

PA ENTERPRISE

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

September 2018

**Managing gossip
at work**

**Why do so many
Brits feel lonely in
the workplace?**

**Should you avoid
huggers at work?**

**Should emailing on
your commute be
considered part of
your working day?**

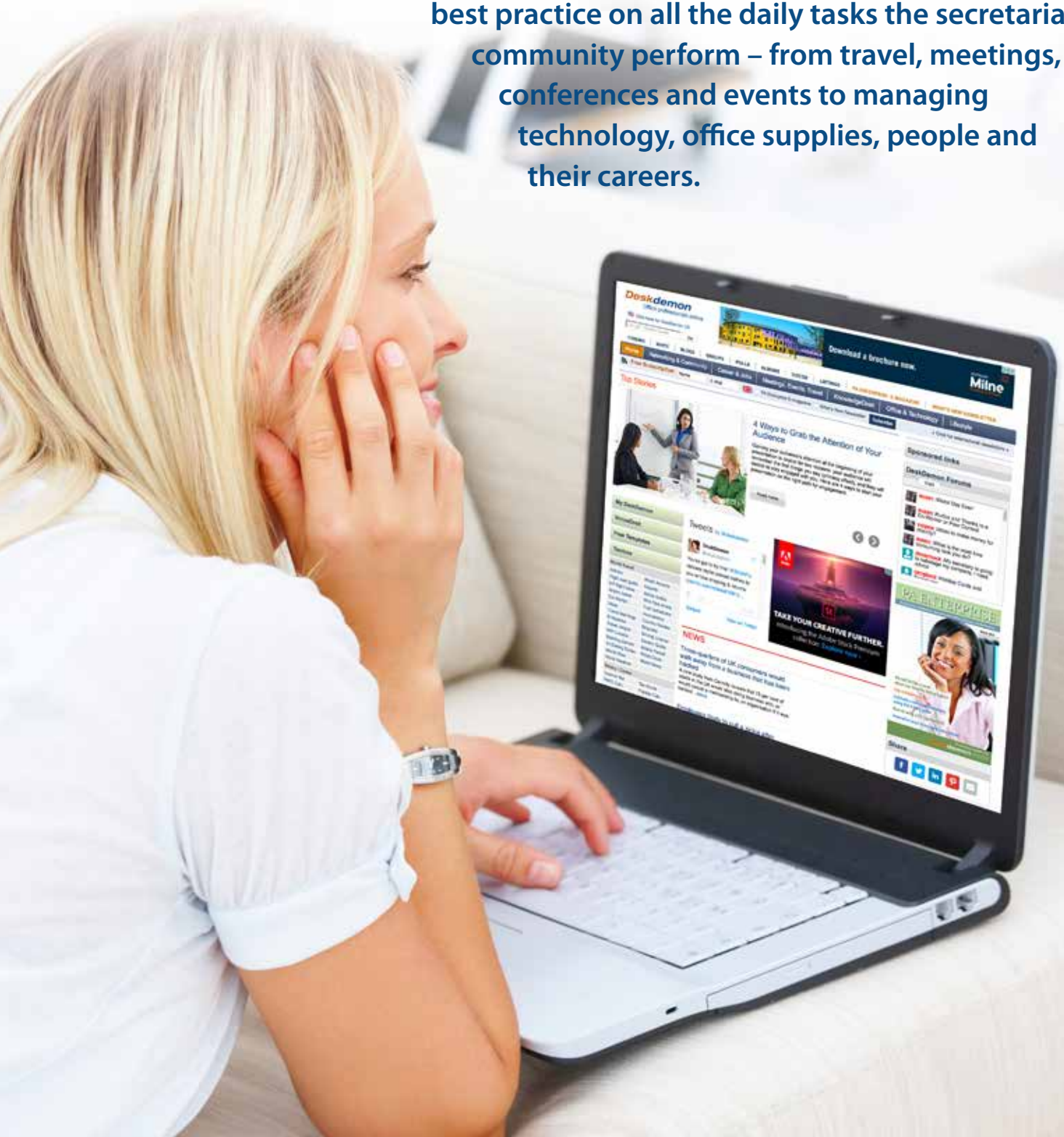
**How to have a
successful 1-1 with
your boss**

PA Enterprise is published by

Deskdemon.com

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

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.





4 Emailing on your commute should be part of your working day



6 Aussie career expert claims workplace gossip can cost you your job



8 How to manage gossip at work

10 Should you avoid huggers at work?

12 Why do so many Brits feel lonely in the workplace?

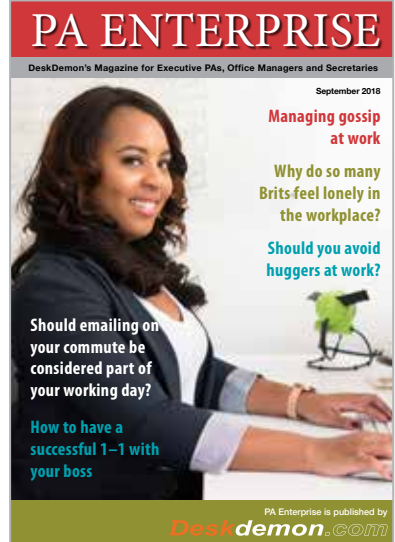
14 Brits believe thinking positively is better for them than vitamins

