

PA ENTERPRISE

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

February 2010



**SPECIAL
ISSUE:**
**Focus on
Job
hunting**

- ▶ Coping with Redundancy – and find a new job
- ▶ How to write the best CV and cover letter
- ▶ Using networking in your job search
- ▶ The Interview – plan and prepare

A publication of
Deskdemon.com



WHO SHINES THE BRIGHTEST?



NOMINATE YOUR NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND® EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AND WIN...

Employee of the Month Prizes

Each month we will be awarding the top 50 voted employees with a tin of NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND® and a box of QUALITY STREET® for your office. The winner with the most votes will also receive a meal for two to the value of £100.

Employee of the Year Prize

An exclusive VIP box at The O2 arena to a top event for the winner (who amassed the most votes) and up to 17 colleagues and £200 spending money for your Employee of the Year. Plus, a year's supply of NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND® and QUALITY STREET®.

Visit **www.goldblend-employee.co.uk** for more information.

NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND®

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Entry is online only. Promotion runs from 1st February to 20th December 2010. For full terms and conditions visit www.goldblend-employee.co.uk

NI customers: No purchase necessary. Please call 0800 745 845 to get your entry code.

Promoter: NESTLÉ UK Ltd. St. George's House, Croydon, Surrey CR9 1NR. © Reg. trademark of Société des Produits Nestlé S.A.

- 5 News**
- 6 Workplace Issues**
Office etiquette; staying motivated; office romance dos and don'ts
- 9 Venues**
New restaurants; best and worst hotels
- 10 Products**
Multi-Charger; new Sony S-series laptop; AF targets game market
- 11 Promotions**
Thistle Hotel online prizes; NESCAFÉ® Employee of the month; Brother printer promotion
- 12 Redundancy**
How to cope and find a new job
- 15 Redunancy Glossary**
Understanding the terms used
- 16 Job Hunting Mistakes**
What to avoid
- 19 CV writing**
Top tips on how to make the most of your CV
- 20 Cover Letter**
Boost your CV with a great cover letter
- 22 The Interview**
How to plan and prepare
- 24 Performance Appraisals**
Don't have to be a bad thing!



PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

www.deskdemon.com

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

Editorial

PR contact: Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Features Editor

Susan Silva

Advertising

Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos
Graphic Design
janebigos@deskdemon.com

Kulasekaram Vimalarasa (Raj)
Web Developer
raj@deskdemon.com

Suresh Karupppannan
Website Designer
suresh@deskdemon.com

Publisher

Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
paul@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani
Founder, CEO
mek@deskdemon.com

General Enquiries

Paul Ormond
Tel: 08704104038
Email: paul@deskdemon.com

Copyright 2010 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

WHY I LOVE MY BROTHER LABELLER

Diane Lofthouse
The Raft

ONE ROLL PRINTS
ANY LENGTH
FROM LABELS TO SIGNAGE

YOU CAN PRINT
DIRECT FROM
WORD, EXCEL & OUTLOOK

"We've not had our QL machine for long. But it really has been a godsend. I used to spend ages producing address labels for our mail, but since we invested in a QL machine, I can do it in no time. I simply print all the labels I need instantly at the touch of a button and WOOSH! - they're ready!"

Contact your usual stationery supplier or visit www.brother.co.uk/office

All Brother label printers come with a 3 year warranty upon registration.



QL-570

Plan for six months' paternity leave revealed

New rights for fathers to take up to six months' paternity leave - three paid - have been announced by the government.

The plans, which could come into force from April next year, would give fathers the right to take the time off during the second half of a baby's first year if the mother returns to the workplace. Ministers hope that the principle of sharing leave between parents will help achieve the goal of a more flexible workforce and give couples more options.

At present, fathers are entitled to just two weeks' paid leave while mothers can take up to 52 weeks, with 39 of them paid.

The government conceded that take-up is likely to be low, with less than one in 16 fathers expected to leave work for a period of full-time childcare. It has sought to reassure small businesses by saying that less than 1 per cent of them would find themselves affected by the change.



International Confex 2010 keynote speakers announced

Featuring 60 free seminars over 3 days, **International Confex** has announced the 2010 keynote speakers.

"The line-up of keynote speakers at this year's event promises to be strong," said Duncan Reid, Portfolio Director, Confex Group.

"The combination of political and economic expertise, in depth media knowledge and entrepreneurship will give attendees access to proven best practice in business and allow them to learn from experiences."

On day one **Martin Bell** presents "How it went so wrong for the Government and the economy in 2009" One of the most highly regarded names in British television journalism, Martin takes a closer look

at the state of the economy over the last twelve months, the lessons learnt and how to apply these to businesses.

On day two editor of the legendary London magazine *Time Out*, regular contributor to radio & TV and former *Heat Magazine* & *Smash Hits* editor, **Mark Frith** will draw on his extensive media experience to offer advice on reinventing your product, getting by on meagre resources and using the power of celebrity to leverage your brand.

And finally on day three **Jo Fairley** co-founder of *Green & Black's* shares her knowledge and experience on entrepreneurialism, growing a small business and the importance of corporate responsibility.

International Confex is the premier event in the UK for people who organise meetings, conferences, incentives or special events. It attracts around 1,000 exhibitors from 50 countries each year and around 10,000 visitors. Confex 2010 will be held at Earls Court, London, 23-25 February.

www.international-confex.com

Brits need to get organised

Despite constant bombardment of money-saving tips and advice, few of us will head into 2010 with hopes of increased prosperity if the way we manage our household admin is anything to go by. According to new research, over one third of Brits do not consider themselves organised when it comes to household paperwork, and as a result, are likely to miss out on money-saving deals or even incur fines via late renewals of policies and official documents. The research found that only five per cent have a system in place for reminding themselves when important documents or agreements are due to expire or whether they could be switched to cheaper deals.

Luckily, help is at hand with the launch of Allfiled.com, a new web service that helps busy families to keep on top of all of their household paperwork. The reminder-based system with over 5,000 UK supplier details and 100 file types helps you manage every aspect of your family's administration; from insurance policies, appliance warranties, vehicle MOTs, mobile phones, utility contracts, passport renewals and even your annual pet reminders.

Stephen Bennett, founder of Allfiled.com explains, "The combination of Brits leading hectic lives due to family commitments, busy jobs and more supplier paperwork through increased regulation could be the reason why so much money is wasted on household costs every year. A common complaint is that organising the household paperwork is complicated, boring and time consuming - which may be why the majority of people simply have no system in place to help them manage the problem."

www.allfiled.com



Love is in the air!

It's filled with a clever liquid and a little metal switch; when you click the switch, the liquid solidifies and heats up, you can then put it anywhere that needs warming up. It's a great little gadget that you can use over and over again. You just boil the bag up and it re-liquefies, ready for the next time you need a warm-up.



