent) regularly tackle work issues in the dead of the night, rather than leaving it until the morning.

In fact, 44% of those polled by British Summer Fruits, claim they frequently send emails to colleagues and clients between the hours of 11pm and 6am, while one in ten say they would fear for their job if they didn't respond to emails promptly.

As many as 16% said they often end up burning the midnight oil due to pressures from colleagues and the boss, while 11% describe their life as 'all work and no play'.

Even at the weekend, the average Brit works an average of THREE hours catching up on emails and dealing with issues they simply haven't had time to deal with during the week, while 64% of workers admit they lose sleep over work worries.

33% said their dinner is often interrupted with work demands, while one in twenty have had to put a stop to intimacy with their partner due to disruptive work queries.

A further 45% complained that their boss often called them during non-working hours and 28% have been disturbed on a family holiday.

Over half (53%) of the 1,000 British employees



polled said they rely on strong coffee to keep them focussed during the long working week, however 61% say their reliance on high caffeine drinks makes it harder to switch off when they get home.

A lethargic 14% resort to energy drinks to stay alert in the office and 27 admit to eating sweets all day to perk them up while a third (33%) of those polled said they had been made to feel bad by the powers that be for not taking calls or answering emails out of hours.



Dr Emma Derbyshire, Nutritionist for British Summer Fruits said: "This research paints a bleak picture for British workers.

"Whilst the advancement of technology has helped us in our professional careers, it also means we are contactable 24 /7 and for many it makes the ability to switch off very hard.

"We spend such a huge proportion of our lives at work anyway, it's depressing to hear that so many professionals are having to work until the early hours of the morning in order to catch-up on their heavy work-load.

Relying on caffeinated drinks and sugary foods to keep us going is compounding the issue, making it harder for us all to switch off. With new research

shedding light that berries can keep you going for up to six hours with no adverse side effects, we think they offer a great-tasting alternative to caffeine and sugar."

Relaxing baths, friend's weddings and even funerals were also events that workers had had ruined because of work dramas, while 37% of us have ended up logging on when abroad and working during our annual break.

And 37% of employed Brits say their phone is like a technological umbilical cord to their office and work, while more than four in ten (41%) confessed they are often at their wits end with constant grief from work.

How to prepare for that crucial interview

Research and preparation is the key to the job you want

By Daniell Morrissey

"I'm very nervous about my job interview. What's the best way to prepare for it? Do you have any tips on what I should focus on?"

RD, London

Preparation, preparation, preparation

There's no excuse for a lack of research. As a journalist, it is one of your key skills and, with the internet, there is so much information close to hand. Of the hundreds of journalists that I have interviewed, lack of preparation is the number one mistake.

Almost all of us feel interview nerves – especially if we have not been interviewed for quite a while. On the one hand, the adrenaline can work in your favour by helping you think faster on your feet. On the other, you can become tongue-tied, forget to talk about some of your most important achievements and talk about things you did not really mean to mention.

First tip: remember interviewers are often nervous too! Far from playing games and tricks, their first priority is to get the job filled with the most suitable person and that can often bring its own anxieties.

Know the job

Study the job specification – it is not just an advert for the vacancy; it is telling you what they are looking for. You can use this as a guide to the



areas that you are likely to be questioned about.

What skills are required? What technical and subject knowledge are they expecting? What are the soft skills like team working, planning, organising, influencing and persuading?

Once you are clear on these, think through the examples that best demonstrate your skills and experience. Write these down. Your most relevant examples might be from your current or previous job. If you do not have anything appropriate, consider school and college work, work experience and hobbies that might make useful demonstrations.

Find someone to chat to about the job. Sometimes a contact will be given on the job spec or advert – if so, call them. If not, phone the company's recruitment team and ask who you can talk to. Who in your contact book might be able to tell you more about the job?

If you are going for a job in the same organisation where you already work, is it possible to work alongside someone for an afternoon in the area

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you have applied for? The job spec is a great start but talking to people in the job, or even better shadowing them, will put you ahead of the crowd.

