

PA ENTERPRISE

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

Volume 3 Issue 19 November/December 2009



- ▶ **Effective Meetings** – our tips for how to run them
- ▶ **Going Part-time: eight top tips to succeed**
- ▶ **The GROW Model: Part 2 – life coaching**

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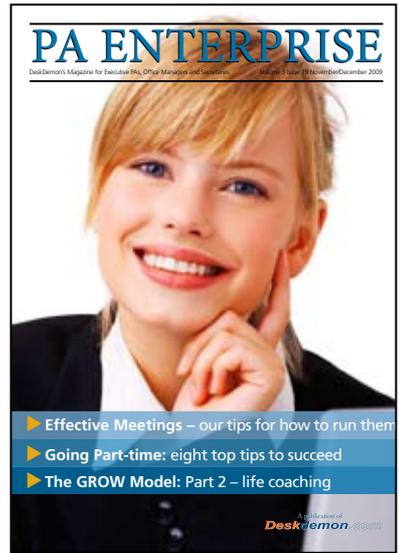
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WHY I LOVE MY BROTHER LABELLER

Diane Lofthouse
The Raft

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Too much Twittering?

Research released by Morse, the IT services and technology company, has shown that use of Twitter and other social networks by employees at work is costing UK businesses £1.38 billion each year in lost productivity. From the 1,460 office workers surveyed over half said that they used social networking sites during the working day for personal use.



On average those people were spending 40 minutes on these sites each week – nearly full working week being wasted each year by employees using social networking sites at work.

“The popularity of social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook has grown considerably over the last couple of years, however with it has come the temptation to visit such sites during office hours. When it comes to an office environment the use of these sites is clearly becoming a productivity black hole,” commented Philip Wicks, consultant at Morse. “The recent case of Portsmouth City Council banning Facebook access for all employees was a high-profile example, but it is clear that businesses shouldn’t turn a blind eye to their employees’ use of social networks, and instead look to formulate and enforce sensible usage policies.”

When it comes to usage policies it is clear many businesses have some way to go, as of those surveyed just over three quarters (76%) said that their employer hadn’t issued them with specific guidelines with regards to using Twitter. Without guidelines and usage policies businesses are leaving themselves wide open to a reduction in productivity, brand damage and security risks.

Half of office workers lack access to appropriate IT

Almost 50 per cent of more than 1,500 UK workers and managers do not have the appropriate IT equipment to do their job, a new survey has found.

The Plantronics survey adds that 63.8 per cent of those polled use technology such as conference call facilities, seen by 81.9 per cent as a key tool for department management – but 68.4 per cent of managers don’t have access to the right equipment for office-based conference calls.

Some 58% of workers surveyed said they struggle to concentrate on conference call discussions in the office as a result of not having the right equipment such as headsets or appropriate software.

With remote working becoming increasingly common, the problems are extended to home office environments.

Big Brother’s watching you

All telecoms companies and internet service providers will be required by law to keep a record of every customer’s personal communications, showing who they have contacted, when and where, as well as the websites they have visited.

Despite widespread opposition to the increasing amount of surveillance in Britain, 653 public bodies will be given access to the information, including police, local councils, the Financial Services Authority, the ambulance service, fire authorities and even prison governors.

The Government is pressing ahead with privately held “Big Brother” databases that opposition leaders said amounted to “state-spying” and a form of “covert surveillance” on the public. It is doing so despite its own consultation showing that it has little public support.

New website for VAs

Reading-based business the TMWSGroup has launched a new web service dedicated exclusively to the Virtual Assistant industry, www.tmwsecretarial.com

Designed by Tina Woollard, who has over 8 years’ experience as a VA, the new website service addresses the requirements of running a successful VA business.

She said, “With my own VA industry knowledge and experience I know exactly what a virtual assistant business needs from a website for it to be a successful addition to, and a promotional tool for, their business.

“I care about the VA industry as a whole and am always happy to offer advice to any aspiring Virtual Assistant including hints and tips on how to get up and running successfully. I really feel this new website service is going to be an extremely valuable tool for any fledgling VA business or even a more established one that needs a new website.”



Virgin helps passengers pay their fare share

Virgin Atlantic has found a way help its passengers find other travellers to share taxi rides into city centres across the world – saving both their wallets and ground carbon emissions. The Taxi2 website will help match passengers who are on the same flight or whose flights arrive at a similar time and are travelling to a similar part of a city, so they can share the taxi ride.

Passengers simply log onto www.taxi.to and input their flight and destination details and the website will match them with a suitable travelling companion. They are then sent the details of the matched traveller and can decide whether to agree to the match. They then print off the easy to make Taxi2 sign from the website so they can locate each other at the airport. The system will also match female travellers who also only want female travelling companions. The scheme is not limited to Virgin Atlantic customers and passengers on other airlines can share rides also.



Christmas party season kicks off with Woman Power

The official start to the Christmas party season has been heralded by the organisers of Here Come The Girls, a musical extravaganza featuring three female vocal legends.

Anastacia, Lulu and Chaka Khan are getting together for the Christmas party starter, which is also said to mark the dawn of Woman Power.

Kicking off on 21st November and touring until 21st December, Here Come The Girls is described as an "unforgettable evening of music, dance and more" against a backdrop of breathtaking glamour and fun.