16 How to have a successful 1-1 with your boss

18 Bugged at work: how secret recordings are changing the workplace

20 What if you could press a reset button on your life?

21 Employees need help to manage money worries



PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

www.deskdemon.com

Terminal House, Station Approach, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8AS

Editorial

editoruk@deskdemon.com

Advertising

Tel: 0870 410 4038

mek@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos

Graphic Design

janebigos@deskdemon.com

Kulasekaram Vimalarasa (Raj)

Web Developer

raj@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani

Founder, CEO

mek@deskdemon.com

All rights reserved. No part of this Publication (whether in hardcopy or electronic form) may be copied, transmitted, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written consent of DeskDemon.com. Whilst every care is taken in the compilation and publication of this publication, DeskDemon.com can not be held responsible for any consequences, mistakes or omissions. DeskDemon.com can not accept any responsibility for any inaccuracies or changes, or for consequential loss arising from such changes or inaccuracies, or for any other loss. Inclusion of any advertisements does not imply recommendations or endorsement by DeskDemon.com.

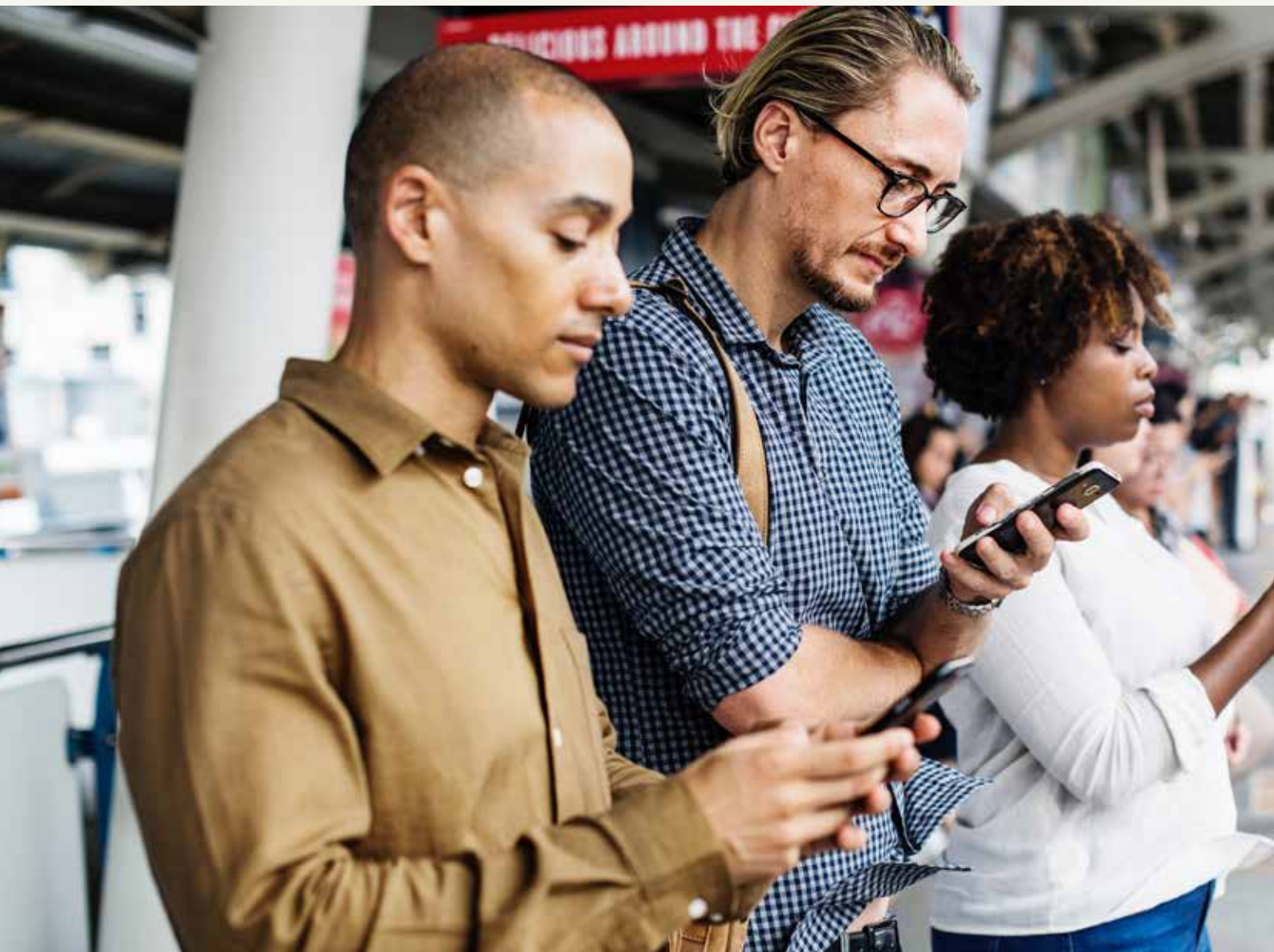
Copyright 2018 DeskDemon.com



PA Enterprise is sent to DeskDemon UK e-newsletter, audited by ABCe (5th/6th July 2007) with a net distribution of 70,581 email addresses.