Know the company

Practically every organisation has a website, so use it to find out about the company and the relevant department.

Know the industry

Keep up with what is happening in the industry. Read the industry magazines and websites. Many of them have free email newsletters that you can subscribe to.

If you are being interviewed for a particular programme, magazine, newspaper or website, do you know who the competitors are? You are probably going to be asked to compare and contrast them.

The practicalities

When and where is the interview? Turning up late and sweaty will give you a bad start. Make sure you have clear directions and give yourself plenty of time to get there. If you are going somewhere unfamiliar, can you dry run the journey?

Find out who is interviewing you – who are they, what are their job titles? Google them. Make sure you have the right people but do not freak them out by demonstrating an intimate knowledge.

Just knowing something of who they are might help you include something in your interview that will interest them in particular.

Dealing with nerves

If you get seriously nervous, then arrive in plenty of time. Find somewhere quiet and do some breathing exercises. In the interview, take your time and do not rush to answer a question. Just pause, let the question sink in and then answer.

Remember, it is a two-way conversation, so participate – try to actively listen to what is being asked and if you are unclear, ask for clarification. If you feel you have given a bad example, then come back with another until you feel you have answered the question fully.

Take in your own notepad – you do not want piles of notes but a few bullet points can help you focus on saying the things that you want to talk about.

Nerves often mean that when you are asked if you have any questions, you can not think of a thing to say. To the interviewer, this can look like you are not interested or you can not think on your feet, so have a couple of questions prepared on your notepad.

Nowadays, we are all amateur specialists in body language, so people read all sorts of interpretations in to eye movements and hand gestures. Just remember the basics – make eye contact with each of the interviewers and smile and nod. It makes it more inclusive and more like a conversation.

It is really useful to rehearse – so get a friend to practice interviewing you. Ask them for feedback on your answers – and also ask them to watch your body language carefully.

Most of us never fully get over interview nerves – and adrenaline can be a good thing – but plenty of preparation will help you focus, will help you concentrate on your success stories – and, whilst practice might not make perfect, it will certainly make it easier.

UK office workers waste over 1 million hours a week searching for documents

Offices across the UK are so disorganised they are losing over 1 million hours a week searching for misplaced documents, that's seven days a year for each worker and is costing UK businesses £20 million a year in wasted time.

Research from office product specialists, Fellowes, also found that half of UK workers have documents that are over a year old on their desks, with 1 in 5 even admitting they have paperwork over 5 years old cluttering their workspace.

Other workers blamed their company for office disorganisation, with 40% saying they waste up to an hour a week due to the colleague's poor organisation skills.

It seems as a nation we are ignoring our own disorganisation as surprisingly, only 10% said their paper documents were very disorganised and it takes them ages to find what they need and 32% claimed they tidied their desks once every day.

However, over a third of people also admitted they would only purposely tidy their desk if their boss or a client was coming into the office.

It appears organisational dilemmas aren't just dampening workers' spirits. It is also affecting their output, with over 80% stating that an organised desk would make them more productive.

A further 50% of office workers believe their workplace design, environment and organisation has a positive impact on their productivity and 45% of workers said getting a promotion would be more likely if they had a tidy desk.

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Darryl Brunt, UK Sales and Marketing Director at Fellowes, said:

"What we can see from the results is that there are too many shortcomings in the workplace when it comes to organisation in the workforce. An organised workforce is an efficient workforce, regardless of what sector they work in, it's essential for the new year and a way to save businesses money in 2018.

Looming GDPR regulations should also be an incentive for employers to tighten their organisational strategies by encouraging workers to use filing and storage solutions properly and shredding any sensitive information which is no longer required. Ensuring client data is logged properly and stored securely will become a necessity come May."

