Your documents grow but your pockets don’t. That means your pockets get torn under the strain of too much paper. Not any more. With a 20mm fold along every edge, the new Expanding Pocket from Esselte can expand to accommodate up to 200 A4 pages. And with the option of a metal reinforced spine, even the weightiest document is held safely in place.

FROM TO DO... TO DONE
Welcome to the February issue of PA Enterprise. A report by the Work Foundation released in December has shown that managerial and professional jobs have grown steadily in the last decade. This is positive news, but what is even more encouraging is the fact that, among women, the number of managers grew by nearly 30%. The number of women professionals grew by 15% and associate professionals by a grand 57%. These are huge increases, and ones that should continue.

However, it is interesting to note that the number of administrative and secretarial jobs has actually fallen. According to the Work Foundation, this has a great deal to do with computerisation: information technology is able to accomplish an increasing amount of our administrative work. What this report really shows, in relation to the administrative professional, is the importance of both IT and managerial skills. We are now in an age where knowing how to manage yourself and others is an important asset. And knowing how to coax the most out of technology can reap many rewards. In fact, these both expected as the norm rather than the exception.

With these thoughts in mind, we bring you ‘Understanding the Different Influencing Styles’, ‘Effective Cross-Cultural International Business Meetings’, plus ‘Rules for Naming Cells in Microsoft Excel’. But success is much more than just the skills you learn; it’s about looking after yourself. The article ‘Sleep, in Short Supply’ reminds us that sleep is not something that can be deferred, even though it increasingly is in modern life. And ‘Understand and Overcome Procrastination’ puts forward the importance of listening to what your brain is telling you – that what you initial perceive as procrastination might actually be a useful gut feeling.

But this isn't everything! There's much more of value besides in this issue of PA Enterprise. We hope that you enjoy it.

Basma Hadid

Basma Hadid
Publisher
5  Understanding the Different Influencing Styles
Discover the various ways to achieve management success.

9  Rules for Naming Cells in Microsoft Excel
Naming cells in Microsoft Excel can take the headache out of complicated spreadsheets, ensuring you get the data from the right place.

11  Travelling to Spain: A Regional Guide
Spain is an incredibly popular tourist destination, and this guide shows you the best ways to get there.

15  Effective Cross-Cultural International Business Meetings
Meetings across cultures can be invaluable to a business, but there are a number of possible issues to be aware of.

18  Vegetarian Menu Extravaganza
A fruit and vegetable extravaganza, proving that you don’t need meat for an exceptional meal.

20  Sleep, in Short Supply
Recent research suggests that we’re not getting enough sleep. Time to remember just how good it can be!

23  Understand and Overcome Procrastination
We label a lot of things as procrastination when, if we know our true goals, we can look at them in a different way.

26  Sudoku
Try your hand at this SuDoku puzzle. The name of the game is simply to insert numbers into the blank squares so that each row, column and 3-by-3 box contains the digits 1–9 just once.

27  Past Articles on DeskDemon?
Think you might have missed something? Find out what articles we’ve had recently at DeskDemon.
Discover the various ways to achieve management success.

The way in which you behave as a manager and the approach you take will have a marked effect on your ultimate success or failure. Having a range of approaches and styles of behaviour gives you more flexibility. It increases your options, and your chances of success.

Natural Styles
Most managers have a natural style of influence which they prefer to use whenever possible. More flexible managers also keep in reserve a fall back style, used when the preferred style doesn't achieve the desired results. However, there are at least eight identifiable styles of influence – not including aggression, manipulation or force!

Because you are influencing a wide range of people, proficiency in a wider range of styles will ensure more success. Step outside the comfort zone of your natural style and enjoy greater success by practising new ways of influencing. Varying your styles too much may give you a reputation for being unpredictable.

This approach works best when supported by power, authority, age, knowledge or wisdom. Resistance or objections are minimised. You tell others what you want them to do and they do it. Do remember though, that autocracy can be a high-risk strategy. It may result in a feeling of “You won, I lost.” They’ll get you next time.

The Collaborative Approach
You include others in the decision-making process.

Use the push style when:
- You want to maintain long-term influence with others.
- You seek a high level of commitment.
- You have no time to enforce the outcome.

This approach works successfully without you having any power or authority. A word of caution, democracy takes time and can result in watered down solutions. Remain consistently collaborative. Don’t give up too early. Avoid imposing too many parameters or conditions – these will create frustration in others.

The Logical Approach
You use clear logical, unassailable arguments, supported by proof.

Use logic when:
- The other person demands evidence and lots of detail.
- You are prepared to do your homework.
- You are prepared to wait for a reaction.
This approach works best when the other person is a logical, linear thinker. Avoid exaggeration and unnecessary emotion. Offer instead facts and figures. But, you may find this style long-winded and frustrating. You may even be forced to put it in writing. Allow time to prepare your argument, time to explain it, time to wait for a reaction.

The Emotional Approach
You use your natural charm, charisma or enthusiasm.

Use emotion when:
• You want others to feel part of an exciting project.
• You want to fire up someone’s motivation.
• You are truly enthusiastic about an idea.

This approach works when your influence becomes a genuine extension of your own feelings and beliefs. Appealing to the long-term effects of your ideas, you will reinforce their continuing value. Do remember though that emotional appeal carries risks. It can leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Painful memories linger longer.