Emailing on your commute should be part of your working day

Sending emails on commute should count as part of your working day, researchers say. A survey of thousands of commuters by the University of West of England found how many use their train journey to and from the office as time to “catch up” with work, outside their traditional working day.



Their team analysed the use of free wifi on Chiltern Railways' services between London and Birmingham, and London and Aylesbury.

Over a 40-week period, the rail operator incrementally increased the amount of free wifi available to passengers, with the number connecting to the free wifi on the London to Birmingham route rising from 54% when 20mb was offered to 60% when 125mb was offered.

By contrast, connections by mobile data fluctuated around 48%.

Interviews with passengers showed why internet access was as important for commuters as for those travelling on business, the university said.

Many respondents expressed how they consider their commute as time to "catch up" with work, before or after their traditional working day.

This transitional time also enabled people to switch roles, for example from being a parent getting their children ready for school in the morning to a business director during the day.

The researchers' findings were presented at the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference on Thursday.

Dr Juliet Jain said: "If travel time were to count as work time, there would be many social and economic impacts, as well as implications for the rail industry.

"It may ease commuter pressure on peak hours and allow for more comfort and flexibility around working times.

"However it may also demand

more surveillance and accountability for productivity."

The team also looked at how Norway allows some commuters to count travel time as part of their working day.

However, the researchers added copying such a move in the UK would need trains to also provide a good working environment with tables, power sockets, space and continuous internet and phone connectivity.

This would require investment from train operators and telecoms companies, they said.

Reacting to the news of the study, many current commuters posted on Twitter about how they were doing "hidden work" on their daily journeys.

One wrote: "I clocked an average of 20 additional hours per week on the Brighton to London commute for 6 years. I would very much like some back pay!"

Another described how sending or checking emails was how they spent most of their 90-minute commute each morning and afternoon.

But, one cautioned that those who answer emails while travelling are making "a rod for your own back", adding: "I don't even think about work until I step into the office.

"If people know you will respond out of hours then they will come to expect it."

Another claimed the study was a "London-centric issue", highlighting how most commuters actually travel by car.

Commenting on the study, the Confederation of British Industry's head of employment Matthew Percival said: "Flexible working practices are valued by employees and employers.

"Having the freedom to email on the go enables employees to fit work into the times that best suits them, whilst offering flexibility helps employers to recruit and retain staff.



Aussie career expert claims workplace gossip can cost you your job

Several Australian firms have banned gossiping in the workplace.

We all do it — sometimes several times a day. But this common habit could be harming your career and might even get you sacked if you're not careful.

If you've ever worked in an office before, you've probably been guilty of indulging in a little gossip at some point.

Whether it's speculating about Sharon from account's love life or the boss' questionable fashion choices, most of us have swapped stories behind a co-worker's back on occasion.

But according to workplace expert Rose Bryant-Smith, that common habit could end up seriously affecting your career.

Ms Bryant-Smith, co-founder of workplace investigations firm Worklogic and co-author of Fix Your Team, said it was human nature to gossip and speculate at times of stress, such as when redundancies were on the table, or when boredom sets in.

But she said gossip becomes a problem when the speculation is negative in nature and when it is intended to "drag people down" and damage someone's reputation.

"Bosses hate undermining gossip because it really damages team relationships," she said.

"Bosses need people to work together constructively, and we know if someone speculates about your personal life — about your marriage, your illness, about how you got a promotion — that sort of gossip really hurts.

"You're less likely to trust and work constructively with that person and the damage to teams can be significant."

Ms Bryant-Smith said many workers didn't realise gossip could land them in hot water at work.

"People who engage in gossip need to be very careful they're not breaching any values or standards of conduct the employer has set because at its worst, gossip can be bullying or sexual harassment," she said.

"If gossipers breach a policy then employers can rightfully discipline them or possibly even terminate their employment, particularly if it's repeated behaviour that risks the health and safety of co-workers."

Ms Bryant-Smith said while you shouldn't be forced to be friends with everyone you work with, conduct that affected morale, disrupted productivity or socially isolated a particular team member was "quite serious".

So how should you handle the notorious office gossiper? Ms Bryant-Smith said it was important



to either refuse to engage with them — or call out their bad behaviour.

“Combat it directly and say, ‘I don’t find that sort of talk constructive, it makes me feel uncomfortable,’ or you could say ‘I really like Sarah, I don’t agree with what you’re saying,’” she said.

“In open-plan offices where noise levels are an issue and it’s harder to step away when someone is gossiping all day, say, ‘Look, I’ve got a deadline coming up, I’m popping my headphones on,’ and that’s a pretty good way of indicating you need to focus without being too confronting.

“And if you’re concerned about it getting out of hand and turning into bullying, I’d consider having a quiet word with your manager without making a formal complaint.”

Ms Bryant-Smith said workers also needed to

be wary of what they post on social media — especially if they are followed by any colleagues or clients, or have their role listed on their account.