In today's rushed existence, it's difficult enough to find time to speak to your other half in the mornings, let alone sit and have breakfast with them. So why not bring back some much-needed love to the breakfast table with Love Toast? All you have to do is get to your loved one's slice of bread before they do and stamp your message of love in the middle. A simple, fun way to tell the one you love that, well, you love them more than toast. We all know that all food tastes better with love, so if you can actually put love on the food then it's bound to taste amazing.

www.iwantoneofthose.com

Workplace issues



Avoiding bad manners at work is such a simple thing to do and can have a dramatic impact on improving your working environment and your relationships with others.

Office Etiquette

We all like our own space, even if we're not in it for much of the time. We mark out our territory at work, and expect others to keep out. What makes you quietly seethe behind your PC? According to a survey by the Sharp Consultancy, 42 per cent of us find bad manners the most annoying office habit. So here are 10 ways to keep office life happy.

1 Brrring, brrrring

It's very distracting to have to constantly answer other people's phones if they haven't diverted them or activated their voicemail. It's just as annoying to listen to 20 seconds of "Crazy Frog" as the ringtone on someones mobile.

2 Respect colleagues having lunch at their desk

You're sitting there quietly eating a sandwich and perhaps reading a book or a newspaper, when someone decides to come up and ask work-related questions. Treat others on their lunch break as you'd like to be treated on yours.

3 Monitor your speaking volume

People always tend to speak louder than necessary when on a mobile, so make sure you pipe down or go into the corridor. Talking to a friend from the phone on your desk?

No-one else wants to hear your conversation about how you dumped your boyfriend or what you're planning to wear when out tonight. Especially your boss.

4 Be mindful of others needing the printer

"Printer etiquette" is a phrase used widely in South Australia. It refers to giving preferential treatment to workers printing only one page at a time, ahead of those using half an hour and half a forest to print out large documents.

5 Be sensitive about smells

Limit strong perfume, excessive body odour, and very fragrant flowers -- all of which can offend others. Hot take-away food and instant soups can also be very unpleasant, especially if you rely on air-conditioning rather than being able to open the windows.

6 Be tidy in the kitchen.

Remember when your mum would say, "Do you think this is a hotel?" Similarly, at work, no-one wants to have to tidy up after your mess. Don't leave food on the counter or dirty dishes in the sink for extended periods of time. And check the fridge now and again to make sure the cheese you bought last month hasn't sprouted a green disguise.

7 Keep your music to yourself

Roger Tullgren, in Sweden, managed to convince three psychologists that his compulsion to listen to music at work should be classified as a disability. He's now been given a dispensation to play music "really loudly" at his new job as a part-time dishwasher in a restaurant. However, not everyone at your office will be keen to hear your latest discovery, so keep the volume non-existent by wearing headphones.

8 Stay home with the sniffles

You may feel you should be applauded for bravely soldiering into work when ill, but no-one else will. A Kimberly-Clark report found 94 per cent of workers admitting they still turn up for work when experiencing cold and flu symptoms. Eighty-five per cent of these think about the risk of passing on their illness to colleagues but go in anyway. If you absolutely must appear, be considerate and use tissues and wash your hands frequently to reduce the spread of germs.

9 Ask before borrowing

Like Gareth in *The Office*, some people are fiercely protective of their office supplies. How many times have you been on a scavenger hunt to track down borrowed pens, staplers and scissors?

10 Be on time

According to a report by the BBC, two-out-of-three people regularly turn up late for meetings. What message does it give to people if you're always late, cancel at short notice or chat with others while a meeting is going on? Showing respect and tact in the workplace will help you build productive relationships.

For more career advice go to www.CareerBuilder.co.uk

Staying motivated

There will be an inevitable ebb and flow in your job - some weeks the projects you are working on seem to play to your strengths, offering you endless challenges and praise, yet some weeks feel like a hundred hours sitting at your desk while life passes you by.

It may be that you are demotivated in your job because you are actually keen to make a change and look for a role that is more suited to your skills and experience, but if you are simply going through one of those slow weeks, here are a few ideas of how to keep focused and positive.

- Don't allow your standards to drop - although you may be feeling like it doesn't matter, when you are back to yourself, it will be more hassle to re-do work or make amends
- If you are finding it hard to concentrate at work because you are dealing with personal issues, see if you can take a couple of days off to deal with the situation and look after yourself. Do not allow your partner/parents/children to call you all day, every day as it will be even harder for you to give your work the concentration it deserves. Set aside time at weekends to focus on your personal issues, or, if they are particularly serious, ask your boss or HR department for some compassionate leave.
- Try to see the value in the project you are working on - if you are involved in a particularly tedious task, rather than keep reminding yourself how pointless it is, see if there is an aspect of the project that you are more interested in. There may be a presentation that you can work on, a treat for the team on completion or a new skill you can learn.
- If you are demotivated because you cannot see any progression in your role, you could request a review from your boss or line manager. If you ask for it in the right way, you will be seen as keen to upgrade or reactivate your passion for your job. Say you are feeling a bit lost and would like some pointers on what you could be doing better or differently. Ask for feedback and then use it to your advantage.
- Find out if there are teams, committees or groups within your workplace that you could be involved in. You may find that there are people with similar



interests in other departments or areas of your company that you were not aware of. These could be both social and business focused - for example, there may be a five a side football team or a group that organises the Christmas party.

- Remember why you wanted this job in the first place - think back to what appealed to you in the job advert or at your interview. Perhaps you have allowed yourself to become stagnant in your role and are your own worst enemy. Perhaps there are promotional or training opportunities that would boost your commitment and enjoyment. Are you taking all the advantages of the job?

www.workrelationships.co.uk



With so many hours being spent at work, it is inevitable that you will meet people there that will potentially become important to you - friends, colleagues and partners.

What is key, here, is what is and isn't acceptable when it comes to flirting at work.

Office romance

You will not be surprised to learn that there are more don'ts than dos with regards to flirting in the workplace.

Although studies have shown that around 40% of us meet our prospective partners at work, snapping at the heels of friends of friends, holidays, the supermarket and the gym as the place to meet your significant other.

Do

- Be friendly to everyone - do not make your favourites obvious!
- Aim to keep your home life and your work life separate
- Observe your colleague to understand appropriate behaviour in your particular workplace
- Sneakily ask the office gossip who is going out with whom so you don't step on anyone's toes or say something inappropriate

Don't

- Forget you are at work - nobody wants to walk in on you in a meeting room in a state of undress/ embarrassing embrace if your flirting goes that bit further!
- Make it really obvious if you start a work place relationship - don't always have lunch together, say 'we' or come in at the same time
- Tell everyone about your crush - if your feelings are not reciprocated, everyone will know. Even when the crush passes, no one will forget
- Get soppy at work - no hand-holding or smooching
- Take things at face value - your boss may say they are happy about your relationship with Barry from accounts, but don't expect them to respect you professionally
- Think people don't know - they will!
- Take your eye off the ball at work - if you start letting your standards slip because you are swooning over the object of your affection, you will be heavily criticised



Surround yourself with inspiration...

New for 2010!