Lulu said putting the Christmas party appetiser together has been exciting for all three artists, pointing out that the show is about "all that it means to be a woman", from laughter and lost loves to friendship and family.

"I am thrilled that these great voices - and now my great friends - Chaka Khan and Anastacia are sharing the experience with me," she added.

"The show is a celebration of us women - a little mischief and a lot of fun, set to real get-up-and-dance music. Talk about woman power!"

With the first show happening in Edinburgh on 21st November, tickets for the tour are on sale now.

www.herecomethegirls.org



Is this bling heaven or what? It's time to jettison that humourless and corporate-grey mouse of yours and get some sparkle onto your desktop. Studded with a panoply of glittering fake diamonds, the Diamante Mouse is a dazzlingly different and sparkingly superior computer mouse for people wanting to be lifted from the drudgery of normal workstations.
www.iwantoneofthose.com



Mini Christmas Selection

With four of our favourite seasonal chocolates, these Christmas chocolate boxes make gorgeous stocking fillers or handy little gifts for friends and colleagues. Ribbon-tied and ready to give.

www.hotelchocolat.co.uk

Corporate Christmas

Theme park party

Looking for the perfect venue to host an enchanting and magical corporate Christmas party this year? Then look no further than the Alton Towers Resort!

During the festive season, the resort is transformed into a winter wonderland, with a whole host of yuletide festivities to indulge in.

The Christmassy celebrations include the magnificent Masquerade Ball that is held in the spectacular Alton Towers Hotel. This beautifully decorated venue is the ideal place to hold an elegant and glamorous festive celebration that all your colleagues will love!

Alternatively, you could book your place at one of the Dinner and Disco nights, held in one of the fantastic, festively-themed hotel restaurants.
www.altontowers.com



Masterpiece cards

If you are looking for bespoke, high-quality Christmas cards to send festive greetings and to thank your clients for their custom in 2009, the National Gallery's new personalised cards service is worth a look.

The easy online ordering system allows you to choose your preferred design and personalise the inside with a bespoke greeting. You can also include your company logo and staff signatures to make office Christmas cards as hassle-free as possible this year.

Priced from £108 for 50, these exclusive cards feature images from, or inspired by, Masterpieces in the Gallery's Collection.

www.nationalgallery.co.uk/personalisedcards



Corporate Christmas

The gift of a sumptuous hamper is a tried and tested way to thank important corporate clients and business customers. ChristmasHamper.com are a leading provider of luxury corporate gift hampers, and their great range are sure to make an impact.

Pictured here is the Winter Warmer, priced at £58. Featuring a bottle of fine French wine, plus a host of sweet and savoury treats to fill its lucky recipients full of cheer, this gorgeous hamper is sure to go down a storm.

www.christmashamper.com

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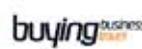
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10 most unusual interview mistakes

What is the most unusual thing a candidate did in a job interview? Fall asleep? Disappear? Show up a day late? Here are the top 10, according to a survey from www.CareerBuilder.co.uk:

- 1 When interviewer asked candidate why he wanted to work for the company, he replied, "Because I fancy the girl who works in reception."
- 2 Candidate turned on a CD player to play the song "I feel good" during the interview.
- 3 Candidate performed magic tricks for the interviewer.
- 4 Candidate showed up for the wrong job interview with the wrong company.
- 5 Candidate gave the interviewer the impression that she had murdered her husband.
- 6 Candidate kept checking his mobile which was in his hand under the desk during the interview.
- 7 Candidate told interviewer, "I don't have any particular ambitions for advancement, as long as I am paid a lot more in five years time."
- 8 Candidate told interviewer that he would not be able to travel for work when his football team was playing at home.
- 9 Candidate told interviewer he would wrestle clients to the ground rather than trying to diffuse difficult situations.
- 10 Candidate tried to chat up the interviewer.

Here are some tips to make sure you don't make the top 10 list next year

Do your homework

Nothing says "I am not that interested in this job" like someone who has done no research and knows little about a company.

Don't get too personal

Even if the interview seems casual, always keep it professional and avoid sharing unnecessary personal information.

Be honest

If you are unsure of an answer, it is ok to say you don't know

but then outline the steps you would take to find out -- this will demonstrate you are a problem solver.

Prepare for these common questions

"Tell me about yourself?"
"Why do you want to work here?"
"What motivates you?"

Do not be negative

It is never a good idea to say negative things about a previous employer. The interviewer will assume you will also be likely to bad mouth their company in the future.

Health

If you have trouble staying fit at work, these office exercises are a great way to keep your body moving right at your desk. The moves here involving stretching and strengthening your body, all within the comfort of your office chair. This workout doesn't take the place of traditional strength training, but offers you a way to keep your blood moving if you can't get away from your desk.

Leg Extension: Sit tall with the abs in and extend the left leg until it's level with hip, squeezing the quadriceps. Hold for 2 seconds, lower and repeat for 16 reps. Repeat on the other side.

Chair Squat: While sitting, lift up until your hips are just hovering over the chair, arms out for balance. Hold for 2-3 seconds, stand all the way up and repeat for 16 reps.

<http://exercise.about.com/cs/erciseworkouts/l/blofficeworkout.htm>



Bicep Curl: Hold water bottle in right hand and, with abs in and spine straight, curl bottle towards shoulder for 16 reps. Repeat other side.