“We often see employees get into hot water because they think comments they make on social media are either off the record or private, but the reality is Facebook posts and other social media comments are online 24/7 and if you’re connected with a colleague ... people can literally take screenshots of your post and attach it to a formal complaint,” she said.

“Some employees don’t appreciate how much risk they’re taking. Unless none of your colleagues are your friend on Facebook, which is incredibly rare, it’s best to be careful because the lines between personal and professional on social media are blurry.”

How to manage gossip at work

Gossip is rampant in most workplaces. Sometimes, it seems as if people have nothing better to do than gossip about each other. They talk about the company, their colleagues, and their managers. They frequently take a partial truth and turn it into a whole speculative truth.

Gossips speculate about the company's future, whether colleagues will get fired, and what other employees are doing in their personal lives outside of work. In short, employees are capable of gossiping about anything—and they do—in a workplace that fails to manage gossiping employees.

Managers and Gossiping Employees

Many managers turn a blind eye to employee gossip (or worse, participate in it). It results in low employee morale and a toxic culture.

In one company, employees knew that the minute they shared information with their marketing manager, he would share it in his one-on-one meetings with every other coworker. The department's morale was low, and the gossip made the employees distrust each other and not share anything with their manager—all of it the manager's doing.

Many employees gossip about the amount of money they make—and often, they don't tell the truth. So, unhappy colleagues beat a path to the Human Resources' door asking about their own salary.

By law, companies cannot prohibit employees from discussing their salaries, although many companies do have such policies. Their intention is to avoid problems, but they are violating the law in so doing. Employers may not restrict employee discussions.

When to Act

Expect a certain amount of gossip; people want to know what is going on in their workplace, and they like to discuss work issues. The key is to know when the gossip is out-of-hand. You need to act if the gossip is:

- disrupting the workplace and the business of work
- hurting employees' feelings
- damaging interpersonal relationships
- injuring employee motivation and morale

If you find yourself having to address gossip frequently, you may want to examine your workplace to understand the consistent themes in the gossip. Consider that you may not be sharing enough information with employees. It is also possible that employees don't trust you and are afraid to ask about important topics.

When employees don't trust their manager or feel that they lack information, they make up information to fill in the blanks. That information is often false, but people may believe it and make decisions based on that information. Or they speculate which can also damage decision making.

The results can be terrible and damaging to employees' careers and company morale. For instance, if employees hear rumors of layoffs, they may start looking for new jobs and leave when in

***“Who gossips to you
will gossip of you.”***

Turkish proverb



reality, their jobs were not under threat. Turnover can be very expensive.

If gossip has not been managed in the past, gossip tends to become a negative aspect of your work culture. So, don't let negative gossip go unaddressed.

If employees are talking about other employees in a negative manner, it can have serious consequences. Frequently, in a toxic gossip culture, there is a small group of employees who cause the problems. They often have power and bully other employees and often can bully the boss.

How to Manage Gossip

You can manage gossip exactly as you would manage any other negative behavior from an employee in your workplace. Use a coaching approach, when possible, to help the employee improve his or her behavior. Gossip is often a life-long habit and breaking it can take a great deal of effort. Managers who ignore gossip can destroy a department.

But, when needed, gossip management starts with a serious talk between the employee and the manager or supervisor. If discussion of the negative impacts of the employee's gossip does not affect subsequent behavior, begin the process of progressive discipline with a verbal warning, then a formal written, verbal warning for the employee's personnel file.

You absolutely should fire an employee who continues gossiping after participating in coaching. One toxic person can drive your good employees out, especially if they see that the behavior is going unaddressed.

If you assertively deal with gossip, you will create a work culture and environment that does not support gossip. You need to answer your employees' questions directly and honestly to avoid work-related gossip.

If the gossip is personal, you must go to the employees in question and make it clear that their colleagues are not an appropriate topic.

www.thebalancecareers.com

Should you avoid huggers at work?

Are you a hugger or a hand shaker - or neither? When a work colleague returns from holiday or maternity leave, do you go in for the double bear-hug, or a friendly hello from across the desk?

For those people who prefer a non-physical greeting, the direction of office etiquette may be moving against you.

There is evidence that workplaces are seeing a rise in hugging culture. In a survey last year more than half of advertising and marketing executives said hugging was common, up from a third in the survey in 2011.

Experts say it could have a lot to do with more relaxed workplace environments.

But there's a downside. A separate study last year on sexual harassment in the US fast food industry found that more than a quarter of workers felt they were hugged inappropriately.

Deborah Wallsmith, an assistant professor of anthropology at Kennesaw State University, Georgia, says that the gradations of hug discomfort depend upon nuances, relationships, and personal preferences.

"The least offensive is the one armed side-by-side hug, where the huggers are standing next to each other, and extend their adjacent arms around each other's waist.

"The most objectionable is the full-frontal squeeze that goes on forever."

She adds that she "feels uncomfortable getting hugged by former professors and former bosses".

Kara Deringer, a business coach from Alberta, Canada, explains that context is all-important. Yet many people get it wrong.