PA Day

Thursday will have additional content aimed specifically at PA's including:

- Dedicated seminars
- Secret's Out
- Goody bag
- Fashion Show
- Nirvana

exhibitions *training*
conventions and congresses
roadshows *parties*
experiential marketing

team building
charity events

promotional activity
awards

meetings
conferences

product launches

corporate hospitality

live events

sales presentations

incentive travel

*...a colourful array of event
ideas, venues and exciting
destinations awaits you*

23-25 FEBRUARY 2010

EARLS COURT, LONDON

- Over 1,000 exciting exhibitors of venues, destinations & event services
- Exceptional networking opportunities
- 60 FREE exhilarating seminars & celebrity keynotes

INTERNATIONAL
confex

THE PERFECT EVENT FOR ANY EVENT

REGISTER TODAY AT WWW.INTERNATIONAL-CONFEX.COM

Newly opened restaurants

Circus, London

This new restaurant in Covent Garden is designed by ex-Habitat creative director Tom Dixon, "with entertainment at its very heart". It serves a Pan-American menu and offers an extensive cocktail list.

Menu Pan-American - dishes include crispy fried baby squid with sticky coconut glaze and coriander cress; Adobo chicken with dirty rice cakes, red gravy and pancetta green beans; and chocolate espresso cake with vanilla cream and bourbon raisins.

Average spend £30 for three courses, excluding drinks

27-29 Endell Street, London WC2H 9BA www.circus-london.co.uk



Fish Restaurant, London

Located at riverside retail development Hay's Galleria near London Bridge, this fish restaurant from wine merchant Balls Brothers offers a range of British seafood.

It includes a volcanic rock grill, which allows diners to cook their fish themselves.

Menu Seafood - dishes include classic crayfish cocktail; grilled sardines with

warm feta and courgette salad; fish stew "bouillabaisse"; fish and chips; Cornish lemon sole fillets with shrimp and Chablis sauce; and smoked haddock and potato chowder.

Average spend £40 including drinks and service

Tooley Street, London SE1 2HD

Chez Jules, Edinburgh

French chef Pierre Levicky, who rose to fame with his former French restaurant chain Pierre Victoire, has relaunched the Chez Jules concept with this restaurant in Edinburgh. The restaurant offers classic French bistro food at affordable prices.

Menu French - dishes include ribeye, sirloin and fillet steaks served with a choice of sauces and hand-cut chunky chips. Other dishes include French onion soup, moules à l'étuvée and lobster thermidor.

Average spend £25 including drinks and service

109 Hanover Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DJ www.chezjulesbistro.com

Dean Street Townhouse Dining Room, London

Soho House Group has launched its latest venture with the opening of this boutique hotel housed in a Georgian townhouse in Soho. The restaurant serves traditional British favourites.

Menu British - dishes include Dorset crab and mayonnaise; potted ham and wild rabbit with piccalilli; fish and chips with marrowfat peas; mince and boiled potatoes; rib steak with chips and béarnaise sauce; and Bramley apple pie.

Average spend £35 for three courses, including drinks

69-71 Dean Street, London W1D 3SE www.deanstreettownhouse.com



One of the best...

Bradford hotel wins HRS.com innovation award

The Dubrovnik hotel in Bradford won the new Robert Ragge Award for innovation at the third annual HRS.com Hotel Excellence Awards. Launched to recognise outstanding and innovative thinking within the UK hotel industry, the award was made to the 46-bedroom Dubrovnik Hotel, Bradford, for having a positive approach to dealing with business throughout the recession

"The Dubrovnik demonstrates that they put the customer experience first by investing in added value and the owners show great loyalty to their staff which in turn earns loyalty in their customers," said the judges. "As a result, the hotel has seen increased revenues, a new market mix, a motivated team and a re-focused business."



...and one of the worst

Blackpool hotel tops the Tripadvisor filth league

A Blackpool hotel has been named the filthiest in the UK by Tripadvisor in its 2010 league of the country's top 10 dirtiest hotels.

Grosvenor hotel came top of the filth league based on traveller reviews on the travel website.

Visitors to the website complained of dirty carpets and bathrooms, cigarette burns in duvets and windows so filthy that the promised view of Blackpool Tower was completely obscured.

One visitor recognised that the hotel was cheap, but added: "Even for free this would not be a place I would recommend to my worst enemy. As someone who has recently had the misfortune of booking a night over in this disgusting hole of a hotel I can confirm it's truly awful. So bad that we didn't even stay the night."

Solve the problem of charger clutter...

Solve the problem of "charger clutter" and reduce power consumption at the same time - with the new Universal Multi-Charger from One For All.

The perfect green charging solution for home or office, the Multi-Charger can be placed on a flat surface or mounted to a wall using the wall-mount plate included. The power cord is kept out of sight by winding it up in the bottom case.

To use, simply click the appropriate tip into one of the three slots and away you go. There are two further empty slots for storing tips you're not using.

It will charge up to three devices simultaneously, with no messy wires and an LED light for the individual charge slots. Once each battery is fully charged, that slot shuts down automatically and the light goes out - so, as well as saving energy, you can tell the charging process is complete without having to check the device display.

The Charger works with mobile phones, MP3 players, PDAs, digital cameras, sat nav, game players and other devices.



The One For All Universal Multi-Charger will be available at leading electrical retailers priced £59.99.

www.oneforall.com/greenproducts/

Sony takes on the challenge of the Netbook

Sony, one of the world's leading manufacturers of laptop computers and notebook technology, has launched its latest challenge to the world of portable PCs - the S series. Ultra light, ultra sleek and ultra portable, the compact yet feature-rich S series is set to become the business laptop of choice.

This sleek addition to Sony's established range of laptops packs a variety of advanced security, performance and entertainment features into one, lightweight notebook PC. With a 13.3 inch screen with LED backlighting, the usual moan of laptop users that the screen is difficult to see in direct light is negated with the new S series. "Sony has really listened to what the business community wants from a portable PC package," explains Rob Woolley, Laptop Specialist of computer experts IT247. "They've always had a



reputation for cutting edge development, and a lot of the problems that people have encountered with Netbooks in the past such as limited memory and their inability to run some programs is not a problem for this mini-laptop. It has all the advantages and none of the drawbacks," he continues.

"The Dual Core Processor means that it's as fast as its bigger brothers in the Sony range," explains Rob "That faster speed reduces the power demands made on the battery, and consequently the S series has a much better battery life than some bigger versions.

Weighing in at just over four pounds, the S series 13.3 inch version is ideal for business users who spend a lot of their time travelling, but want all the capabilities of a laptop rather than the limited functions of a Netbook. "The S series bridges the gap between Netbooks and laptops, which is what a lot of people have been looking for," explains Rob.

www.it247.com



AF launch 'Game' Range

AF International, specialist suppliers of ICT cleaning products to the office market, are launching a range of environmentally-friendly cleaning solutions for the entertainment gaming industry at Paperworld Frankfurt 2010.

Targeting the users of hand held gaming units like the Nintendo DS Lite, Wii and Sony PSP as well as Playstations and X-Box and their accompanying accessories, this new range has been developed to encourage more regular cleaning and sanitising of all types of game units and gaming accessories.