The Assertive Approach
You ask directly, clearly and confidently for what you want, or don’t want.

Be assertive when:
• You want to influence autocratic people, bullies and stick-in-the-muds.
• You want to influence behaviours.
• You need to act and initiate, rather than react.

Assertiveness can have a lasting effect, especially on those who least expect it from you. Any resistance is met by your persistence. Assertive influence carries little or no risk.

The Passive Approach
You win the day by being submissive, by not overtly influencing.

Remain passive when:
• You want to influence others through personal demonstration.
• You want to avoid unhelpful confrontation.
• You have tried all the other approaches.

As you quietly demonstrate desired behaviours, others can see for themselves the value in following your lead. Many potential confrontations with power or authority demand submissive influence, which can pay positive dividends. The downside is that your submissiveness may leave you with feelings of low-esteem. Can you live with this?

The Sales Approach
You use good old-fashioned salesmanship.

Use salesmanship when:
• You know that the other person expects to be sold to.
• You need to show the benefits your suggestion will produce.
• You enjoy selling ideas.

Draw out their point of view, understand their needs, demonstrate that you empathise; minimise resistance by showing how their ideas dovetail with your own; show how they will benefit. Do realise though that logical or submissive people often hate an overt sales approach and may work hard to wreck your plans.
The Bargaining Approach
You trade concessions in order to reach a mutually acceptable conclusion.

Bargain or negotiate when:
- You are both equally keen to go ahead with the idea.
- You are happy and able to offer a few concessions.
- You want to reach a win-win conclusion.

Don’t just share the cake – make it a bigger one. Your success as a fair negotiator will help cement the relationship. Aim too low and you’ll end up even lower. Over collaborate and you may regret giving too much away. Always trade concessions.

The Power of Positive Behaviour
Who has been a big influence in your life? A parent, relative, employer, friend or neighbour? Chances are that they often did nothing specific to influence you – they just behaved in ways that you took note of and decided to copy.

The behaviour of others can be influenced greatly when they observe the ways in which you:
- Deal with aggression;
- Handle awkward customers;
- Control group behaviour;
- Field tricky questions;
- Overcome resistance;
- Live by your values and beliefs;
- Walk the talk.

Behaviours that help the influencing process:
- Continuous maintenance of rapport;
- Maintaining good eye contact;
- Congruent body language which supports your messages;
- Appropriate voice tone which underpins what you say;
- Flexibility – being prepared to change your approach, when necessary;
- Awareness and acceptance of the needs of others;
- Lack of conditional words, which dilute your messages.

In Summary: Modelling Behaviour
Ok, suppose you don’t have sufficient flexibility of style. With practice, it’s easy to observe, analyse and reproduce the effective behaviours of other people. If you’ve ever studied any skill under a master, you will already have done this.

Suppose you know a person who uses an influencing style in a particularly elegant or effective manner. You have identified this as something you would like to improve for yourself. By closely observing what works for that person and noticing the effect it has on others, you can begin to experiment by adopting these behaviours and strategies and making them work for you, too.

Behaviour is only behaviour: it can usually be replicated.
DID YOU KNOW?

Choose UK made LOGIC 300 and LOGIC 500 for fewer product miles.

In 2007 LOGIC will donate £20,000 to Save the Children.

Save the Children is a registered charity, number 213890

Papers that make business sense
Microsoft Excel is one of the most important applications that you can ever learn in your working career. I say this because over 90 percent of businesses use Excel on a day-to-day basis; so, not knowing Excel can really put you on the back foot. One of the greatest challenges we have in working with the program is the cell addresses. The column naming standard A to Z and then AA to IV is really ingenious but it really does cause a lot of problems for people using large spreadsheets. Just imagine trying to remember what every single cell does in a spreadsheet that has over 20,000 cells.

There must be an easier way – and there is. It involves naming your cells in a worksheet: giving a cell address such as AA543 a normal name like Interest Rate or Total Amount. The cool part about giving cells a name is that you can actually refer to the name rather than the cell address in formulas. Naming a cell makes life so much easier simply because, as humans, we are able to relate to more descriptive names like Interest Rate or Total Amount than we can to standard cell names. However there are some very strict rules we must follow.

**Rule 1**

**Names Must not Exceed 255 Characters**

The first rule that must be followed is that, when you are naming a cell, the cell name must not exceed 255 characters. There is another aspect of this that you should also be aware of, and this is that if the name exceeds 253 characters then the name will not show up in the name box on the formula toolbar. In reality, though, you want to follow this rule of thumb: your names should not exceed 30 characters; generally we try to limit them between 10 and 20 characters because anymore than that and your formulas and functions can be too difficult to fault find.
Cell names in Microsoft Excel must not have spaces. There are two ways that are considered acceptable in overcoming this problem. One way is to distinguish words in a name by placing the letter at the start of each word in capitals such as, TrialBalance. An alternative way of naming a cell is to use the underscore such as, Trial_Balance.

Either technique is quite acceptable. You may find, though, that when using underscores in cell names where you have used borders it may be difficult to distinguish the underscore from a border. In this particular case it would be better to use the first naming standard.

Microsoft Excel cell names are not case sensitive which means that a capital C is exactly the same as a lower case c and this is one of the reasons why we utilise the first naming standard in Rule 2.