Here are some top tips to help you get you organised for 2018 from Bankers Box by Fellowes:

- 1. A good filing and storage system helps you become more organised and productive, a perfect way to get your workspace back in order**
- 2. Use a Records Management System to understand what documents you need and where they should go. Are they active, semi-active, archival or disposal?**
- 3. Keep your documents organised and secure using an assortment of strong storage boxes for easy transport and file access**
- 4. Once you have organised your documents it's always best practice to shred anything you no longer need**
- 5. Plan a file clear-out every six months to a year to get rid of out dated or unnecessary files**

Getting your workspace organised means not only will it keep your desk clear and tidy but you'll also find it much easier to locate important information the minute you need it. Bankers Box is the leading brand in document management, offering durable, functional records storage for every need.

Find out more at www.bankersbox.com

Clutter and employee productivity:

disorganised employees can cost managers up to 10 per cent of their salary

Office clutter clearing business, AnyJunk, considers the implications that cluttered desks can have on a business and employees' productivity, as well as tips and solutions for decluttering the office.



your brain's ability to process information. Clutter makes you distracted and unable to process information as well as you do in an uncluttered, organised, and serene environment, according to Princeton University.

Overloading your brain forces it to divide its power, making it more difficult to sift through information, move between tasks, quickly, and have a strong working memory.

How clutter impacts employee productivity

The National Association of Professional Organisers (NAPO) found in their study that disorganisation can lead to financial losses equivalent to 10 per cent of a manager's salary. NAPO also state that 80 per cent of the clutter in the office is a result from being disorganised and not due to a lack of space. There is no excuse for small or large business owners!

When your environment is cluttered, the chaos restricts your ability to focus. The clutter also limits

Researchers at Yale recently identified that the anterior cingulate cortex and insula, the two places your brain associates with pain, illuminate when you let go of things you own and feel connected to. This means it's painful to get rid of things due to a real connection with the item.

While it may be difficult to let go of these things that then cause clutter NAPO state that the number one challenge in being organised is paper clutter.

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Some studies reveal the average person wastes up to 4.3 hours a week looking for papers, which adds stress and frustration to the workplace while reducing concentration and creative thinking.

Cleaning professionals say that getting rid of excess clutter would eliminate 40% of the cleaning work needed.

Bryan Hunter from Instant Offices emphasises: "Keeping your company organised is paramount to keep staff mobilised, sustain high office productivity, and remain focused on priorities and

profitability. Whether you are a large organisation or a small business owner, maintaining a clutter-free office can have a huge effect on the bottom line."

The good news is that there's something you can do about it. Office clutter clearing business, AnyJunk considers the implications that cluttered desks can have on a business and employees' productivity, as well as tips and solutions for decluttering the office.

Tips and benefits to decluttering at work

- Use a filing system for keeping things where they belong. This will clear the surface of your desk and you'll know where documents are when you need them.
- Use a logical flow to keep papers in one spot. Pens, notebooks, and other commonly used items should be kept at arm's length.
- A US study shows the average worker wastes up to one week a year searching for misplaced items.
- Decluttering your digital space is just as important as the physical stuff – they both have the same effect on your brain.
- Often, we need to access documents in a moment's notice, in which case a thought-out desktop file sorter is important.
- Try using colour coded folders, and not stacks of files.
- Reduce workplace accidents and spills with a clear space. A recent study by the HSE reported that between 2013 and 2016 an average of 119 000 employees slipped, tripped, or fell at work in the UK. Have you ever tripped over a colleague's pile of tossed out paperwork, crammed rubbish bin, or unruly cords?
- Remove, or toss, anything from your desk that is not used often. Everything else should go in drawers, cabinets, and containers for easy access.
- Keep the space around your computer clear so that your mouse, and hands, can move freely without knocking anything over.
- You will instantly be more efficient, energised and fewer accidents will occur.
- Keep areas clean for less employee absence and higher employee motivation. Being



healthy at work directly impacts productivity – no one works well when they're ill, and chances are you'll end up infecting a fellow employee.

- Initial Hygiene UK discovered that 57 per cent of employees feel more motivated and have greater morale when their workplace is clean and provisions are made for proper hygiene solutions
- The tidier your workspace, the more hygienic it is.
- There are germs and mould from viruses or crumbs that can't easily be seen. Dust, mould, and animal hairs (if your office is lucky enough to have these furry bundles of joy visit) that get wedged into cluttered spaces trigger allergies and asthma.
- Don't risk your health, and that of your colleagues. Keep your desk and other surfaces clean by using powerful cleaners regularly.
- Even if your office has a regular cleaning service, they won't get into the nooks and crannies – be sure to tackle these untouched surfaces.