Side Bends: Hold a water bottle with both hands and stretch it up over the head, arms straight. Gently bend towards the left as far as you can, contracting the abs. Come back to center and repeat to the right. Complete 10 reps (bending to the right and left is one rep).

Virgin Atlantic releases iPhone App for people with a Fear of Flying

Virgin Atlantic's Flying Without Fear course is now available as an application for iPhone and iPod touch.

Many people suffer anxiety at the prospect of flying. These fears range from anxiety at booking a trip to complete inability to board an aircraft. Whether it is the unfamiliar aircraft, the strange noises a plane makes, or the fear of losing control, this app is designed to help people overcome their personal fears.

The course helped American actress Whoopi Goldberg overcome her fear of flying. The actress had not flown for a decade but a business commitment in London meant she had to step on a plane once again.



After going through the course, Whoopi Goldberg said: "I was a sceptic. I hadn't flown in 13 years but after doing their program, I understood that while my fear was real, there were many things I didn't know or had misinformation about, which they were able to clear up. So what happened? The program works. I now fly. It's that simple."

Innocent veg pots

Say hello to an interesting new lunch - the innocent veg pot. Each one is made from the finest veg, wholegrains and tasty sauce, with fresh herbs and spices. There are plenty to choose from, like Thai coconut curry or Mexican sweet potato chilli. Ready in four minutes flat, with no faff or fuss. Just lots of good health, done and dusted by lunchtime.





Bigger and better at the Natural History Museum

Things are getting bigger at the Natural History Museum as they announce a larger capacity in the iconic Central Hall as well as the launch of a new look events website.

Already renowned as one of the best large event spaces in London, Central Hall has now increased its capacity for seated dinners from 650 to 700. The additional space is a result of a change in exhibitions within the archways in Central Hall, which effectively creates more floor space.

The improved website will provide more information on the experienced events team at the Museum and additional details of the Museum's environmental policy and award wins. It will also include event imagery for the first time.

www.nhm.ac.uk/business-centre/exclusive-events/

'Anything goes' at DOLCE Hotels & Resorts

Dolce Hotels & Resorts is challenging meeting planners to 'name their price' for meetings or group events.

The promotion, called 'Make Us an Offer ... Anything Goes', is available for conventions, meetings, teambuilding exercises, seminars, training sessions and product launches at any of the 24 Dolce properties in Europe and North America.

Meeting planners are invited to submit details of their event, including their preferred Dolce specialist conference hotel, date, food and beverage, accommodation and other meeting requirements. Bookers can then state the price they would be willing to pay for the entire package.



The Dolce team will evaluate all offers, working to book the meeting or group event and providing counteroffers where necessary detailing what the hotel can offer to hold the meeting as specified within budget. If the hotel is not available on the requested date, the staff will suggest alternative dates and other Dolce properties that may be available.

'Anything Goes' is available on all bids placed by 18 December 2009, and valid on all meetings or group events taking place before 31 May 2010.

For more information on the Anything Goes offer, or to book, log on to www.dolce.com/meetings

Reach for the stars at Altitude 360

This Christmas, Altitude 360 is launching **A Night in the Stars** at London's largest venue in the skies. For those organising a Christmas Party, there is no better place to dazzle your guests and soak up the festive cheer than this 360° venue towering over London's sparkling Christmas lights.

From the 29th Floor of Millbank Tower, the crisp white interior of Altitude 360 provides a stellar vantage point over the very heart of London. Unique 360° views and a stunning contemporary interior make this starry venue the ultimate location to make merry and party into the night to the sounds of London's best bands and top DJs.
www.altitudelondon.com



Fat Duck voted restaurant of the year at national awards

Heston Blumenthal has yet another accolade to add to his impressive collection after scooping the top prize at the National Restaurant of the Year Awards 2009.

The celebrity chef beat off competition from upmarket eateries Hibiscus and The Walnut Tree to scoop the award for restaurant of the year at London's Hurlingham Club.

Blumenthal is currently busy filming his second series of Channel 4 programme *The Feast*.

Lime Wood to open in November

Lime Wood, described as a luxury country house hotel with a difference is due to open on 23 November.

Set in the heart of the New Forest National Park, the 29-room hotel will offer the Alex Aitken at Lime Wood and Scullery restaurants, a library, dining room, bar, wine cellar and billiard room.

Activities on-site will include a cookery school, food-foraging masterclasses, yoga, spa treatments and bike riding.

A spa featuring a swimming pool, hydro therapy pool, eight treatment rooms, saunas, hammam, steam room and fully equipped gym will open at the property in June 2010.

www.limewoodhotel.co.uk



Effective meetings – seven tips to running them

By Robert Hosking

There's no shortage of meetings in today's workplace. In fact, many professionals would probably say there are too many.

According to a recent OfficeTeam survey, managers said more than one-quarter (28%) of meetings are a waste of time. In fact, almost half of respondents (45%) felt employees would be more productive if their companies banned meetings one day a week.