She agrees that hugging can be very useful. "It creates connections." But on the other hand, she says: "Be careful. I have seen lots of misunderstandings. I currently work in a team, and we're huggers. But there are those who will courageously say 'I'm not a hugger!'"

Ms Deringer recommends either asking people for a hug, or paying very close attention to body language. "If they reach out their hand? I've got it,

they're hand shaker or a high fiver."

And beware another minefield - the sociological layers of power, culture, and gender. All can have their own "rules" for physical contact, says Ms Deringer. "It's also about social intelligence - I won't hug someone I just met."

Tracey Smolinski is also in a work culture where hugging is acceptable. The chief executive of Cardiff-based Introbiz, which hosts business networking events, says: "We are quite a friendly team, and usually give a kiss on the face, both cheeks, when we are familiar with them."

"But if you don't know them, best not to kiss or hug, because you don't know how they will take it. You have to be careful."

Some of this may sound like commonsense. But what if hugging is standard practice in your office, but you really don't want to indulge? Are you the office grinch?

Toronto-based musician Cynthia Pike-Elliott, who has had careers in healthcare and law enforcement, says that in both environments hugging was standard.

"Hugging was a huge part of my workplace, a huge part in maintaining these personal relationships," she says. For her, hugging is "a way to say to someone that you've made a connection with them, and that you trust them... It's not hurting anyone."

"If I was an employee, a hug from my employer would show their pride and gratitude of a job well done much more than words could ever accomplish," she says.

Ms Pike-Elliott adds that if a business owner hugs a client, it "shows trust and validates that the client is special, it builds a solid relationship".

In her role as a musician she has found colleagues and acquaintances more "huggy" than most. "Music and arts is about revealing your soul. It's very personal," she says.

Canadian labour lawyer Shaun Bernstein advises against hugs in the office, particularly

in light of the province of Ontario's update to its Occupational Health and Safety Act last September. This included more provisions against workplace harassment and unwelcome attention.

Mr Bernstein says: "If the hug is taken in the wrong way, it can easily be construed under the law as workplace sexual harassment, which places a responsibility on the employer to investigate."

It is also the responsibility of the company to have a designated harassment complaints officer, as well as a back-up person in case the officer is the one causing trouble.

Mr Bernstein adds: "Employers have a serious responsibility when it comes to protecting their workers against harassment, and are obligated to have policies in place to prevent this kind of conduct."

For Adina Zaiantz, chief executive of Napkin Marketing, in Toronto, the simple rule is: "When in doubt, don't hug... Everyone feels differently about personal space and boundaries." It's possible to hug and still avoid full body contact, she adds.

So, when does she feel it's OK?

- **Someone you are close to at work is very upset, and confiding to you about a death or personal tragedy in their life**
- **Someone you are close to at work is telling you big, happy personal news, "I'm engaged!" "I'm pregnant!"**
- **A close co-worker or employee is telling you they got a new job, and the departure is on good terms**
- **You meet a colleague whom you haven't seen in a very long time**
- **You're at a party and everyone is being a little extra huggier**

Ms Zaiantz adds: "No matter what you think, your work friends are different than your real friends. Your real friends can't call HR on you."

Why do so many Brits feel lonely in the workplace?

It's not uncommon to feel stressed at work; either you've got a bunch of deadlines to get on with, or there's nothing to do but clock-watch. But one of the biggest issues for many of us during office hours is loneliness.



If you ever feel lonely at work, a survey by recruitment website Totaljobs has found that you're not alone; a vast majority of the British public feel the same.

The site has collaborated with mental health charity Mind and the Samaritans to encourage employers to speak to staff about their problems and general mental health.

Research shows that of the 5,795 people surveyed, 60% have experienced loneliness in the workplace.

As many as a quarter (26%) of employees have actually left their jobs due to feelings of isolation.

And it's not just because respondents felt like they had no one to have a natter with in the canteen; for some there were serious issues that made them feel alienated.

A large number of people (44%) felt it was work-related pressures that isolated them from other staff members as they had to focus on their own responsibilities.

Not fitting in with colleagues was a factor, with 42% citing this reason while 32% of people said they actively seek solitude at work.

Worryingly, 21% of respondents associated their loneliness with discrimination.

Feeling lonely significantly impacts employee mental health, say researchers. Two thirds (68%) of employees who feel lonely said this impacts their stress levels, 66% suffer from low self-esteem, and 56% lose sleep over it.

A third have even called in sick because of it, resulting in up to five sick days a year.

And gender breakdowns showed that more women than men avoided work as result of a lonely environment.

Neither sexes seemed to address the problem either, with 30% of women saying they don't talk about it and 39% of men saying they wouldn't either.

Both Mind and the Samaritans say employers can do more by listening to their workers and being

aware of different employee needs.

The Samaritans are encouraging recruiters to sign up to mental health charities and enlist in online programmes such as Wellbeing in the City.

The tool shows staff how to intervene when someone is struggling, actively listen and manage difficult conversations.

Mind has its own programme, with its Wellness Action Plan which can be helpful to employees whether they have a diagnosed mental health problem or not.

'We would strongly encourage men and women, millennials and boomers, to confide in someone about their loneliness, whether inside or outside of work,' said Martin Talbot, Group Marketing Director at Totaljobs.