Microsoft Excel is very strict in that you cannot have the following in cell names:
- Spaces
- Mathematical symbols such as + - * / < > &
- Anything resembling a number, cell address or reserved word.

A reserved word is text used for functions and formulas. For example you cannot call a cell by the name SUM as it is already used in the function SUM.

When naming cells you may only use the following characters:
- Letter Characters From A to Z
- Number Characters from 0 to 9
- Non-Uniform Characters such as . _ ?

Whilst you can use numbers and non-uniform characters such as decimals and question marks, all cell names must start with a letter, backslash (\) or underscore (_).

So, How do we give a cell a name?

The simplest way to name a cell is to first select the cell, and then simply click in the Name Box on the formula bar. Now type the name you wish to use and then press the enter key. What you will notice is that each time you click on the cell with the cell name, Microsoft Excel will substitute the cell address for the name you gave the cell.

Naming cells is a really useful skill to learn, especially when you are starting to create complex spreadsheets, as it is very easy to forget which cell address contains each piece of data. Naming cells means that it will be easier for you to write your formulas that refer to the cells with the right information.

Chris Le Roy writes for One-on-One Personal Computer Training. Go to www.1-on-1.biz/ for more tips and tricks.
Up to 60 million visitors travel to Spain every year to delight in the country’s 315 sunny days and its rich and diverse history and culture. As a result the Spanish government spends millions of Euros per year on the travel and transport infrastructure to service the country’s growing population and its ever-growing numbers of visitors.

Therefore Spain has to be one of the easiest and most affordable of the world’s popular destinations in terms of its accessibility – particularly from the UK and North America. Daily, there are cheap flights available from all British airports to both main and regional airports across Spain and direct flights from the US to the main Spanish hubs. As an alternative, for British and European travellers there are fantastic country wide train, coach and ferry links and great access for those who prefer to travel by car.

Spanish Travel Options: Broken Down by Region

Northern Spain
The easiest way to access this region is by plane from one of the main UK airports, which fly directly to Bilbao, or from the US to Malaga with a transfer to Bilbao. It’s possible to connect with Iberia flights for connections across the North and throughout Spain. Alsa and Eurolines have sophisticated coach networks and it’s possible to travel all the way across Europe to Bilbao or San Sebastian and then pick up local coaches or rail connections. You can also sail from the UK port of Plymouth to Santander with Brittany Ferries, or you could take the P & O route from Portsmouth to Bilbao.

Castile and La Rioja
The cheapest way to access these regions is possibly to fly to one of the main Spanish hubs – Barcelona, Bilbao or Madrid for example – and then either drive or get connecting flights. You can connect with Iberia for flights to Logrona in La Rioja or Valladolid in Castile. Castile, Rioja and Navarre are serviced by an excellent road network which makes getting around simple and, again, Alsa coaches will connect you with major and minor destinations across the regions and the entire country.

Aragon, Navarre and the Pyrenees
As these regions are easily accessible by car or coach from Madrid it may be best to get a cheap flight to Madrid and then drive the E90 to the heart of the region. You could consider getting a connecting flight to Zaragoza in the
middle of the region, which is a good jumping off point for explorations in this stunning part of Spain. Alternatively this region can be accessed by rail or coach. Eurolines coaches will connect you with Pamplona or Zaragoza; Eurostar rail will take you from the UK to Paris and from Paris you can catch an overnight high-speed rail link to Madrid. And from Madrid the options are varied, from local rail and coach connections and car hire to local flight connections using Iberia Airlines.

Costa Brava and Costa Dorada
As we move east to the beautiful Northern Catalonian coastal regions of the Costa Brava and Costa Dorada, so accessibility increases. Barcelona airport is the main airport for these regions and it welcomes cheap UK and US flights. You can then connect to Girona in the Costa Brava region or Reus in the Costa Dorada region. Barcelona itself has an underground train network for access throughout the city, and if you want to travel further afield the Spanish rail service RENFE has many mainline and local services servicing both regions. The main coastal road in Costa Brava is the A7, with the A2 taking you west away from Barcelona and the C32 taking you south from Barcelona into the Costa Dorada. Barcelona has a port with ferry services to Genoa, Rome, Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza.

Central Spain and Madrid
Central Spain’s main airport is Madrid and it welcomes direct flights from all the major UK and US airports and some of the smaller ones as well. As Madrid is such a major city you can imagine it acts as an important travel hub for the whole of Spain. Coach and rail networks and main motorway routes all radiate from the city. Madrid has two main stations with trains departing for regional and international destinations, and the city has an underground metro system as well.

Costa del Azahar
The main travel hub of this region is Valencia with the city’s airport enjoying direct UK flights. To access the rest of the region you can take advantage of the RENFE services from Valencia or enjoy the city via the FGV trams and underground trains. If you want to travel from the coast to Madrid then take the N430 and A3; to explore the coast take the A7. Again, Eurolines coaches operate connections to towns and cities in this region including Valencia, Sagunt and Vinaros. And last but not least, Valencia is a port city and has ferries running across the Mediterranean with destinations including Malta, Ibiza and Italy.