Meetings often serve an important purpose by helping staff members gather to brainstorm, tackle business challenges and share best practices. However, professionals should carefully consider whether holding a meeting is warranted or if there's a more efficient way to share the information. Time is a precious commodity, especially now, when many people have been asked to take on more work due to limited staff or budgets. If the information can easily be covered in an e-mail or over the phone, there is no need to meet. Also, pay attention to routine meetings. People get in the habit of attending these gatherings and may not realize when they have outlived their usefulness. If the meeting you lead is on a regular schedule, think about whether

these gatherings are still valuable, or if they could be held less frequently.

Once you've determined that organizing a meeting is necessary, follow these seven tips to ensure the gathering is as productive and pain-free as possible:

1 **Make a list and check it twice.** Determine who really needs to attend – and who doesn't. If someone is unlikely to contribute much to the conversation or is being included only as a courtesy, it's best to leave him or her off the invite list. Keep in mind that your colleagues can be updated about the meeting's outcome afterward.

2 **Provide information upfront.** When sending out an invitation to your

Professionals should carefully consider whether holding a meeting is warranted or if there's a more efficient way to share the information.

meeting, try to answer the "five W's": who, what, when, where and why. The more information you provide to your colleagues, the better able they will be to prepare for the discussion, and the smoother it will go. A few days before the meeting, distribute an agenda to all participants so they can review it ahead of time. The agenda also will help keep everyone on track during the discussion.

3 **Come prepared.** Make sure you have everything ready for the meeting well before it starts. For example, you may need to print documents or make copies of materials for distribution. Proper preparation also involves testing any electronic equipment you plan to use, such as a laptop or projector. Is the equipment operating properly and, more importantly, do you know how to use it? Nothing is as unnerving as having everyone stare at you while you scramble to fix a technical glitch.

4 **Watch the clock.** Start and end meetings on time and assign an estimated amount of time for each agenda item. An hour is about as long as you can expect colleagues to maintain a steady focus. If you can't squeeze everything into a single hour, consider hosting more than one meeting over the course of a few days. For meetings lasting more than an hour, offer quick breaks that allow participants to stretch their legs and recharge. Providing food and refreshments or having different people present

also are effective ways of keeping everyone's attention during marathon sessions. If it becomes apparent that you won't be able to cover the entire agenda in the time allotted, set aside the last few minutes to schedule a follow-up discussion.

5 **Maintain order.** As the meeting leader, it's your responsibility to ensure that everyone sticks to the agenda. Discussions that are only tangentially related to the topic at hand can kill productivity and cause everyone to leave the room wondering if anything was actually accomplished. If you sense the conversation is veering off track, step in. Remind people of the goals of the meeting and suggest that unrelated issues be addressed at a future gathering. One word of caution: Be careful you don't kill the creative mood, especially if the purpose of the meeting is to brainstorm new ideas. The temptation is often to take the first "good" idea presented and run with it. But you should make sure everyone has a chance to weigh in and offer his or her opinion.

6 **Create a distraction-free zone.** Few things are more annoying than the unexpected jangle of a cell phone in the middle of an intense discussion. To prevent such interruptions, ask that participants turn off their cell phones, Blackberrys and PDAs prior to the start of the discussion. To ensure that whoever is speaking gets the full attention of everyone in the room, you might also consider

banning laptop computers, unless they are required as part of a presentation. Keep in mind, though, that you may have to bend the rules slightly, depending on who will be attending the meeting. If senior-level managers will participate, for instance, they may need to remain connected during the course of the gathering and want to check messages while others are talking.

7 **Follow up afterwards.** Distribute notes to the group after the meeting, outlining what was discussed, what was accomplished and what, if any, to-dos attendees have been assigned. The meeting recap accomplishes a number of things. As a record of the conversation, it ensures that everyone who was involved is on the same page. It also allows you to check in with anyone who was unable to attend.

By paying attention to the various dynamics of the gatherings you schedule and making adjustments as necessary, you'll know that the get-togethers you organize are successful and that the participants will find them valuable as well.

About the Author

*Robert Hosking is executive director of **OfficeTeam**, a leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. OfficeTeam has more than 325 locations worldwide and offers online job search services at www.officeteam.com*

Digital File Shredder – what is it and do you need it?

By Andrew Green

Are you someone who is interested in making sure that your private files stay private? Whether you are looking at protecting the data of your clients or you just want to make sure that the pictures and documents that have been uploaded on your computer are not made known, you will find that you need to look into a download shredder.

No matter what business you are in or what your browsing habits are online, you will find that there might be material on your computer that would make your life more difficult if anyone sees it or worse if anyone uses it against you.

The first thing that you need to think about is the fact that nothing on your computer can't be retrieved unless you take fairly extreme measures to destroy it. When you put something into the recycling bin and when you have deleted it, you have simply made the file harder to get to. It is absolutely certain that if this is all you do, someone who is determined enough and has the right kind of knowledge is going to be able to pull it up in a very small amount of time.

When you want to make sure that the information that you have deleted is going to stay deleted, this is where a download shredder comes in. A download shredder is essentially the same as a document shredder, though instead of going through paper, it will destroy data. There are many different versions out there, ranging from some which are not bad to others that meet and even exceed the qualifications set for secure government documents.

If you are looking at a download shredder, you might be wondering what it really does. Essentially, a download shredder is going to find all the documents and data that you deleted and then it is going to overwrite it. The data that you were looking at and that you had created or saved is instead going to be written over with separate data. In some cases, the download shredder will use ones and zeros, but this is frankly less secure than you might want. More secure are the ones that will use government quality encryptions and which



will render the data completely unrecoverable.