'Talking to someone can help you to feel less lonely. Equally, we would urge employers to be proactive in putting measures in place so those suffering from loneliness in the workplace have a network of people and tools to support them.'

You never know, reaching out to the person sitting next to you could have more benefits than you think.



Wellbeing in the City

Three out of five people have experienced mental health issues due to work. But just one in ten tell their manager. Together we can change this. We want to create workplaces where employees feel supported and where no one has to cope alone.

The Wellbeing in the City programme teaches people the skills to manage their own emotional health and look out for others, before they reach crisis point.

Businesses and individuals can sign up now using the token code: samaritans2018

Brits believe thinking positively is better for them than vitamins

New research into the nation's attitude towards health revealed that while 38% of us describe ourselves as 'fairly health conscious', our knowledge of what techniques and habits can improve our health is sorely lacking.

- **80% of Brits are unaware of the positive impact supplements can have on their health**
- **London is the most health-conscious region in the UK**
- **Small changes in routine can add years to your life**

25% of adult men and nearly 50% of adult females are believed to have insufficient levels of selenium.

The study, conducted by Simply Supplements, asked over 2,000 Brits to identify what improvements they could make to their lives in order to improve their health. The respondents could choose multiple options, 24% chose Increase fresh air intake and 27% picked Thinking positively, this does not compare favourably to the mere 19% who selected taking daily supplements to top up vitamins needed by the body.

This study appears to have exposed a major gap in our knowledge. This is shown in almost half the population (46%) not understanding that eating healthy balanced meals would improve their overall health, less than a third (29%) realising that decreasing alcohol intake would improve their overall health, and 5% mistakenly believing that Arsenic was something they should be taking daily.

Arsenic occurs naturally in the earth, and at low levels is harmless. However, when consumed over a long period of time, it can lead to adverse effects on the

stomach and liver. This pales in comparison to 4% believing that radioactive isotope Polonium would improve health if consumed, when in actual fact would give you metal poisoning, liver damage, followed by death.

If you do want to get healthier, the impact a healthy diet can have on the body is wide-ranging, from increased alertness, improved sleep, and reduced risk of heart disease. Having a balanced diet gives the body all the nutrients it needs, meaning we have enough energy without excess calories being stored as fat. But one of the struggles people face in eating healthier is time.

Unknown to over 80% of the population, one of the fastest easiest ways to improve your overall health is through daily vitamin supplements. It's now common knowledge that, even with the recent weather, British people do not get enough vitamin D, but there are several other key vitamins and nutrients which can be difficult for us to maintain all-year-round.

Matt Durkin MSc, an expert nutritionist from Simply Supplements, explains what we Brits are lacking the most:

'According to recent research by the British Nutrition Foundation, almost 25% of adult men and nearly 50% of adult females are believed to have insufficient levels of selenium. Selenium is a crucial nutrient for the creation of glutathione in the body, more commonly known to nutritionists as the 'master antioxidant'. Similarly, around a third of females between the ages of 11 and 64 have an insufficient intake of iron, which is an important mineral for cognitive function and energy levels. As a result, it is therefore quite worrying that such low numbers of Brits identify supplements as an effective method of supporting good health.'

While all of us should be trying to get healthier, the quickest ways to do so are remarkably simple, and will make a big difference to your daily life.

How to have a successful 1–1 with your boss

Whether you've been working for years or are just starting out, you know that having good one-on-one meetings with your boss is crucial for your success.

At best, these meetings can leave both you and your manager feeling productive, energized, and prepared for the week and work ahead. At worst, they can leave you feeling confused, drained, or even hopeless about the path forward. (Reading this article and realizing you don't even have these on your calendar regularly? Here's how to ask your boss to set up weekly check-ins.)

Here's how to make the most of this time so you get what you need to get ahead.

Set an Agenda

The most productive one-on-ones have some kind of structure, which requires you to do some prep beforehand. Basically, don't just show up and chat—you'll lose precious time in rambling conversations.

Have a clear agenda—you can use this template to create one and send it to your boss before you meet.

Share Important Updates (But Keep Them Quick)

It's key to share any important updates with your manager—here's what I did last week, here's what I'm doing this week, here's the result of X project—but be careful of spending too much time discussing these.

Prior to your one-on-one, consider what you want to get out of sharing updates. Remember that you don't have to share everything in person—many things can be explained over email or Slack, or in passing over lunch.

Instead, prioritize them. Here are some questions

to ask yourself to do this:

- **Is this time-sensitive? If it's urgent, don't wait for your next meeting to provide an update. Mention anything urgent in real time so your manager can quickly help you before the going gets too tough.**
- **How complicated is my update? If you find yourself drafting an essay-length email to your manager, that's a good sign your update is better suited for in person. On the other hand, if it's short and sweet, go on and send over an email, but don't let it cut into precious one-on-one time.**
- **Is this an opportunity to share a win? Don't be afraid to share and celebrate your wins. Help your manager see your progress and acknowledge your good work. This also helps your manager share your work with leadership who you might not interact with you on a regular basis.**

Ask a Lot of Questions

The best use of one-on-ones is spent here—debugging a problem, thinking through an obstacle, or gathering feedback or guidance on how to take the next step forward.