When 'living for the weekend' is a huge red flag

by Alyse Kalish www.themuse.com

Love what you do and it'll never feel like work.

Ever heard this phrase?

Despite being an optimist, I'm also a realist. And soon after I started working, I realized that this statement is never the whole picture. Work will never be that simple, sometimes you'll have bad days (even bad weeks), and yes, sometimes you'll live for the weekend. And that's because weekends are great—truly nothing beats having zero professional responsibility and the freedom to do what you want, whenever you want, for 48 hours.

However, begging for the weekend to come can be a sign of a much bigger problem. While work will always feel like work, it shouldn't make you miserable—otherwise you're getting into Sunday Scary territory.

With that in mind, here are the signs your weekend obsession is a red flag:

It's OK if it's Thursday and it's been a long week

Not every day at work is going to be sunshine and butterflies and compliments from your team. You may've spent the week cleaning up someone's mess, getting yelled at by your supervisor, staying late to finish a huge assignment, or dealing with a tough client—it's normal to be counting the hours until your freedom comes.

It's a problem if it's Monday and you haven't even started your week yet

That said, if you're going into the office expecting all the bad stuff above to happen—and dreading



it even before you've sat down at your desk on Monday morning—that's probably a sign you're in a toxic work environment.

It's OK if you live for the weekend occasionally

Even the best jobs can be tiring, frustrating, excessively slow, or incredibly hectic. And, like I said above, the weekends are almost always going to be a lot more fun than whatever you're doing at work. So, don't feel guilty for treasuring them.

It's a problem if you live for the weekend constantly

But, as I note in this article, you spend 30% of your time at work—that means that no matter how great the weekends are, they'll never truly be enough to make you happy. So, if you're always looking to them to lift your spirits, you need to find a job that won't continue to diminish them.

It's OK if you feel refreshed when the weekend ends

As much as we love the weekends, most people who are happy—if not satisfied—in their roles

make the most of them, enjoy their time off, but then leave them ready to get back to the grind.

This won't always happen—sometimes you'll have weekends that are as stressful as, if not more than, work is (think: dealing with travel delays, having to do chores, being in the middle of family drama).

But for the most part, these pauses should be enough to at least somewhat rejuvenate you for the week ahead.

It's a problem if you feel sick when the weekend ends

I have a friend who I always have a blast with over the weekends—we eat great food, sleep in, and have plenty of fun activities planned. But when Sunday evening hits, she tells me she starts to get stomach cramps. No matter how great our time off is, they always come.

When you find yourself continuously unprepared, anxious, or sick (or even self-medicating) at the end of the weekend, that's a sign your job may be the problem.

It's OK if you actually get to enjoy your weekends

You work hard for five days, so you deserve two days' worth of not thinking about anything job-related. If that's true for you, keep on getting pumped for the break ahead.

It's a problem if you expect to have to work on your weekends

If you go into the end of the week praying your boss doesn't call you or expect you to come in, or some work conflict doesn't interrupt your plans, that may be a sign you're in a role that's affecting your work-life balance.

Yes, some jobs require you to be on call, and you know if you signed up for such a role. But when



this happens more often than it should, you're not reaping the full benefits of your weekend—and it's no wonder you can't help but live for them.

Start to recognize how you're feeling when the weekend approaches. Maybe you log your emotions in a journal or have your friends evaluate your moods for you. If you find you're identifying with the "problem" signs more often than not, it could be that your work is doing more damage than you anticipated. And maybe it's time to find yourself a healthier gig.

5 ways to manage your personal and professional development

There was a time when personal and professional development was provided and managed by your employer. You went on a few courses chosen by your company, said yes when you were offered the chance to take on a new project and waited until the time was right to move up or move on. But it's not like that anymore.