Costa Blanca
Most visitors for this region enter via Alicante airport. With the Costa Brava well serviced by roads and Alicante airport offering great car hire opportunities many people prefer to access the rest of the region by car, though RENFE, Eurolines and Alsa offer excellent rail and coach alternatives.
**Costa Calida**

Murcia is the main airport for this region, although Alicante airport is also accessible, affording visitors and residents an extra opportunity and advantage. From Murcia there are a number of major train services including direct links to Madrid. In terms of roads, again the Costa Calida is a region with an excellent network of major roads and routes: the N340 runs from Alicante through Murcia to the Costa del Sol, the A7 hugs the coast and local, national and international coach lines service the area. In the port town of Cartagena a passenger terminal was built in 2003 that now serves as a destination for some of the major cruise liners on their way to and from destinations around France, Greece and the Black Sea Coast.

**Costa de Almeria**

You're spoilt for choice when it comes to airports serving this region; you can fly to Alicante or Murcia and travel by road or rail into the region or you can fly direct to Almeria airport. The cheapest flights are often to Alicante. RENFE have mainline train services from Almeria to the city of Granada, and Eurolines, Alsa and Enatcar all offer coach services across Costa de Almeria. The major routes in the region are the N340 which runs from Costa Calida through the town of Almeria and on south to the Costa del Sol, the A92 which connects with Granada and the A348 which connects Almeria with the Alpujarras. In terms of sea access, Transmediterranea have ferries from the port of Almeria to Northern Africa.

**Costa del Sol and Andalucia**

If you can't get a flight to this region of Spain you must be doing something wrong – or maybe just hoping to travel during peak season! The main airport is Malaga and nearly every single airline you can think of flies there from almost every single UK and US airport you can think of! If you can't get a flight and you're in the UK you might consider driving to the Costa del Sol! In which case your best bet would be to sail from Plymouth to Santander or from Portsmouth to Bilbao and then travel the 900 or so kilometres south. If you start off in Bilbao you'll need the A68 and A1 to Burgos, or from Santander take the N623 to Burgos; then from Burgos travel via the N1 to Madrid. From Madrid head to Granada, from Granada head for Malaga... phew! Alternatively get a Eurolines coach all the way from the UK to Estepona or Malaga or travel from Paris on the fast night train to Madrid and connect with the AVE fast train to Cordoba, which in turn connects up with regional Costa del Sol services.

**Costa de la Luz and Gibraltar**

You can either fly to Gibraltar or Jerez in the region or make use of the many cheap flights to Spain that land in Malaga. There are ferry services between Tarifa and Algeciras in Spain and Tangiers in Morocco. There are also bus and rail services across Europe and through Spain to the Costa de la Luz and strong road links with the E15 serving Gibraltar from the mainland. Whatever your final destination you should be able to find cheap flights to some of Spain's main airports and then use local and regional travel services to access your destination of choice; as I hope I've shown, the whole of Spain is incredibly easily accessible.

*Rhiannon Williamson is the publisher of www.shelteroffshore.com, an online resource for investment property abroad, offshore investing and living overseas articles, guides and resources.*
Use DeskDemon’s Powerful Advanced Search to Make Booking Your Next Meeting More Effective by Searching Over 650 Venues

www.venuedesk.com
Effective Cross-Cultural International Business Meetings

By Neil Payne

Meetings across cultures can be invaluable to a business, but there are a number of possible issues to be aware of.

The corporate meeting room is one of the many areas in international business where cultural differences manifest themselves. International meetings are an area where differences in cultural values, etiquette, interpretations of professional conduct and corporate rules are at their most visible and challenging to control.

In international business meetings, cultural differences between professionals can and do clash. Although it cannot always be avoided, the negative effects of cultural differences can be minimised with careful and effective planning, organisation and consideration prior to meetings.

Culture influences what we do, say, think and believe. Culture is different in different countries and contexts. In the context of international business it affects how people approach, perceive and contribute towards meetings. A few examples include:

- **Time**: Not all cultures live by the clock. Time orientated cultures such as the British or Germans will have strict approaches to how meetings run. The start time, finishing time and all the different stages in between will be planned carefully. Other cultures will see the start time as an approximation, the finish time as non-fixed and all the different stages in between as flexible.

- **Hierarchy**: The hierarchical nature of a culture can have a massive impact on the input given by participants in an international meeting. For those from hierarchical cultures speaking one’s mind, critiquing ideas, disagreeing openly, giving feedback and reporting problems in front of the boss or manager are all areas they would feel uncomfortable with. To offer a criticism of the manager’s idea would be seen as a loss of face for both the manager and the criticiser.

- **The purpose of meetings**: After a few pleasantries in the meeting room, the common term in the West is, “let’s get down to business”. Western meetings generally run to a tight schedule with an organised, pre-planned agenda. Meetings are for business. On the other hand, different cultures see the meeting as the arena for building personal relationships and strengthening bonds. Getting down to business comes further down the priority list.

When chairing an international business meeting it is always advisable to bear in mind the attendees’ cultures and backgrounds. Is it a very varied group or do the majority of participants have cultural similarities? Think about their approaches to meetings. How have they acted in meetings before? Can you identify the cultural reason why?