Some download shredders will overwrite your data once or twice, while other applications will suggest that you do it as many as eight or nine times. The more often the data is rewritten, the better off you are going to be when it comes to making sure that no one is going to be able to get it back.

Think about your computer and everything that is on it. Think about things like valuable data or sensitive information that could be used against you, your family, or your colleagues. Data security is something that you need to think about, and the more time that you spend working on it, the more you will realize that a good download shredder can help you!

About the Author

Andy Green is a web developer with several years of experience in web security. You can check out Andy's review of File Shredder which is a great utility for making your files completely unrecoverable. www.squidoo.com/file-shredder



BROTHER GOES PINK FOR CANCER RESEARCH UK

Brother's special edition of PT-1000P pink labelling machine is currently supporting Cancer Research UK. Perfect for labelling everything from folders, CDs, DVDs and filing cabinets it's the must-have tool for busy PAs. And most important of all, the manufacturer's profit of £2.50 from the sale of each PT-1000P has been donated to Cancer Research UK. This has been so successful, that by this month, the labelling division of Brother UK will have donated £75,000 Cancer Research UK to support the Charity in its fight to beat breast cancer.

Mike Kelly, head of labelling at Brother UK commented: "The office remains the biggest market for Brother's range of P-touch labelling machines because organisation is key to the running of a successful business. In general it is down to PAs and Secretaries to ensure an office is run efficiently and professionally. It remains a fact that the majority of PAs and Secretaries are female, consequently to support the Breast Cancer division of Cancer Research UK with donations from the sales of a product used widely by females seemed logical.

"Pink is both popular with many office staff as well as being the colour chosen by charities working in this area of research. It was relatively easy for us to produce a version of our popular PT1000 in pink and redirect the profit to Cancer Research UK. Initially we set a target of a £25,000 contribution to the charity, however we are now in the third phase of this project and it is our intention to continue with this product into 2010 to reach our revised target donation of £100,000, subject to demand."

This is a limited edition model so hurry now to purchase this fantastic labelling machine. For details of where to buy visit www.brother.co.uk or call 08444 999 444.

WIN a special limited edition PINK labelling machine from Brother!

Simply email your full contact details to PA Enterprise by 31 December. Six readers picked at random will receive this fabulous limited edition PT-1000P pink labelling machine absolutely FREE!

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TEMPTATION ON EVERY LEVEL

The GROW Model:

Part 2: Life Coaching: the R the O and the W

GROW is an acronym for:

G = Goal R = Reality O = Options W = Will or Way Forward

By Ronnie Slade

Hopefully, you will have completed the 'G' section of your personal GROW model from the October issue of PA Enterprise, about establishing a personal goal or issue. Now you are invited to explore the realities, options and a way forward for your current situation. The 'R', the 'O' and the 'W' of the GROW model.

R is for REALITY

- 1 What is going on right now that tells you that you have an issue or a problem?
- 2 As well as what is happening, what is missing from your current situation that you would like to have?
- 3 What is happening now that is good and that you want to preserve to contribute to achieving your goal?
- 4 What have you done so far to improve things?
- 5 What were the results you got from doing these things?
- 6 What obstacles or possible barriers are in your way that prevent or hinder you from moving forward?
- 7 What resources do you already have to help you to achieve your outcome? (skills, experience, qualifications, personal qualities, talents, time, enthusiasm, money, support etc.)
- 8 What other resources will you need? Briefly, write down where you will get them.
- 9 The final step is to look back to your goal for a minute. The one you identified in identifying your topic or issue. Is it still relevant or has it changed? Make any changes or adjustments. If it's still okay, leave it alone.

Well done! You have completed the **REALITY** section of your GROW

model. You have already had a taste of what coaching is all about - stating the present situation in real and quantifiable terms. Perhaps this is the very first time you have faced up to an issue in this way and actually written down the answers instead of churning them over and over in your mind. If so, you may be experiencing the sensation of a weight being lifted from your shoulders.

■ Now consider your **OPTIONS**. This takes about 10-15 minutes. Having developed your topic or issue into a goal and clarified what is going on or not going on, you are now able to decide where you want to start to move forward to set about achieving your goal and considering the options available to you.

The **O** in the GROW model stands for **OPTIONS**. Options are about what you could do, not necessarily about what you will do. So, let your mind run free. Brainstorm all the possibilities of what you might do in relation to this issue or goal. Keep your ideas free from judgment or criticism.

If you try to think of one good idea, you may fail and get despondent, so try to think of 10 ideas, even if some of them appear too outrageous or impossible. One of them might spark another thought that gives you a brilliant idea. So, remember you are looking for a first step not one idea that will crack the whole issue. There are 11 questions in this section for considering your options.

As in the previous sections, some of them may be relevant, some of them may not. Answer the questions that are relevant to you. What possible options do you have? Remember to brainstorm all the possibilities.