Ask questions that get to the heart of your concerns. For instance, if you're stuck on a potential strategy, you can ask your manager: "How would you approach X? My proposed solution is Y, any feedback on this?"

It's important to note that your role as an individual is not only to surface questions but



also to provide some initial thoughts on how you might solve these problems. It's okay if your ideas aren't fully baked, but make sure you've thought through potential solutions, rather than rely fully on your manager to solve those issues for you.

Make Commitments Out Loud

What next steps will you and your manager both agree to? What tasks will your manager commit to taking on, and what's on you to carry forward?

Articulate and agree on these commitments in the last part of your one-on-one so you're crystal clear on what's expected between now and your next check-in. This could be as simple as your manager agreeing to send over a report that might be helpful for you, or as complex as you agreeing to have a difficult conversation with a client.

Discuss the Long Term

Not every one-on-one needs to be about the

short-term—remember to discuss long-term goals every now and then.

Think about how your manager can help you grow in your career, and ask for feedback to help guide the way.

For instance, ask yourself and your boss: "What am I good at and how can I get to the next level?" "What are my strengths?" "What are some gaps in my experience, and what help do I need to get there?"

You should send these questions along in advance (a.k.a., in your agenda) so your manager can prepare thoughtful feedback. This also gives you time to self-reflect and prepare for your part of the conversation.

These simple changes will help your one-on-ones be more productive and show your manager that you're proactive about managing your work and your career—and confident in your abilities to do so.

www.themuse.com

Bugged at work: how secret recordings are changing the workplace

A pair of recent, high-profile news stories are highlighting the way workplace lawsuits and culture increasingly are influenced by surreptitious recordings.



Former presidential adviser Omarosa Manigault Newman says she taped several conversations related to her firing, including one involving White House chief of staff John Kelly as well as one with President Trump himself.

In a separate case, Simone Grimes says she started recording Federal Housing Finance Administration Director Melvin Watt in early 2016, to bolster her claims alleging sexual harassment, retaliation and violations of the Equal Pay Act.

The idea is that recordings might help unearth truth, but experts say they also can foster mistrust, undermine workplace culture, and raise a host of thorny issues — from legality and ethics to trade secret violations and, in Manigault Newman's case, national security.

Grimes says she is thankful she decided to make undercover recordings.

"The best thing I did was to record people without their knowledge, because they were

much more frank and honest," she says.

Grimes, who still works at the FHFA as a program analyst, says the pay increase she had been promised required Watt's approval, but every time she brought it up, he seemed to be interested in a quid pro quo. Grimes released parts of her secretly recorded conversations with Watt, including one from November 2016, when he insisted they meet outside the office, at his house.

"This is the safest place to do this — to have this conversation," he tells her on the recording. "It would be the safest place if it were going beyond this conversation — but I think you were concerned that I was luring you here for other reasons."

Watt had denied wrongdoing. The FHFA and Watt have declined comment regarding the recordings.

Grimes' allegations are now the subject of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint and a separate lawsuit filed this month. She says she has multiple recordings, with various people she works with, that she believes support her case.

She did so, she says, on the advice of a friend — and that without it, her claims might have been dismissed.

"I was fortunate that I was given the advice to record everything," she says, though she also admits "at first I felt very guilty doing that."

But Katrina Patrick, a Houston employment attorney, says surreptitious workplace recordings are commonplace.

"When I first started practicing 23 years ago, it was a rarity; [in] five years, you have about two or three cases where there were recordings," she says. "But today, the question really is: 'Why didn't you record? You mean to tell me you have no recordings?'"

Patrick says everyone ought to assume, at this point, that they're on mic: "If you are surprised you're being recorded, then you are extremely

naive; it really is the way of the world."

But the laws governing secret recordings are complex and vary by state, and in some cases there are federal rules that might apply. Eleven states require both parties to consent for the recording to be legal. Whistleblower protections, labor laws and free speech laws also can come into play. On top of that, some employers have policies prohibiting the practice.

Patrick says secret recordings get mixed reviews from judges and jurors: "If you like the employee, then you tend to give them a pass when they make a recording — but if you do not like the person, I've seen it come to haunt that person, because people tend to think that it's sneaky."

Besides influencing legal cases, these types of undercover recordings also have an impact on workplace culture, says Johnny Taylor Jr., CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management.

"It has changed the entire workplace dynamic," says Taylor. It counteracts what has been the mantra of HR for years, he says: trying to cultivate transparency and worker engagement.

"The struggle that we have now is, if there is some concern that every word spoken is being recorded surreptitiously by an employee, then people are questioning whether or not it makes sense to be so open, so accessible, so employee-friendly," he says.

Taylor says one case brought to him recently involved a female executive giving her female protégée some advice, including about how to dress. The protégée secretly recorded that conversation, argued the executive was being sexist, and brought a claim. In that case, the claim went nowhere, but it left the executive feeling embarrassed.

Taylor says he has seen cases where peers and colleagues are recording one another. "That cannot be deemed a healthy culture — it just can't be, by anyone's standard," he says.