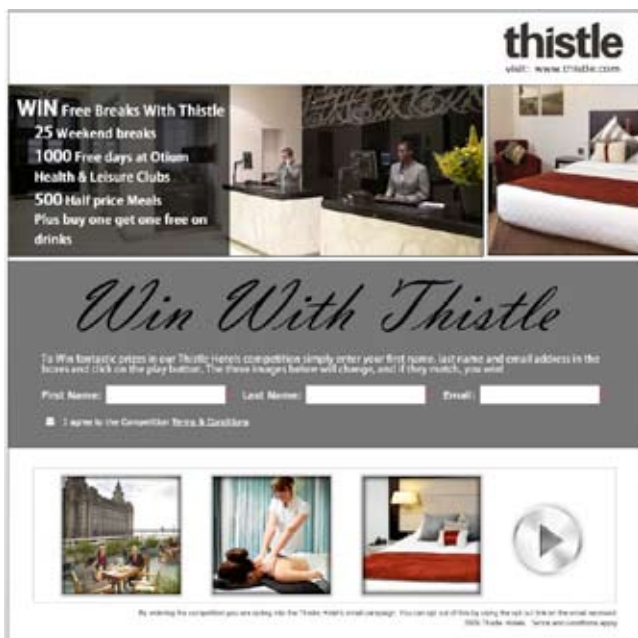
"We have long been advocating better standards of cleanliness in the office environment and the traditional office market has responded well to this", says Ron Jakeman, MD of AF International. "With the launch of our entertainment gaming range, we are able to expand our campaign into the home market with products that will offer dealers and retailers a unique range and value, safe in the knowledge that their choices do not adversely affect the environment". www.af-net.com.

Thistle Hotels celebrates the new decade with 1000s of online prizes

Thistle Hotels is on a mission to bring some New Year cheer by giving away thousands of pounds worth of prizes to lucky winners who visit **WinwithThistle.com**.

More than 20,000 prizes are available to those who try their luck with the online hotel competition, which include two night weekend breaks for two adults at any Thistle Hotel across the UK, free days at Otium Health & Leisure Club, 50 per cent off restaurant bills and free afternoon teas.

The online competition was generated in response to the growing community of hotel guests who prefer to make their bookings online and to offer discounts in the New Year when people look towards saving money.



The prizes available during the competition are:

- **2 night weekend breaks for 2 adults at any Thistle Hotel across the UK**
- **free day passes for Otium Health & Leisure Club**
- **50% off restaurant bill when ordering 3 courses (min 2 adults)**
- **free afternoon tea**
- **buy one get one free meal from lounge menu (min 2 adults)**
- **buy one get one free drink from the bar (min 2 adults)**
- **25% discount off Best Available Rate Room**

The 25 per cent off room nights finishes on 28 February 2010 and all other prizes are available to claim until 31 October 2010.



Employee of the Month Competition with NESCAFÉ®

In the current economic climate, employees are working harder than ever – so perhaps now is the perfect time to recognise their efforts. That's why NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND is launching its brand new **Employee of the Month** competition in February, to reward and engage employees across the UK.

Here's your chance to identify and reward someone outstanding in your workplace that deserves special recognition. Monthly winners can enjoy a host of rewards such as a meal for two worth £100, or a tin of NESCAFÉ® GOLD BLEND® and a box of QUALITY STREET® chocolates to share with colleagues. There is also the accolade of "Employee of the Year" to be won.

The Employee of the Year will get a VIP experience at an event in a VIP box at The O2 arena with their colleagues plus £200 to spend as they wish. In addition they will receive a year's supply of coffee and chocolates for their office.

To enter, log onto **www.goldblend-employee.co.uk** for more information on the campaign and download the campaign kit which includes a poster to generate awareness around the office, a wall chart to register nominated employees and a certificate for the office Employee of the Month.



Looking for a new office printer?

Brother is running a special promotion on the MFC-9840CDW, high speed wireless network ready colour laser multifunction printer with fax and automatic duplex. Buyers can choose between £100 cashback or free 3 year warranty. Features include:

- Increase workgroup productivity with this wireless network ready 20 page per minute colour and mono multifunction printer
- Boost efficiency and print files directly from USB memory stock with the 'direct print' feature
- Built in duplex printing feature saves paper and costs
- Optional high yield toner available offering cost effective printing

Offer runs until 31 March 2010.

How to cope with Redundancy

and find your new job

As the number of new redundancies increases, it's natural for a person to feel under enormous pressure to find work as fast as possible. While this sense of urgency is perfectly natural, it's also counter productive. In particular, it doesn't allow a person to come to terms with their redundancy.

By Wayne Andrew Davies

For some people, the added stress gets in the way of finding new work. It's simply not possible to network effectively, think creatively, or be positive while coping with the emotional turmoil of redundancy.

That's why the very first thing a person must do is give themselves permission to wallow in whatever emotional state they find themselves in. Rather than resist it, let it work its way through your system naturally. Most of us tend to get over the worst of it in a matter of days.

If you find it more difficult to get past, be honest with yourself and seek professional help. A fully qualified Occupational Psychologist is of enormous value here. They're trained to help in exactly this sort of situation. And your former employer, union, unemployment insurance, religious organisation, social club or welfare system may be willing to help pay for it.

Think Positive *(even if you don't feel positive)*

It may be difficult to be positive, especially at first. When faced with the reality of redundancy, most of us won't immediately think of it as a wonderful opportunity.

Despite that, we can deliberately

set out to think of it that way. Every time a negative thought creeps in, override it with a positive one. Take some time out, and think up ways this experience will be positive for you. For example...

- **It's a chance to address your work/life balance**
- **Retrain in something more exciting**
- **Find a better paying position (e.g. by applying for more senior roles)**
- **Go to university (or add a second major to your existing degree)**
- **Start a charity, or help an existing one**
- **Pursue a hobby**
- **Investigate starting a new business**
- **See if you can offer your skills as a consultant (a friend of mine consulted one day a week for 18 months to the company that made him redundant - and got paid 4 times his old salary)**

I'm sure you can come up with better ideas than I can. What matters is that you force yourself to think positively about redundancy until such time as it starts happening naturally (usually 10-20 days). The key to doing this successfully is to have already thought of several ways

It's also possible your industry has its own dedicated online networking site. Find out what these are (Google is your friend), and become an expert at using them. There are many articles that explain how to take advantage of such sites.

this is positive for you, so they're immediately to hand when negative thoughts creep in.

Get to Work on your CV

Potential employers will want to see your CV. The sooner you get it ready, the faster you can get yourself into the job market.

These days, most advertised jobs are found online. It's essential that your CV is available in either MS Word or PDF format (preferably both). You should have it with you at all times, in both physical and digital form. Burn it on CD-ROM, have it on a USB thumb drive, and carry printed copies with you. That way, you'll always be ready to start selling yourself should an opportunity arise.

If you don't have a word processor, type openoffice into Google and click on the openoffice.org website. Download their free Office suite. The Word processor in this suite can produce MS Word and PDF documents. And of course, it's free.