These days, you are responsible for your personal and professional development and you need to look for your own opportunities.

What do professional growth and personal development mean?

Professional growth is all about gaining new skills and experience. That means your development is either related to your current role or the role you

want to do next.

Personal development fits alongside professional growth — so if you want to progress in your career, you'll need to develop personally first. That's the only way you'll be able to handle your fears, take on more responsibility, and succeed with greater challenges.

Why is professional development important?

Professional development isn't only about climbing the greasy pole or earning more money. It's also about avoiding stagnation in your career and future-proofing yourself.

When you expand your skills beyond your current role you're preparing yourself for more and that makes you more valuable to employers.

What are some examples of professional development opportunities?

An opportunity either enhances your brand or takes your career where you want to go. Opportunities include:

- **Managing bigger budgets, more people or larger projects**
- **Attending professional training or gaining sought-after qualifications**
- **Volunteering as a buddy or taking on corporate charity work**
- **Taking on a role to gain specific experience, knowledge or skills**
- **Raising your profile by public speaking or leading a sales presentation**

5 ways to manage your personal and professional development

1. Set a clear goal about what you want to achieve

Once you have a clear goal, you'll find it easier to manage your personal and professional development. You'll be able to choose the training that stretches you personally and gives you the experience you need to grow professionally.

2. Be intentional and plan your development

One of the best ways to develop yourself and your career is to ensure you keep learning. Work out a training plan for each year and aim to complete at least one piece of significant training each quarter.

If your employer only pays for training that gives them a return on their investment, you may need

to pay for it yourself.

3. Look for and take the right opportunities

Training isn't all about the learning. You also need to find opportunities to use your new knowledge and skills. But not all opportunities will be right for you and may not fit your personal brand, so choose carefully.

4. Discuss your career plans with your manager

When it comes to personal and professional development, it helps if your manager is on board with your career plans. Since your manager will be signing off on your training, select the right one to take on new projects when those chances appear.

5. Set goals and measure your progress

The best way to manage your development is to ensure you go through a regular process of planning, taking action and reviewing your progress. You'll be clear about how you could improve your performance while seeing beyond day-to-day frustration.

Develop yourself, develop your brand

The clearer you are about your brand image, the more easily you'll find the right personal and professional development opportunities. As you take on more demanding roles, you'll overcome your fears and limiting ideas about yourself.

This creates an upward spiral that helps you get where you want to go. If you are struggling to know how to develop your career further, do reach out to us at Career Consultants for professional career advice and help.

About the author Sarah Berry

Sarah Berry is an internationally recognised Career Consultant and the author of five career titles published by Hodder & Stoughton and Ward Lock, Cassell. She offers her expert career management and social media advice to corporate clients, individuals, leading websites and national magazines and runs Career Consultants & London Outplacement Services.

Businesses must start recruiting on attitude, social competence and character - not CVs

New talent acquisition campaign launches to address skills shortages by changing mind set on how businesses recruit great talent

Industry thought-leader and leadership expert, EP Insights (www.epinsights.co.uk), has launched its new talent acquisition campaign in response to a series of controversial think tank events, which identified that high numbers of businesses could be losing out on future talent due to obsolete recruitment processes and short-sighted approaches.

In an era where skills shortages and lack of trust in leadership are at an all time high across many industries, this latest campaign aims to increase the pool of valid, but often over-looked talent that exists in society today by removing out-dated approaches that recruit on CV alone, thereby ruling out potentially suitable applicants.

Chris Sheppardson, CEO at EP Insights explains: "Attitude and character are a vital consideration when recruiting and it's hard to believe that we still talk about skills shortages as an industry even though we can't seem to look beyond two sheets of A4 paper. We should be focusing our energies on establishing if a person has the right attitude, social competence and character for the role. This is about fairness and encouraging all talent to be represented in the right way without prior judgement, if they possess the required attributes. It's also about behaving with respect

towards others. Talent deserves better, it deserves to have a voice."

EP's campaign is centred on core attitudes that fall into one of two categories: a fixed mind set and a growth mind set.