O is for OPTIONS

- 1 What could you do to move yourself just one step forward right now?
- 2 What else could you do if you didn't have to explain what you were doing or be answerable to anybody?
- 3 What could you do if money were unlimited?
- 4 If you could devote all of your time to this one thing, what would you do then?
- 5 What could you do if you did not have to live with the consequences?
- 6 If you went to your manager or friend with this problem, what might they suggest?
- 7 If you secretly know what you should do first, what would it be?
- 8 Have a look back over your list of options and read each of them carefully.
Check to see if any of them spark another idea you could also consider?
- 9 Choose one of the options. Choose one that will move you forward just one step. Choose the easiest thing to do, or the cheapest, or the quickest, or the one you feel most comfortable doing but choose one right now. Circle it, highlight it.
- 10 If you do the one thing that you have chosen, just check. Will it move you forward? If not, choose something else. If it will move you forward, stay with it.
- 11 What is the benefit to you of doing this one thing? Will it make you feel better? Will it mean you will know something new? Will it change your opinion of

something? Will it relieve the stress a little? There has to be a benefit. Identify it and write it down.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the **OPTIONS** section of the GROW model. By now your mind may be spinning with several options, including some you might never have considered before. Now the fun really starts as you begin to create a brighter future for yourself!

■ The final part of the model is probably the most important, because you can have a goal, know what the reality of it is and be aware of the options but, unless you are willing to commit to it, just forget it, there will be no point.

This section has the most questions - 18 in all. Some of them will resonate with you, some may not. You decide. It will probably take about 10-15

Continued on next page



minutes. You have your option and you have your first step to move you forward. So, now do something with it. This session changes an idea into an action and identifies what you will do.

W is for WILL and WAY FORWARD

- 1 What are you going to do?
- 2 What will you do? List the actions you must go through to complete this thing you have chosen.
- 3 How will these actions meet your main goal?
- 4 When are you going to take these actions? What's the time-scale?
- 5 How long do you think that that list of actions will take you? Can you identify anticipated time-scales for each item?
- 6 Should anyone else be involved in this list of actions you are going to do to complete this thing, or this issue, or this goal that you have chosen?
- 7 What do you want this person, or these people do do?
- 8 When will you tell them?
- 9 Who else should know that you will be doing these things?
- 10 When will you tell them?
- 11 At what point in your plan will you tell them?
- 12 Whatever your first step is, can you think of any obstacle or barrier that might stop you from doing it?
- 13 How likely is it to stop you? Is it likely or not likely? If it is not likely, that is fine. But if it is very likely, what can you do to make your first step more achievable?
- 14 How will you overcome this obstacle or obstacles?
- 15 What will you do to stop it from stopping you?

16 Earlier you wrote down when you would complete this first step. Is that timescale still valid?

17 Is there anything else you need to consider before you begin this first step?

18 In identifying your goal, you identified when you would have achieved it. You also identified a time-scale in this section as to when you would begin your first step. Put the two together. When will you actually start in terms of date? Be specific - day, time, place. Write it down in your diary.

You are there! You have now completed your own experience of a coaching session. It will have shown you how some very simple sounding questions can yield some very profound thinking and answers. Perhaps you have found that your intuition provided answers that surprised you. Perhaps you have already identified some great new possibilities.

You have worked through all the stages of the GROW model. You have identified your goal, you have worked through the reality, explored your options and identified what it would take for you to be willing to be commit to the action.

Commitment

Using a scale of 1-10, answer these questions.

1 = definitely cannot or could not be lower. **10** = definitely could not be higher.

How strong is your intention to take that first step?

How high is your enthusiasm for taking that first step?

How strong is your commitment to taking that first step?

Experience shows that a score of 7 or below on intention and commitment means that it will not get done.

If you have a score of 7 or less, ask yourself a powerful, incisive question.

'What has to happen in order for me to raise that score?' Maybe that is where the first step should be.

If you have worked through this and answered all the questions that seemed relevant to you, you have established your goal, explored the current reality, identified and explored the various options available to you, chosen an option and evaluated your intention, enthusiasm and your commitment towards achieving a first step.

Well done. Congratulations! You are in the top 3% of the population who commit to writing down their goals.

Of course, you can work through the process as many times as you wish to. It can be used for all kinds of purposes and with anyone who wants to commit to living a better life.

When you use the GROW model with others, you will need to follow their thinking by listening fully to their answers and asking related questions. The self-coaching questions are a starting point which you can use, modify, add to, adapt and, in some instances, discard. It's entirely up to you.

One of the most powerful methods of learning anything is by actually going through the experience yourself. Obviously, the self-coaching exercise does not give you an opportunity to react to and interact with a real coach. However, the purpose of the exercise was to give you the experience of working through the GROW model. Your experience will have reinforced the sequential aspects of the model.

About the Author

Ronnie Slade is passionate about Self-Improvement and Self-Development and has been successfully helping people find their niche and empowering them to prepare for change since 1981.

<http://followronnieslade.weebly.com>



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Going Part-time

eight top tips to succeed

By Heather Townsend

Some of the top professional services firms have recently been offering temporary part-time working to all of their staff. I hear on the grapevine that the take up for this offer has been very good and it has avoided the need for further redundancies. From personal experience, for it to be successful working part time takes time to re-adjust and a different mindset to working full time.

As someone that worked part-time for three years at my last employers, here are my eight top tips at achieving more whilst being a part-timer.