Start Networking

(Yes you can when you use this simple strategy)

Many jobs aren't advertised in the press, online or via agencies. Employing people is a risky business, and employers can reduce that risk by using their connections and find people that way.

Anybody can follow this strategy, even if they're hopeless at networking or painfully shy.

Most of us know at least 100 people well enough to phone. Each of those 100 people knows another 100 people well enough to phone. That's a total of 10,000 people. Within that group, there's likely to

be around 100 people (1%) who could either employ you directly or recommend you to an employer.

Your challenge is to find out who those 100 people are, and meet them. It may not sound simple, but it's a lot easier than waiting for a miracle (i.e. doing nothing). And I have a great system to help you achieve your goal.

The process starts by writing down the name and phone number of everybody you know well enough to phone.

There's no point calling them up and asking if they know any employers who just happen to be

looking for employees. This is about networking, and that works best when you have something to offer. I suggest you do the following...

- **Call up someone on your list**
- **Tell them you've been made redundant, and that you want to keep busy. Tell them you're not interested in charity, but you would like to make yourself useful. See if they need their car washed, or have some other simple chore you can do**
- **Offer to do it free of charge. Don't accept money. Make it clear you're interested in keeping busy, not looking for hand outs.**



But also joke that you'll accept a drink or a snack as payment (which will help your plan)

- Arrange to do the chore at a time when that person will be home. This is essential to the success of the plan
- Do the chore as well as you possibly can (it's essential this person realise you have a good work ethic). Then seek out that drink or snack. The person you've helped is now socially obliged to chat with you. Keep the conversation light, and wait until it naturally turns to what you're going to do now
- Tell the person you're doing all the normal things, as well as networking

Let them know you're hoping to meet people who own their own business, or who employ others. Be clear about the type of work you do, and what you're looking for. Be as specific as possible.

The key to making this strategy work is to keep it low key. What you want to do is make an impression, and educate the person as to what kind of work you're looking for, and who is likely to employ someone who does what you do.

Let the person know that you'd appreciate a recommendation if they meet somebody like that. If they already know somebody like that, you can be pretty sure they'll bring it up immediately (especially if they're happy with the work you just did for them).

If they don't, they'll remember when they do meet somebody like that. And there's a good chance several of the people on your list will.

This is why you have to be very specific. It creates triggers in their mind that associate you with that type of person. This brings you to the top of their mind at exactly the right time (i.e. when they meet

Potential employers will want to see your CV. The sooner you get it ready, the faster you can get yourself into the job market.



the person you're looking to be introduced to).

If the person agrees to do this for you, make sure s/he knows how to get in touch with you.

Online Networking

LinkedIn was created to help people find work via introductions. I suggest you get yourself a LinkedIn account (it's free), and then use Google to find articles that explain how to use it. You can upload your CV, join industry groups, and get to know the right people through LinkedIn. It's well worth investing your time in this activity.

There are other online networking sites too (e.g. ecademy). It's also possible your industry has it's own dedicated online networking site. Find out what these are (Google is your friend), and become an expert at using them. There are literally thousands of articles that explain how to take advantage of such sites.

It's worth noting that your mastery of online business networking makes you more valuable to a

potential employer. If you keep it up, even after you find work, you can continue to use your skills to secure better paying and/or more senior positions.

An Outplacement Service

A good Outplacement Service is worth its weight in gold, and it's highly likely your former company will pay for it. If they haven't offered you the services of an Outplacement company, ask them if they'll provide it for you (even if you've already left).

As the saying goes, if you don't ask you won't get.

Outplacement is designed to help former employees deal with the shock, get past the stress, whip their CV into shape, brush up on (or even perfect) their interview technique, gain experience of psychometric testing, find routes back into work, discover ingenious networking ideas, and impart other essential skills and information it might otherwise take months to acquire.

About the Author

Wayne Davies is a lead generation expert based in London (UK). Get more tips about Internet marketing, business networking, article marketing, creative ideas, social media marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO), copy writing and more. <http://waynedavies.net/>

An Employee's **Redundancy**

Glossary

By **Iain Mackintosh**

Redundancy

Many people think that they know what redundancy is, but the legal definition is quite specific. Essentially, the employee's position must disappear entirely or require fewer workers to perform satisfactorily. This may occur when a company ceases trading altogether, closes a particular store or department, takes on less business, or invests in technology that makes certain positions unnecessary.

Furthermore, redundancy falls into two categories - voluntary and compulsory. With voluntary redundancy, an employer identifies a part of the company that needs to be reduced in size, and asks for volunteers from that section to be made redundant. With compulsory redundancy, individuals are selected on a number of criteria (including skills, qualifications, and workplace performance) and are made redundant against their wishes.

Lay off

Where an employee has their work temporarily suspended due to a lack of work. This is a short term alternative to redundancy.

Short Time Employment

Where an employee has their hours and pay reduced below half a week of the norm. Another alternative to full redundancy.

Collective Redundancy Consultation

If a company wishes to make more than twenty members of staff redundant, it must go through a

In an economic downturn, every employee is likely to be double and triple checking their employment contracts and company redundancy policy so that they know what to expect if the worst comes to the worst. Here are some of the most common and important terms to understand concerning redundancy.

collective redundancy consultation, which involves sending a letter to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and holding a meeting with employee representatives at least thirty days before the first redundancy (ninety days if over a hundred employees are being made redundant.) Failure to do so may result in claims for unfair dismissal and protective awards (see below).

Statutory Redundancy Pay

The sum that an employee is due to receive as part of their redundancy. You are only entitled to Statutory Redundancy Pay if you have been a continuous full time employee for more than two years. The calculations for redundancy pay are somewhat complex, but are based on the number of years an employee has been working for a company, up to a maximum of twenty years. Consult your company's redundancy policy - it should lay out exactly what kind of payment you are legally entitled to. Unless the redundancy pay is over £30,000, it will not be taxed.

Unfair Dismissal

If you feel you have been unfairly and (more importantly) illegally selected for redundancy, you can lodge a claim for unfair dismissal. If you can prove your case, you may be entitled to reinstatement to your

job or a substantial damages claim. Certain reasons for dismissal (usually to do with discrimination on a wide variety of grounds) automatically qualify as unfair dismissal.

Guarantee Payments

If an employee is not given work during a day when they are contractually required to work, they may be entitled to a Guarantee Payment for that day. An employer cannot simply cease providing work for a day and not provide payment - a lay off, short time or part time working arrangement must be reached first.

Protective Award

If a proper redundancy consultation procedure is not followed (i.e. if employees are made redundant without their representatives or themselves being given sufficient notice) the employee has the right to claim a protective award, which typically takes the form of ninety days payment.

This is simply an introduction to a few of the key terms of redundancy - consult your company redundancy policy and the BERR website for a fuller understanding of the process.

Iain Mackintosh is the Managing Director of Simply-Docs.
www.simply-docs.co.uk

5 Biggest Mistakes in Job Hunting

Most of us know that when looking for a new job, networking can be of huge value and importance. However, for many of us there maybe a difference in definition of what 'networking' really means. Nisa Chitakasem looks at some of the dos and dont's of online job hunting.