Sheppardson continued: "In the case of the fixed mind set, you believe you are who you are and you cannot change, which creates problems when you are challenged because anything that appears to be more than you can handle, is bound to leave you feeling hopeless and overwhelmed. In the case of the growth mind set you believe you can improve with effort – these people naturally outperform those with a fixed mind-set, even when they have a lower IQ, because they embrace challenges, treating them as opportunities to learn something new."

This new approach to recruitment is about focusing on a display of inner strength and character at interview stage, so applicants would have to demonstrate attributes such as:

- **Ability to deal with failure: success in life is about how one deals with failure. Common sense would suggest that being smart inspires confidence. It does, but only while the going is easy. The deciding factor**



in life is how you handle setbacks and challenges. People with a growth mind-set manage setbacks

- **Personable:** passion and care are key in life and work
- **Showing leadership:** how often do we measure a candidate's working potential beyond themselves? How they do show leadership in daily life?
- **Beyond CV:** What does their background

and track record tell us beyond what is written on their CV?

- **Social competence:** how do they present themselves and do they have both the social and presentational skills to influence others?

"If the industry wants to talk of skills shortages with any degree of credibility, then it needs to start by ensuring it possesses the right processes and vision to be able to recruit great talent for the future", concluded Sheppardson.

How disappointing was your last cup of tea?

They say the British empire was built on cups of tea, however, as a nation, we will endure 9,828 disappointing cups in our lifetime, according to a new survey.

Researchers from Clipper Teas undertook a nationwide study into our tea drinking habits and revealed we drink an average of 28 cups a week, but according to the poll, at least three of those are truly disappointing.

Half of those polled said they have had to complain to a partner, friend or work colleague about their lack of brew making efforts, with three in ten claiming they feel genuinely insulted by a poor cup of tea.

In fact, three quarters felt that the way in which a person makes your tea is a solid indication of how well they really know you.

And it is our work colleagues who are most likely to serve a cup that is below par, however four in ten said they are too petrified to confront their boss over bad tea and 20% do not dare tell their partner that they hate the way they make it.

Tea stains down the side of the cup, chipped mugs, over milky brews - and being given sugar when you specifically didn't ask for it were among the main concerns of the 2,000 Britons who took part in the study.

In fact, so seriously do Brits take their tea, that 12% said they would rather be sworn at than receive a disappointing cup of tea and one in ten felt someone forgetting your birthday was less



insulting than someone presenting you with a poor-quality beverage.

According to Clipper's Master Blender, the optimum time to leave the teabag in is 3 – 4 minutes. However, 26% of the nation admit to not leaving the tea bag in for long enough and 36% said they would complain if their tea was too weak.

One in five said their preference was for their tea to be strong with a dash of milk, but a more eclectic 15% like it black with a slice of lemon.

The poll found over a third of Brits are convinced that if someone gives them a poor-quality cup of tea, they simply don't care enough, with one in twenty saying their day is totally ruined if it starts with a bad cuppa.



The biggest tea related grumble is if it is too weak (36%), but nearly one in twenty throw a wobbler if tea isn't served with a biscuit to accompany it.

More than one in three (13%) go berserk if they get a cuppa in a chipped mug and one in ten objects if the wrong milk is added.

TOP 20 TEA GRUMBLES

1. Too weak - 36%
2. Luke-warm - 35%
3. Too milky - 30%
4. The teabag has not been in for long enough - 26%
5. The mug has not been washed properly - 25%
6. It has the incorrect amount of milk - 21%
7. The cup is half empty - 20%
8. It is poor quality tea - 19%
9. The cup is half full - 18%
10. Too strong - 18%
11. The teabag was left in too long - 18%
12. The milk was put in before the tea - 18%
13. Someone rushed the process - 16%
14. Not enough sugar or sweetener was in it - 15%
15. There are tea stains down the cup - 14%
16. Not milky enough - 14%
17. The mug is chipped - 13%
18. The wrong type of milk - 11%
19. They gave you sugar/sweetener when you don't take it - 11%
20. It is not the right brand of tea - 9%