- 1 Choose your hours carefully**
When choosing which days or hours to work, aim to pick hours that suit both the demands of your role AND your personal needs. For example if your team meets weekly on a Monday, it makes sense to be present for this team meeting. Be prepared for some give and take - for example, it is absolutely fine to ask that the weekly team meeting moves to a day you want to work - but be prepared that your request may be turned down. It tends to work better if you have a block of days when you are working. For example, mon-wed, tue-thu or wed-fri
- 2 Aim to hit the ground running**
As a part-timer you don't normally have the luxury of easing into the week. Your time is very precious - particularly if you HAVE to leave by a certain time to pick up children from a nursery or childminder. Work doesn't magically disappear just because you have to leave at 16:00. Use your train journey into work (or an hour the night before a working day) to check e-mails and plan what you need to achieve in your working week.
- 3 Remote working**
Particularly if you have young children make sure your IT department has given you

access to e-mails and voicemails from home. By keeping an eye on the e-mail traffic on your days off you can often nip a problem in the bud before it blows up into a full scale crisis.

- 4 Build up your formal and informal lines of communications**
You are now not going to be in the office day in day out, and so you have to put proportionally more effort into making sure you are still 'in the know'. Who can you regularly lunch with to find out what's going on? Make sure your voicemail message and e-mail signature clearly states your working hours/days. Also, when you are on a day off make sure your out of office message is switched on.
- 5 Have a plan B**
Your clients don't always have needs which neatly can be solved on your working days. Make sure your colleagues are fully up-to-speed on your clients and the work you are doing for them. Have a nominated deputy or team member who your clients can speak to if you are off. Do let your team know a number that they can contact you on, for client emergencies.
- 6 Complete a handover**
As you get ready to leave at the end of your working week, update colleagues on the progress/state of important work - plus anything that needs to get done in your absence.

7**Be assertive**

If you are not assertive about when you work and when you don't work, you will find yourself working full time hours, but only getting paid for part-time hours - and completing work on your days off. Of course, there will always be exceptions but if you are not upfront about your working days and when you can or can't be physically or virtually at a meeting, you will soon find yourself working full time hours.

8**Get used to saying 'no'**

It's very easy when work is being divvied up to take on as much work as your full time colleagues. Remember if you only working part time hours your output is not going to be at the same level as your full time colleagues. You may need to remind your colleagues of this, particularly if they are sharing out work equally between the team.

The Efficiency Coach specializes in working with professional services firms - helping both the firm and the individuals achieve more for their time, effort and money. Why not have take a look at our website - www.theefficiencycoach.co.uk, or read our blog for more ideas and inspiration on how to achieve more - www.theefficiencycoach.co.uk/blog



Drink Driving dos and don'ts – stay safe this Christmas

By Martin Hammond and Philip Trotter

The highest number of drink driving incidents occurs at Christmas time. While the safest option is to have 'none for the road' many people can be caught out by having just a few drinks or driving the morning after a night of heavy drinking. Even though you may feel under the legal limit, your blood alcohol level could still be over.

Many people have heard stories of what you should do or say if you are stopped by the police but often these can actually make the situation worse. If you do find yourself in the situation of being stopped on suspicion of drink driving then follow these 10 drink driving dos and don'ts.

Don't

Do not place pennies under your tongue when undergoing a breath test. It will have no effect on the reading and make you look dishonest in court.

Do

Answer the officer's questions honestly and accurately. Some of the questions the officer will ask you are for your benefit. If the officer asks if you have had an alcoholic drink over the past twenty minutes he/she is actually telling you that he will have to wait for twenty minutes before he carries out a test. This is because an officer has to wait until any residual traces of that alcohol which could affect the machine are gone. The same goes for any consumption such as food, smoking or using inhalers etc.

Don't

Be obstructive. The officers are only doing their job which they will carry on with regardless of a person's attitude. Most officers will try their best to make the process a smooth one for you but they also have the means to make it uncomfortable.

Do

Tell the officer about any medication you are currently taking. Even if the officer believes it will have no bearing on the case it is crucial to the later stages of a case that you raise the issue.

Don't

Refuse a blood or urine sample. If the reading is 50mgs or below the officer will offer you blood or urine to confirm the reading you have given. People should always

take this option unless they are physically or mentally unable as it will result in a more accurate reading. You are allowed this option as the machines reading may not be 100% accurate and therefore anyone who refuses to have the reading replaced with a more accurate one is wasting a valuable opportunity.

Do

Accept a sample of blood or urine that you have provided, if one is offered to you. There are often discrepancies between two samples taken at the same time and this could be used to your advantage.

Don't

Listen to an officer who tells you that the option of replacing a breath sample of blood or urine is just a waste of time. It is not and if an officer does attempt to dissuade you in any way you may have a defence to an excess alcohol charge, for this reason alone. Most officers would not give you any information about this decision but occasionally they will give you advice, often believing they are simply helping you.

Do

Tell the officer if you have any breathing problems. If you have attempted unsuccessfully to provide a sample of breath you will be charged with failure to provide a specimen of breath. If you tell the officer of any breathing difficulties you have then you will most likely be offered a chance to provide blood or urine.

Don't

Refuse your right to have a solicitor. Not all solicitors will be excess

alcohol specialists but most can answer questions as to whether you should provide a specimen if for example you were not the driver and they will be able to help you should the police wish to interview you.

Do

Give correct details to the police. People who give false details are nearly always found out and you will not come across well in court having told lies. Furthermore you may face fresh charges even if you are found to be under the drink drive limits.