I recently received an email which highlighted the problems people can face with regard to networking and it's impact on job hunting.

"About networking - it depends how you define 'really networking'. I'm regularly sending out e-mails and adding people on LinkedIn. But this is often to very little avail, and I've never been on a course about 'how to network effectively'. My progress over the years has been in a kind of 'trial-and-error way', which I've supplemented with the odd suggestions from friends, recruitment professionals, and university career advisers."

Unfortunately this experience is not uncommon. The email carries on, "I thought I needed to be bolder in my communications with others, more persistent, less honest, and a lot more pushy (just like how a lot of head-hunters are with me) - but it turns out I'm completely wrong!"

So here goes with some of the biggest online job hunting mistakes that I have been hearing about recently.

1 Sending out blanket emails to people you do not know

When people receive emails from those they do not know - it is

'spam'. They do not know you and so why should they care. If you are sending out masses of emails into the cyber abyss, people reading and receiving them can usually tell.

It's generic, impersonal and usually highly annoying to the reader. There is no reason why they should help you; after all, they do not know you, and you have not taken the time to get to know them! No manager will respond favourably to an unsolicited email asking for a job. This approach is a big waste of time. Targeted emails/letters which have been thought through are much more likely to help in your job search.

2 Adding anyone you can find to your linkedin

I receive several invitations from people who I do not know, to join their professional network on linkedin. Do I accept these invitations - no! Don't do it - getting a reply at all unlikely. What will usually happen is that the recipient will hit the 'I don't know this user' button, which means you will never be able to contact that person again. If it is done several times, linkedin will stop you from being able to openly contact people.

3 Sending your CV to anyone you can get your hands on

I did not know John yet the minute he got the chance to he sent me his CV. So what am I supposed to do with it? There might be a chance that I have a job or know someone but am I inclined to help if I've just had a random CV pushed in my face? No - so don't do it.

4 Applying to all the ads you can find

The other day I was talking on the phone to Tom. He was down in the dumps and has been trying to many months to get a job. After asking what he's been doing, he explained that he's been spending hours a day going through jobsites and applying for all the roles he can find. When asked if there's something specific he's after, the reply is no. He also 'sits by the phone waiting for the recruitment agencies to ring, but they don't. They aren't really taking any notice of me'. Spending hours of your time applying for everything under the sun without any focus or way to distinguish yourself from the crowd, will get you nowhere. It will make you tired and frustrated but the likelihood of getting any of the many of jobs you applied for is low.



5 Relying on recruitment agencies or headhunters

You cannot rely on the agencies of headhunters to magic up a job for you. It does not work like that. They are sitting on literally thousands of CVs at any one time. Their CV database is huge. You are a number to them and they will only contact you if you happen to fit one of their roles. Given there are thousands of candidates for them to choose from - you cannot leave this as your only or main route to finding a job.

There is a general theme to the techniques used above. They are all impersonal, mass and volume orientated, time consuming - and they just do not work! There is a great book 'What Color is your parachute?' which tells you that:

- Using the internet as a way to look for a job is at the very most 10% effective.
- Mailing out resumes to employers at random is usually 7% effective.
- Answering job ads you see in the press, trade journals etc are also around 7% to 24% effective at most
- Using search firms, recruitment agencies is 5-28% effective

If you are looking for a new job then please do not spend all of the hours in a day doing the above. There is a very small chance that it may bring about something - but if you want to get ahead - be smart about how you use your time. Get out there, talk to people, meet and get to know them properly. Be curious about them and ask

questions. In short – use your network wisely.

About the Author

Nisa Chitakasem is the founder of Position Ignition - a modern day careers advisory firm. She has been involved in numerous new company ventures including an IPTV business, an executive coaching business and mydeco, created by the team that started lastminute.com. Nisa helps people get the support they need to achieve what they want and deserve. She is passionate about taking careers advice to the next level!

www.positionignition.com



89%
recycled*

Excluding replaceable parts

**Mainly made from recycled plastic bottles.
Made in France in an environmentally
friendly factory (ISO 14001).*

From Bottle to Pen

- **Refillable** retractable gel ink rollerball pen
- Smoothest writing
- Vivid colours
- Available in fine & extra fine



 **PILOT**
BEGREEN 

Top 10 tips for producing a better CV

Think of your CV as your shop window - it must effectively display your experience, skills and qualities in a very short period of time. The following tips will help you produce a CV that does just that.

1 Keep it short and clear

Before you start, choose the right structure for your CV. The most important information, such as your key skills and recent experience, needs to be near the top, where it can be seen straightaway. Sections you usually need to include are your Profile, Achievements, Experience, Special Skills (languages / computers), Education, Training, and (if you wish) Interests. Your CV should normally be two pages in length (unless you have a very long career or you are a contractor or the recruiter asks for a longer CV). If you haven't caught the recruiter's interest by page two then they probably won't read any further pages anyway.

2 Make it look good

Clear, attractive presentation is also important if your CV is to stand out. Ensure that it's uncluttered, with key points easy to spot. Use bullet points and keep the sentences relatively short. Plenty of 'white space' around the borders and between each section keeps the document easier on the eye.

3 Most recent first

Put your employment history in date order, starting with the most recent first. Avoid leaving any gaps, so if you've had time out for some reason, do mention this. Don't go into detail about positions you held over 10 years ago. Include details of holiday or temporary work only if it's relevant to the job you're applying for.

4 Include many facts

List your job duties beneath each position. List your achievements, responsibilities and results. Talk about results - what difference did your presence make? Use numbers for achievements wherever possible, e.g. "Boosted sales by 20% in first year". And always write in a slightly formal manner and never use the word "I" - e.g. "Supervised the team" rather than "I supervised the team". Use the past tense for previous jobs and the present tense for your current job.

5 Not too many lists

Include specific skills, such as languages, administrative or computing skills, in a separate section in your CV. Don't relist them for every job you've used them in. This is particularly so for IT work - lists of tools and packages make dull reading and won't make you stand out from other people with the same abilities.

6 Breath some life into it

Remember the employer wants a sense of the kind of person you are, as well as what you can do. Are you punctual, conscientious, or motivated? Do you rise to a challenge? With each point you write, ask yourself "What does this say about me?"

7 Be accurate

Always check for errors. Run a spelling and grammar check and ask someone else to read it for you. Read it aloud to the dog. The employer isn't going to believe you're a good communicator if your CV is full of mistakes.

8 Adapt it

You don't have to use the same CV every time. You can have two or three versions, each for a different kind of job. Or you can tailor your CV to suit the job you're applying for. It isn't a case of one size fits all.