Following are some guidelines that may assist you when approaching cultural diversity in your next international business meeting.
Meeting Etiquette and Mannerisms

In highly diverse international companies, one can find participants from the four corners of the globe in a meeting. Each will have their own sense of cultural etiquette, gestures, mannerisms and ways of expression. Shouting, throwing hands up and even storming out of meetings are all possibilities. In such a company it may be advisable to provide inter-cultural awareness training to staff to minimise misunderstandings. Where differences are not as acute it may be up to you as the chair to understand how certain etiquette, gestures and general meeting room tactics may be perceived and how you can minimise any adverse impact.

Expectations of Meetings

Prior to the meeting, make it clear what the purpose of the meeting will be. What is the goal of the meeting? Why are you asking each attendant? What do expect from them? Contact the participants and discuss the meeting and what you require of each person. If ready, send them the agenda. If it is a brainstorming meeting then maybe ask each participant to bring at least three suggestions with him or her. If it is a meeting bringing together different areas within a company, let each attendant know what people would like to hear about from them. Once a framework is in place people will know where they fit into the picture.

Take a Relaxed Approach to Meetings

Many people find business meetings daunting. This may be because of a combination of stage fright, sitting in front of the boss and feeling inferior to colleagues. This will lead to anxiety, tension, nervousness and general discomfort. Try introducing subtle differences to a meeting to put people at ease. Icebreakers offer a good tension release at the beginning of a meeting. Warm ups offer a similar benefit. Try using an alternative setting instead of the meeting room. Consider changes in the lighting or ambience.

Group Sizes in Meetings

In short, small groups will work more effectively in meetings. Smaller groups offer increased security and allow for greater participation. In international business meetings, using smaller groups can be used in two ways.

First, prior to a large international business meeting, identify who will be coming and what they can contribute. Will the meeting cover different topics? Will it require input from different business areas? If you are organised enough you can initiate some smaller meetings with group participants who are comfortable with one another or who share expertise in the same area. Ask the groups to take their conclusions to the next, larger, meeting. Participants there will now feel comfortable with their contributions and ideas.
Second, if the company culture allows, break your meeting up into smaller groups where feedback and open discussion may flow more easily. Then ask a delegated head of each group to summarise their findings. This may allow those who would not normally speak out in front of larger groups to get their views across.

Cross-Cultural Meetings
A major mistake made when dealing with diverse cultures in one meeting room is to suggest that those of similar backgrounds work, group or be seated together. Rather than allow for greater fluency in the meeting this will have the opposite affect. Once cosy in their cultural groups, participants will slip into their cultural patterns. It is vital you mix up your meeting. The additional benefit to this approach is that it allows for cross-cultural interpersonal relationships to develop, strengthening staff bonds.

Alternative Communication Methods in Meetings
Most international meetings take on a basic format and structure whereby an agenda is set and attendants contribute to the topic of discussion orally. If you have participants who potentially will be very quiet and non-participatory then consider some alternative methods of communication.

For example, prior to the meeting, e-mail members of staff some questions regarding the forthcoming topics. Give them open-ended questions as to their opinions. Ask them to e-mail back their replies, which can then be used to instigate their contribution in the meeting.

If you know some participants are uncomfortable speaking, then why not let them write? Perhaps use a white board or offer to take suggestions and opinions on paper.

Always Confirm Meanings in Meetings
Different cultural assumptions as to the meaning of a word, phrase, symbol, picture or agreement can cause confusion before and after a meeting. When approaching a topic or after consensus has been agreed upon a subject always confirm that the general meaning has been agreed upon and understood. Where potential problems may exist as to interpretation always simplify meanings. If the meeting will deal with complex language or concepts consider forming a consensus on the meaning all participants will be comfortable with, then circulating them in advance of the meeting for review.

At the end of a meeting, summarise and capture the main agreements and disagreements. Ensure everyone is happy with them.

International business meetings require great planning, organisation and consideration if they are to succeed in offering effective outcomes. Always consider the cultural variants you will be dealing with and think of ways to overcome potential problems. The above-mentioned tips are merely basic pointers that will hopefully help you start to think about how culture impacts international meetings.

Neil Payne is the director of London based cross-cultural communications firm Kwintessential. You can contact him at npayne@kwintessential.co.uk and find out more at www.kwintessential.co.uk.
Vegetarian Menu Extravaganza

This menu is a fruit and vegetable extravaganza, proving that you don’t need meat for an exceptional meal. The tasty starter should be served with toasted french bread and the main course, the gratin, should be served piping hot. All in all it’s perfect winter fare, but however good these first two courses are, it’ll be impossible to keep your mind off the delicious fruit cheesecake for dessert. Enjoy!

French Onion Soup
Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 4 large onions
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 25g/2 tbsp butter
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 4 – 6 slices french bread
- 50g cheddar cheese, grated
- Salt and black pepper

1. Peel and chop the onions into 1cm pieces. Heat the oil and butter in a deep saucepan. Fry the onions briskly for several minutes stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat and cook gently for about an hour stirring more frequently to avoid them burning.

2. When the colour of the onions changes to a rich mahogany brown colour, pour in the vegetable stock along with the salt and black pepper. Simmer for 30 minutes by covering the saucepan partially.

3. Preheat the grill and toast the french bread for several minutes. Break the toasted french bread slices into smaller pieces. Spoon the soup into serving dishes and place several pieces of the french bread in the dish. Sprinkle the cheese on top and serve immediately.