It's hard to cultivate trust, he says, when every word you say might later be used against you.

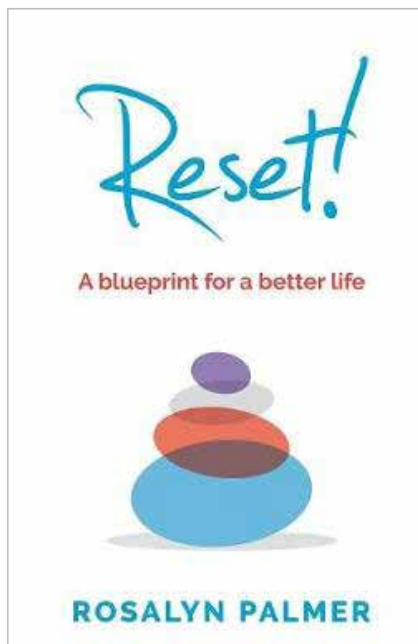
What if you could press a reset button on your life?

This is a self-help book for those who don't like self-help books or those who do but are still feeling deflated.

Powerful and motivating, ***Reset! A Blueprint for a Better Life*** guides readers through a journey of self-discovery. Rosalyn Palmer is a leading specialist in hypnotherapy and Rapid Transformational Therapy. She gained clarity through her remarkable life experiences.

Palmer understands as this was the blueprint for her own life when she was a boss of an award-winning PR Agency in London with the trappings of success. Her clients included the motivational gurus of the time such as Tony Robbins, Edward de Bono and Robert Holden. Yet Palmer was like her own archetypal client of today; Burnt-out Barbara. Stressed out, burnt out and hiding behind a mask.

This is not a book about clichéd 'positive thinking' exercises. Palmer is candidly open about her own story that includes outward success (from Ab Fab Lynne Franks PR to 'making it' and selling her own PR Agency and moving to the Bahamas), her early years as a grocer's daughter and comprehensive school kid to a time when her life imploded with cancer, divorce, bereavement, redundancy, financial loss and more.



Coming through it, and now as a therapist, Palmer offers the reader accessible solutions to everyday challenges. A simple yet powerful framework to create a balanced life and numerous, effective, exercises, reinforce the powerful messages of the book; that you can reset your life and reprogramme yourself for more joy and living at a higher level.

Palmer has written in a communications context for years (often ghosting articles for thought leaders) and now she speaks with her own voice and is vulnerable enough to share her truth.

Her signature message, like the bracelet she wears, is: "All that I need is already within me". We all have it within ourselves to overcome obstacles and reset our lives. Palmer offers advice on overcoming rejection; being mindful; shedding outdated beliefs; taming your inner critic; negotiating with your subconscious mind; and on how to create a 'Compassion Compass' for your life. Her 6Fs exercise offers a blueprint for a balanced life comprising: friends/family/faith/fitness/finance and fun.

Palmer's spiritual side gives insight into the laws of attraction, creating intimacy (or into-me-see and, in a different chapter, about relaxing into having great orgasms), and charts (with candour and humour), her own 50+ online dating journey and menopausal struggles.

Employees need help to manage money worries

UK workers are struggling to cope financially, and would welcome help from their employers.

The survey, carried out among 10,000 employees, showed that 50% said they regularly had to borrow money to pay household bills or deal with day-to-day expenditure. This figure jumps to 70% among under-34s.

Inability to get by has led to spiralling debts amongst the UK's workforce. Unsecured household debt now stands at £13,151.37 on average, compared to £10,718.20 in 2016.

As a result, one in 10 employees said they feel their finances are out of control, and a further 18% were in control, but only just hanging in there.

For British business, the impact of money worries can be significant. Neyber has calculated that the lost productivity and increased absence and employee turnover associated with financial stress costs UK companies in the region of £120.7 billion every year.

6 in 10 employees said their behaviour changes when they are under financial pressure. This increased to more than seven in 10 for those aged under 34. They said that money worries change their internal mindset and attitudes, and their ability to maintain focus at work.

45% said that money worries affect their job performance and 40% said they affect their relationships at work.

Employers are aware of financial worries causing changes in their employees. Sixty eight% agreed that this affects individuals' behaviour, 69% their performance and 67% relationships at work.

Heidi Allan, head of employee wellbeing at Neyber, said: "Employees need help with spotting the warning signs before their finances start to feel out of control, and prevent their situation getting worse and racking up personal debt.

"When we asked employees if they would welcome support and information to help them improve their financial, situation, over half (55%) said that they would. Over their lifetime, there is a consistent need for support with savings habits, long term financial planning including pensions, and ways to invest. A high proportion of under 34s want to know more about how to get on the property ladder and about mortgages. Everyday money management and budgeting home finances are also important skills to teach staff."

The top areas where employees want help:

Savings – how to create good habits:15%

Investments:15%

Long term financial planning e.g. pensions - 20%

Help to understand ISAs and other savings options:10%

Mortgages and how to get on the property ladder:

22% for 18-24

17% for 25-34

11% for 35-44,

4% for 45-54

1% over 55's