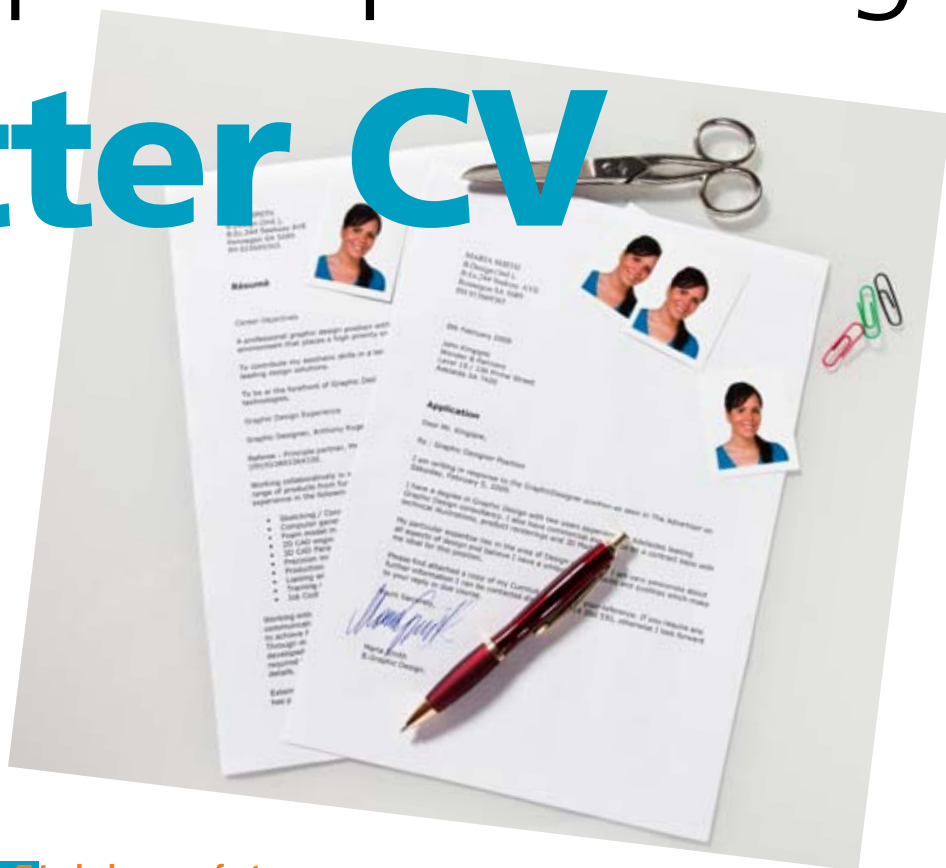
9 Send a covering letter

Unless the advert tells you not to, always send a covering letter. This should highlight the two or three areas of experience from your CV that are most relevant to the advertised job. Never send your CV out on its own.

10 Be truthful

Although you obviously want to present yourself well, don't go too far and embellish the truth. It can easily backfire on you.

For advice on writing your CV and help with interview technique and job hunting, visit www.bradleycvcs.co.uk



How to create a cover letter to boost your CV

by Landon Long

No matter how powerful your resume is, you still cannot land on the best possible job for you if your cover letter is not there, or is not serving its job. Similar to writing a proposal letter, the process to create a cover letter has dos and don'ts. A cover letter is your one shot opportunity to get noticed and finally encourage the hiring manager to read your resume. Hence, it is crucial to create a cover letter that will boost up your resume and credentials.

In creating a cover letter, there are three important elements you have to keep in mind: **professionalism**, **information**, and **precision**. The professionalism of how you create a cover letter shows your intellectual capability and your communication skills. The information you incorporate while you create a cover letter emphasizes how exemplary you are for the company; and creating a cover letter with precision implies how capable you are of submitting factual information.

Four parts to the letter

Typically, the cover letter has four parts: the **introduction**, the **body**, the request for **further action**, and the **conclusion**. In the introduction, you have to address the company you are applying to and if possible, address the hiring manager. The body of the cover letter states your qualifications and your interest in the position while the request paragraph states your availability and your willingness to be interviewed. It is imperative that you put your contact information in the request paragraph, otherwise the hiring manager may not know how to contact you. In the conclusion you

basically sum up everything you have said in the previous paragraphs and tie all of the information together. It is very important to thank the hiring manager for his or her time at the end of the concluding paragraph.

While you create a cover letter, keep the body of the cover letter as informative as possible. However, it should be compact and precise. If possible, create a cover letter with a body that has only one to three paragraphs. Be aware that HR managers do not usually read the whole information in a cover letter. So, create a cover letter that is attractive, easy to read and direct.

What to avoid

To assure that you get the interview there are three things you should avoid while you create a cover letter.

- 1 The first is to address your cover letter using generic salutation. By creating a cover letter that is generic it implies you have less interest in the company you are applying to. When you create a cover letter, assure that you address it to the person in charge in human resource. This says that you have done research and made the effort to finding the hiring manager.
- 2 The second is to create a cover letter with irrelevant information. Clogging up the cover letter with unnecessary information will distract from the point of the

cover letter, to get the hiring manager interested in you.. It is essential that you create a cover letter that attracts the hiring manager attention if you want to get interviewed and that can't be done with irrelevant and boring information.

- 3 Lastly, you should not create a cover letter that only serves as a summary of your resume. The content of your cover letter should not be similar to that of your resume. If you do this, your cover letter will look repetitive, boring and unworthy to read. Bear in mind that you should create a cover letter that is brief and precise and acts as an introduction to your resume. It should not be a fifteen page summary of your life experiences.

Writing a cover letter is not something that you can learn in a short period of time, but a craft that can take quite a bit of research and preparation. However, applying these tips on how to write an effective cover letter can help you get hired in no time at all.



BEWARE: COMPATIBLE TONERS COST UP TO TWICE AS MUCH OVER TIME AS ORIGINAL HP TONERS.



TRUST ORIGINAL HP TONER

Recent tests show that compatible toners can be unreliable and provide inconsistent performance. Original HP toners demonstrated superior reliability, consistent results and greater overall savings than compatible toners. Make a smart choice for your business and buy Original HP toner.



HIT PRINT
INTELLIGENTLY



For more information visit : hp.com/uk/toners

A Quality Logic 2008 study compared Original HP LaserJet cartridges with remanufactured cartridges available in Europe for the HP LaserJet 2300 and HP LaserJet 4350 printers. HP cost calculation based on the average results of 2008 European QualityLogic Monochrome Toner Reliability Comparison Study. Calculation includes paper, cartridge replacement and labour for reprints. Assumes equal number of pages for external, internal and individual use. Labour rate from Mercer 2007/08 Global Pay Study. Assumes purchase price for HP cartridge is €131 and 42% lower purchase price for a remanufactured cartridge. Actual prices, costs and results may vary. For details: www.Qualitylogic.com/tonertest.pdf or at www.hp.com/uk/tonertest.

The Interview:

Plan, Prepare, Participate and Be Positive



As individuals who are looking to find employment the interview proves to be the most daunting task. But this doesn't have to be the case using the four Ps system: Plan, Prepare, Participate and Be Positive. This is a system that was devised by CV Satisfaction which covers all areas of the interview from the beginning to the end.

By Mike Robert Kemp

Plan

Planning for the interview is more significant than attending the interview itself. Without successful and careful planning you have given yourself no chance to progress further as you would have made a bad first impression. Remember you only have one chance at making a good first impression.