Cauliflower and Broccoli Gratin
Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 1 small head cauliflower
- 1 small head broccoli
- 75g cheddar cheese, grated
- 150g cup yogurt
- 1 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 tsp breadcrumbs
- Salt & black pepper

1. Cut off the stalks discard. Break the cauliflower and broccoli into florets and cook in slated boiling water for 10-15 minutes, or until tender. Drain well and move to a Pirex ovenproof oval dish.

2. Mix the cheese, yogurt and mustard together and season with the salt and pepper and spoon over the vegetables in the dish.

3. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the vegetables and grill in a preheated grill until golden brown. Serve whilst piping hot.
Fruit Cheesecake
Serves 8

Ingredients:
- 50g digestive biscuits, crushed
- 1 kg/4 cups cream cheese
- 250g white sugar
- 45ml/3 tbsp lemon juice
- 5ml/1 tsp vanilla essence
- 4 medium eggs

1. Preheat the oven to 160ºC/Gas 3. Grease a 20cm spring form tin and place on a 30cm circle of foil. Press it up the sides to seal tightly. Add the crushed biscuits into the base of the tin and press firmly.

2. Beat the cream cheese until smooth and is at room temperature. Add in the sugar, lemon juice and vanilla essence, and beat until blended. Beat in the eggs one at a time.

3. Pour into the tin. Set the tin in a larger baking tray and place in the oven. Pour enough hot water in the outer tray to come to about 2cm up the side of the tin. Bake until the top is golden brown for approximately 1½ hours. Cool within the tin.

4. Run a knife around the edge of the tin to loosen and then remove the rim of the tin. Chill for six hours before serving.

Optional: Decorate with fresh strawberries and raspberries and sprinkle with icing sugar.

Kitchen Tips!

- Wash your hands well and dry them before and after handling food.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running tap water and scrub them well. The heat will kill everything when you cook it.
- Do not use the same kitchen utensils and chopping board when preparing raw meat and vegetables. Either wash them when alternating or change them!
- Clean your kitchen counters and chopping board thoroughly with an anti-bacterial cleaner.
- If you have any food leftovers, cool them down completely, cover them well and then tuck them away in the refrigerator.
- Do not leave products out at room temperature for long periods of time as bacteria can flourish.
- Do not leave your refrigerator door open for a long time, as the food might go off if the temperature drops down to match the kitchen temperature.
- Empty your refrigerator and clean all the shelves, compartments and walls frequently.
It seems that the western world is facing a shortage – of sleep. The most precious of commodities, taken completely for granted when you have it in abundance and making life a misery when in short supply, sleep is being put forward by more and more people as the thing in their lives that is causing them concerns about their health.

Recent research suggests that we’re not getting enough sleep. Time to remember just how good it can be!
Findings from the recent Legal & General Health Uncovered Index put forward that 42% of people find lack of sleep to be a health concern. The survey asked a representative sample of more than 5,000 British people a number of questions about what issues affecting their health and wellbeing they had worried about over the last three months. Lack of exercise was at the top, with 48% of people being concerned about its affect on their health, followed by lack of sleep (42%), general fatigue (34%), availability of NHS dentists (29%), and stress of daily routine (27%).

Contrary to expectations it is lifestyle issues rather than diet, drinking and smoking (including passive smoking) that the public is most worried about. It seems that our work culture – such as the fact that the UK works the longest hours in Europe – is having a number of negative effects on the mental and physical wellbeing of the populace. But whilst we work long hours, UK workers are less productive than our major competitors. Clearly there is a problem somewhere. Solving this productivity issue could go some way to sorting out the problems of sleep deprivation affecting a large chunk of the UK workforce.

Training, Equipment and Management
The productivity problem isn’t due to UK workers slacking off – far from it. The long working week is far from being an ideal slacker’s choice. In fact, our lower productivity then Germany and France can be accounted for simply by the UK’s lower skill levels and poorer equipment. So, if companies invested more in training and equipment then workers could perhaps go home a bit earlier. But, even taking the issues of training and equipment into consideration, the UK lags behind in productivity to the US. Why might this be?

Dr Nick Bloom, a fellow at the Advanced Institute for Management Research (AIM) and the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) says, “Better management seems to be the key. American-run companies, even those based in the UK, are much more productive. Their managers use IT more productively, and they tend to be more flexible with things like allowing people to work from home, or giving them time off if their child is sick.”

So, our working culture has got a lot to answer for. Better training, equipment and management would all complement each other in reducing the working week, improving that “work/life balance” (in fact might even make work feel more like life!) and meaning that the UK kept up with its competitors. An employee with the right training, equipment and management would be better able to deal with their workload, problem solve independently and work flexibly.

The Importance of Sleep
But why is sleep important, and what actually is it? Sleep can be defined as a regular state of natural rest in which voluntary body movement decreases. All mammals, birds and fish sleep. Contrary to popular belief, it isn’t a state of unconsciousness. In fact, it’s an altered state of consciousness in which the brain winds down to restore itself and the body whilst you become physically less aware of your surroundings.

We know that sleep has a restorative effect because both the behaviour of humans and animals changes when deprived of sleep. This is something that everyone can probably relate to – especially nowadays!