Don't

Refuse to provide a breath specimen without a very good reason. People who do not attempt to provide breath samples have very few defences to charges such as failing to provide a specimen. Often people charged with this offence can end up with even harsher sentences as the Court do not know whether you had one drink or twenty.

Do

Seek representation for Court appearances. Even if your case is not defensible having good representation at court can mean the difference between a fine or community punishment. It could also mean the difference between community punishment and custody.

Don't

Attempt to blow around the tube. Intoxilyser machines are very accurate and know if there is not enough breath being provided. You will not beat the machine you will simply fail to provide a specimen.

Do

Keep an accurate record of everything that was done and said at the police station and of any driving incident. Although you think you remember what happened you will do a far better job if you put it all down on paper at the first opportunity.

Don't

Attempt to drive just because you feel fit to drive. Any good website relating to alcohol offences will be able to tell you how much you can legally drink. The worst judge of sobriety is a person who has had a few drinks.

Do

Avoid sitting in a vehicle whilst intoxicated even if you have no intention to drive and stay out of the driver's seat in particular. An officer is well within his or her rights to arrest you for being drunk in charge of a motor vehicle and it will be up to you to prove that you had no intention of driving further. This may be difficult and expensive to do.

Don't

Assume that you can drive on car parks and industrial sites when intoxicated because they are "private land". In actual fact if the public have access then you are just as likely to be prosecuted for driving in these places as you would be on a public road.

Do

Stay at the scene of any accident even if you are intoxicated. Whilst excess alcohol offences are very serious you will find yourself in far greater trouble if you leave

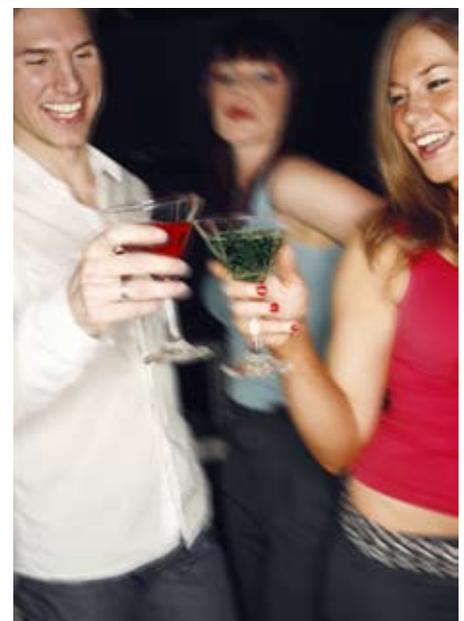
the scene of an accident or fail to report an accident. You are under an obligation to report an accident even if it is just road furniture such as a traffic sign or lamppost. Believe it or not you even have a duty to report and accident if you simply hit a tree.

Don't

Take legal advice from police officers or friends. Whilst most people will give you advice in an attempt to help you, try to only take notice of advice provided by solicitors or the Court. Again, most pieces of advice you will hear are not attempted to lead you astray but they are not always entirely accurate and they can sometimes leave you in a weakened position.

Do

Respect any disqualification you receive. Whilst an excess alcohol offence may not please your boss and make it difficult to get around a spell in prison will almost certainly be life altering.



Ideas for UK Christmas Breaks

By Gino Hitshopi

Christmas is a very special time, and it is perhaps one time of year when we don't necessarily think of going abroad - because Britain itself offers a great many opportunities to have enjoyable Christmas breaks. So in this article we'll be looking at some of the most popular - or indeed simply magical places, which you might consider for a festive break.

on their wish list for Christmas breaks. It is arguably one of the most unspoilt cities in the United Kingdom, offering a great deal of Georgian architecture, especially in the Old Town. The city is dominated by Arthur's Seat, which is great if you fancy a walk and want to get a view right over the city.



Lake District

Snow-capped mountains are surely ideal as a backdrop for Christmas breaks, and it is sometimes surprising to some visitors that you can actually find such a sight in England. The Lake District proves the point, and not only has mountains but also has various lakes which are of course the area's namesake. There are a great deal of things to do here, but as

might consider arriving to the nearby town of Plockton, which amazingly has a train station -surely one of the country's most remote railway locations. Plockton itself is considered very beautiful, and when the surrounding mountains are covered in snow, it is easy to see why many people consider it to be among the best places for Christmas breaks in the UK.

These are just a few of the many destinations in the UK which are likely to lend themselves to Christmas Breaks. If you aim for the higher ground of northern England and Scotland, then the chances of enjoying some festive snow are greatly increased. The internet offers people a great many options and it is worth spending some time seeking out the ideal spot for your festive getaway.



it is very close to where millions of Britons live, you'll need to be quick if you're considering the Lake district as a possibility for Christmas breaks.

Isle of Skye

Among possible locations for Christmas breaks, the Isle of Skye must be one of the most dramatic. It is of course problematic in terms of getting there, but

many people believe it is worth the effort. The main problem is that it is so far away from the main swathes of the UK population, so many people are put off. You

Edinburgh

When the frost or indeed snow covers this city, it is easy to see why so many friends or family groups decide to put the Scottish capital

About the Author

Gino Hitshopi is highly experienced in the realm of Christmas breaks, having worked in the travel industry for many years. For more information please visit: www.english-inns.co.uk



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