Plan how you are getting to the interview. Car, bus, bike or walking are all good options depending on

the distance and location. Do a trail run to give you an estimate of the time it takes to get to the location so you don't arrive late on the day of the interview. Always make time to arrive early; you can wait in the reception area to get a feel of the company. Remember, once in the reception make sure you are sat up straight and are concentrating as you don't know when you will be called into the interview room.

It is essential that you research the

company you are going to have the interview with. The worst thing you can do is go into the company unsighted. You need to see what the company does, what services or products it provides and the history of the business. The best way to do this is by checking their website.

Prepare

Preparation for an interview can be as hard as you want to make it. But the simple solution is don't make it too hard for yourself. By being fully prepared you are reducing your stress levels and giving yourself the best opportunity to shine in the interview. A couple of points that you need to consider when preparing for the interview:

- **Make sure you have the correct attire. If not go and purchase what you require. By dressing correctly you come across presentable and show your desire for the job.**
- **Do a mock interview with a family member or friend. By doing a mock interview it will allow you to get used to the sort of questions that might be asked. Make sure that the person interviewing you takes it serious and puts you on the spot as many times as possible to make you think about your answers.**
- **Have a fully complete CV with you. Even though you have sent your CV it's always good to have a few spare copies with you to give out to the other interviewers. This shows you are organised and prepared. Make sure you can explain everything on your CV from your grades to your achievements. Also at the end of the interview you can give them your CV to help them remember you if they haven't already got one.**

By taking these 3 easy steps you are giving yourself more of a chance to make a lasting impression.

Participate

When in the interview don't be



It is essential that you research the company you are going to have the interview with. The worst thing you can do is go into the company unsighted.

afraid to talk. I strongly recommend opening the conversation with these effortless phrases such as "how are you?" or "how is your day going". By asking these questions you are getting a feel of the way the interviewer is feeling and have broken the ice. Also be the person that offers their hand for the handshake. By doing these two simple actions you are coming across as approachable and confident which will impress the interviewer from the start and settle any nerves you may have. Once in the room you should wait to sit down until the interviewer has taken their seat. This shows respect and responsibility. As the interview is taking place make sure you are always sat up straight to show you are concentrating and absorbing all the information from the question. When it comes to the questions make sure you answer in detail and not just a yes or no reply. The response should be detailed and quick. You should talk about your past and focusing on the relevant skills to answer the question. Don't be afraid to talk about yourself in great detail after all that's the whole point of the interview - to sell yourself to the business.

Be Positive

Before, during and after the interview remember to stay positive. If you go in with the attitude I'm not going to get the job, you

won't. Interviewers assess your body language along with your answers. So if you have the correct attitude you will be on with a winning combination if you are fully prepared. This will show throughout the interview and will be noted by the interviewer. The interview is also a time for you to find out about the company and what it can offer you. Ask about what training courses are available and what the bonus scheme is like. Remember, ask when you will be informed if you have the job or not and if you haven't been informed by that date, ring up and ask. Employers welcome this as it's sometimes done as a test and by responding you are showing being proactive and that you're interested. Always keep your options open, if you see a job you're interested in when you are awaiting your response apply for it as you don't know what the answer will be.

This technique is a tool that we strongly recommend to everyone. It has been used by first time interviewees and people that have experienced interviews before. Both would agree that this technique is well worth using and by following these steps you are giving yourself the best opportunity possible to get the job.

Visit www.cvsatisfaction.co.uk for help to get you your dream job.

Performance Appraisals

Don't have to be a bad thing

by Jewell Hardin

Appraisals have a pretty bad reputation in many organizations. Managers dread having to give them and employees hate having to take them. But by simply focusing on 7 high-value components of appraisals, you can turn them into one of the most important activities you perform... and start to love them.

1 Re-state the key areas

Appraisals give managers and employees the chance to re-state the key result areas of the job. These are, quite simply, what people are paid for. For a manager, they might be:

Production

Quality

Costs

Safety

Staff

For an engineer, they might be

Repair

Maintenance

Installation

Improvements

An appraisal is like the follow-up to a recruitment interview. Just as the recruitment interview at the start of employment looks at the key areas of a job and the person's skills in these areas, so the appraisal at regular intervals throughout employment looks at how key areas have changed and whether the employee's skills need to change with them.

2 Check how they're doing

Taking time out to review past performance is a necessary step in making plans for the future. Instead of continuing as before, review enables us to stop, think and re-assess. It should be part of any management process. Professor Hal Leavitt, of Chicago University, says that performance improves in relation to the amount and accuracy of feedback received, whether good or bad. When you don't know how well you're doing, you often assume the worst, your confidence drops and down goes your performance. "The golfer who doesn't count his shots is only there for the walk."

3 Exchange News

Appraisals that are timed carefully to fit in with the organisation's business cycle can use the appraisal interview to exchange information with individuals. This could be about...

- **the big picture: how the organisation has been performing in the period of the review and how it hopes to do in the future**
- **significant changes that may affect the organisation and individuals**
- **opportunities for the organisation in the market place**
- **detailed plans that affect the employee. Exchanging information about the organisation and the part employees play in it has both practical and motivational value.**

4 Recognise good work

Managers often spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with problems and problem staff. Appraisals allow them to re-dress the balance and recognize the quiet heroes in their team. To find the quiet heroes on your team, ask yourself... Who is rarely absent?



Who never says "No"? Who enjoys pressure? Who delivers on time? Who takes up the slack? Who doesn't pester for help? Who is so unassuming you forget they're there? Who quietly lends others a hand? Who smoothes conflicts and builds morale? Who carries on even when the boss is not around? Who shuns the limelight? Who never takes the credit?

5 Build people's confidence

The appraisal process is an opportunity to give people insight into the things they do well. This in turn focuses on their strengths and builds their confidence. To get people thinking about their strengths, ask the following questions: "What's gone really well this year?" "What have you enjoyed doing most of all?" "What have been the best moments?" "What have you found most satisfying?" "What things have you picked up quickest?" "What would you like to spend more time on?" "Where do you think your strengths lie?" We can do no greater service as appraisers than awaken people to their true potential.

6 Develop the boss/subordinate relationship

Surveys show that we have a very low level of regular contact with our bosses: 7% to 11% on average which is about half

a day a week. Yet, the boss-subordinate relationship is the pivotal relationship that determines how well we perform. When the relationship is bad, performance is likely to be bad and when it is good, performance is likely to be good. The appraisal is therefore an important chance to do some maintenance work on this relationship.

7 Plan the future.

If review follows action in the management cycle, then new plans should follow review. The plans made at the end of a performance appraisal can include...

- **plans for immediate action by either the manager or employee**
- **problem-solving plans to deal with blocks to progress**
- **project plans based on areas the employee wants to develop**
- **development plans based on identified potential**
- **career plans based on matching employee development and organisational opportunities**
- **lifetime plans.**

Appraisal can be the spark that ignites enthusiasm for what is possible. It is what the appraising manager leaves in his or her wake.

For employees, appraisals are big events in their lives. It is the one time in the year when they are center-stage. Practise these 7 steps and you will make their day a red-letter one.