During sleep, animals and humans also heal and, when young, grow. During deep sleep growth hormone levels increase and the immune system undergoes changes. It is also very important for memory. It seems that REM (rapid eye movement) sleep serves a function in aiding the long-term memory of skills – i.e. helping us survive. For babies, sleep is important for them to process the information just gained about their environment.

Some experts have put forward that sleep should really be seen as an evolutionary measure whereby organisms are kept out of harm’s way during the hours that would be most dangerous for them. For humans this is night time.

Sleep, Boring? Never!
So, whatever the exact benefits of sleep, it seems that being tucked up in bed at a reasonable time and able to get a good long deep sleep in which work worries have no place is an all round good idea. It’s such a basic activity it’s often easy to forget how good it is, and how good you feel awaking from a proper, refreshing, regenerating sleep!
Do you ever have a problem and need answers fast? Do you wish you could get objective advice from a peer? Ask on The Hub!

Join in the topics from your peers around the world. DeskDemon’s ‘The Hub’ is a forum board that allows you to network with your peers. Share your thoughts, experiences and advice with your peers worldwide. Post a question or a thought or simply join in and comment to help others.

Take a minute to visit ‘The Hub’ at DeskDemon

Understand and Overcome Procrastination

By Uta Raggendorf

Procrastination is a label we give ourselves when we feel we don’t meet our own expectations. Procrastination in itself is not a bad thing; it’s how it makes us feel that’s the problem. If you climbed up a mountain and halfway a snowstorm started, would you keep climbing? Hopefully not! Hopefully you’d seek shelter or return, whichever was safer. Does that mean you’d procrastinated? No, it means in that moment you chose the most appropriate action.

If on Monday you decide you want to build a house and on Tuesday you decide you actually don’t have the knowledge, is that procrastinating? No, it’s a sensible decision to then either look for another option to build the house (e.g. employ a builder) or to choose another path completely (e.g. buy a house that’s already built). The important message is, first look at what you mean by “you procrastinate” and take away the label of “bad”, “failure”, “not achieving things” and “never getting anywhere”.

Changing Your Mind

Changing your mind and not taking action is not a bad thing. If your head tells you one thing and the heart tells you another, you’re in conflict. It doesn’t mean your head is always right and your heart is always wrong or vice versa. It means that you have different choices in life. And you have to decide in each moment which one is the right one. And sometimes waiting is one option. Not doing anything is an option. Perhaps the goal you’ve set yourself is not right and the lack of drive is actually a sign from your inner guidance system that you need to change your goal.

So first of all, stop all judgment of yourself that is associated with the label “procrastination”. You are simply choosing not to take the action that you decided up on at a point in the past. Then find out if your goal is really what you desire and what it is that blocks you.

Questioning Your Desires

Take a few breaths and connect with your heart centre. Just say to yourself, “I am now connected with my heart.” That’s all it takes; energy always follows thought. Ask yourself, “Is _______ really what I want?” This is where _______ is the goal or action you feel you’re procrastinating with. Go with the first answer that comes into your head. This is always your inner voice and your ego’s voice can very quickly overshadow it.

If you feel that your goal or action is not the right thing to do, then look for something that resonates with your inner voice. It’ll be something that will make you feel excited. And perhaps your inner voice tells you that you shouldn’t do anything in that direction. Perhaps you want to take a driving test to get your driving licence but you just haven’t got round to it. And perhaps your inner voice tells you that you should just forget about it. Follow your inner voice because it is the voice of your higher self that knows all about you and your life. And perhaps it’s a safety message not to take a test. Perhaps you would be more inclined to have accidents and your higher self is trying to protect you.

If the answer you received was that your goal or action is definitely something you want to do, you need to find out what blocks you. Again, go deep within and ask yourself, “What is it that stops me
from taken action to _______,” whereby the blank space is your goal. Notice the first thing that comes to mind. It could be several things that block you and I would advise to repeat the question until you feel that you get no response, or the answer you receive doesn't feel true. You’ll notice this in the difference of its energy compared to the first answer. Look up the explanation below:

**Time**

If you feel you don’t have the time to take the action ask yourself where your priorities lie. Is there something in your life that's currently taking up time that you could shorten or do without? Perhaps you’re going to the gym four times a week and you could skip one visit to focus on your goal instead. If there genuinely is no time in your life then you either need to put your goal on hold for the time being until you are less busy, or you need to be more radical and make the time. Perhaps you can take smaller steps to reach your goal, be less ambitious but still get there. For example, if your goal is to set up a website, instead of having 20 pages in one week, spend 20 minutes twice a week to build page after page. It might take you six months but you’ll feel a sense of achievement and you’ll probably get there faster than waiting for the magical three free days to set it all up.

**Fear of What Others Might Think**

I have this fear myself, about many things. The most prominent is my business as a life coach. There are times when I’m terrified what people might think about me, who don’t know that I’m deeply spiritual, and not only that but my life's purpose is to help others by bringing through communication from God. Surely there must be lots of people out there who’d think I’ve lost my marbles!

**Finance**

Money – or rather lack of it – can be a major hurdle to the achievement of your goals. And this is difficult to advise on in general terms but here are some tips. Make sure that your assessment of your financial needs is correct. Do your research – how much money do you need and how much do you have at your disposal to meet your goal? Don't base it on your gut feeling but do the sums. Maybe you can change the goal and break it down into smaller chunks to allow you to take your first steps and save or raise more money at a later stage.

Be careful though that you don’t financially ruin yourself. Get advice from financial experts. Perhaps you can apply for grants to help you? Look on the internet, which has a wealth of resources on financial grants and support. Can you be more innovative in raising cash? Do you have things you can sell on eBay or in a car boot sale? Do you have skills or services that you could sell to family and friends? Could you work extra for some time to raise money?

If you feel blocked by fear of what others might think about your goal, remind yourself that you’re not here to meet others' expectations. You are here to live and express your truth, and your goals are part of that. You might be pleasantly surprised by people's reactions to your goal. Or you might get comments that could easily throw you off track. Remember that others’ reactions just reflect what they think and feel. It’s an expression of their own fears and beliefs – which are not yours. You are unique in your own way and you have every right to live the life you choose, with the goals you have. Remind yourself that you are a unique being with limitless possibilities and power. And what other people think about you does not reflect on who you truly are.
Fear of the Unknown
Another way to describe this category is the “what ifs”. There’s a healthy portion of fear you should take note of because it might save you from doing something really stupid. However, we also have the voice in our head that paints the biggest catastrophes when it comes to living our dreams, reaching for the stars and aiming for our goals. It comes up with the weirdest complications that are actually highly unlikely to happen. Know that this is just a voice in your head, one of many. It’s just your own expression of all the beliefs, views and opinions you have collected over time through experience or others’ experience. You can turn down the voice in your head. Just say to yourself, “I acknowledge the voice in my head but I choose not to listen to it.” If you have trouble quietening the voice, ask yourself about the most scariest scenarios in your head: “Is this true? Is this really what would happen? Is there any evidence that it would happen?” Chances are that the answer will be no.

Remind yourself to live in the moment.

Right now, you’re not quitting your job, buying the business, or do whatever it is that you want to achieve. Right now, you’re taking only the next little step to get you closer. And in this moment, are you ok? If you are, then you can take the next small step and so on until you reach your goal – safe and sound.

Lack of Knowledge / Understanding
If you decide your goal requires you to do something you have no knowledge of you have three choices: give up, get the knowledge yourself or get someone else who has the knowledge. You have already established that you really want to achieve this goal so you have to decide if you can get the knowledge from someone else or if you have to acquire it yourself. It might take time, effort and money to get to the end result but think of it in small chunks. Just take each day as it comes; be in the moment. What is it that you can do now to move closer to your goal? Perhaps it’s researching courses on the internet or ordering brochures. Your next step might be to enrol in classes, or buy and read books. Just give yourself time to learn what it is you need to know. Rome wasn’t built in a day!

Uta Roggendorf is a certified IHSC higher self life transformation coach and teacher. In her work she tries to teach people how to be their authentic self and to find inner peace. More information can be found at www.authenticawareness.co.uk.
SUDOKU

Try your hand at this SuDoku puzzle. The name of the game is simply to insert numbers into the blank squares so that each row, column and 3-by-3 box contains the digits 1–9 just once. It’s quite difficult, but strangely addictive!

DID YOU KNOW?

THE TWO MOST COMMON LAST NAMES IN JAPAN ARE SATO AND SUZUKI
1. Have You Said “Thank You” Today?
How much time do you spend complaining? When you look closely there’s probably much to be thankful for in your life. Find out how to put your worries in perspective and make life take a positive turn.
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/career/saying-thankyou

2. Healthy Ways to Give Your Energy Levels a Boost
Are you resorting to chocolate and coffee to get you through the day? If so, then why not try these tips for a healthier and lower calorie boost to your energy?
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/lifestyle/energy-boost

3. Scan Your Way to a Paperless Office
Does your office always seem to be being buried under piles of papers? Learn how to run a successful document conversion program to help save money on records storage.
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/services/digital-archiving

4. Innovation: Top 10 Tips
What makes the difference between success and failure? Some projects might seem to have what it takes, but still fail. A study of 65 leading companies puts forward 10 key tips for innovation success.
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/career/innovation

5. Data Recovery First Aid: 3 Useful Tips
If you have ever had your hard drive fail, you know how devastating data loss can be. Here are some handy tips to help you stay confident in the face of data loss, no matter how it occurs.
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/worksmart/data-recovery

6. 10 Easy Steps to Improve Your Self-Esteem
Your self-esteem affects your life in all sorts of ways, in both your business and personal life. Here are 10 practical tips of things you can do to feel happier with yourself.
http://www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/career/improve-self-esteem
You can trust Holiday Inn to make your meeting a success. It’s not just the quality of our facilities, or the extensive range of locations we offer. You’ll also benefit from the personal touches we bring, focusing on your individual requirements. So give us your next meeting’s brief, and rest assured you’re in safe hands.

Dedicated service
You’ll benefit from a single point of contact in the run-up to your meeting and your own dedicated meeting host on the day. Plus, we look after the small details, like a delicious lunch served just when it’s convenient to break.

All the room you need
Select the meeting facilities that meet your individual needs. From board to conference rooms, layouts are tailored to your requirements and all the right equipment will be ready and waiting.

A wide choice of locations
With over 2,000 meeting rooms in over 300 locations across Europe, it’s easy to find a location that suits everyone.

Plan your meeting now
For further information about our meetings solutions, simply call us on 0845 604 6045