PwC REAPS BIG REWARDS BY INVESTING IN THEIR SECRETARIES

Carmel Brown, Head of PwC Secretary explains how their successful programme works

Plus

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Dave’s Marketing Tips
A committee of one is better.

Microsoft Office Excel 2007: Password Protecting Documents
Find out how to keep your data safe.

How to Organise a Successful Business Event
Organising events isn’t easy, but it’s very rewarding.

Get Fitter by Christmas in Five Easy Steps
Turn your back on unhealthiness this winter.

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Taking being green back to the source.

Eating in Season: Autumn’s Harvest
Keep it seasonal this November, with a tasty curried parsnip soup and a delicious walnut and pear lattice pie.

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PwC Reaps Big Rewards By Investing In Their Secretaries
Carmel Brown, Head of PwC Secretary explains how their successful programme works
Welcome to this November issue of PA Enterprise. Networking is undoubtedly the buzzword of the moment. If any concept could represent the zeitgeist, it would be this. Social networking sites, led firmly by Facebook, now have millions of regular users. Networking is rapidly losing the image of senior management backslapping and backstabbing on the golf course. If anything, such sites as Facebook show how natural and normal it is for humans to network: networking is simply communicating and making links with each other. Our article Networking for Personal and Executive Assistants shows you how to discover the joys and value of networking, both in and out of your organisation.

Our cover article features Carmel Brown, the Director of Secretarial Services at PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC). Carmel offers some invaluable advice about networking, as well as explaining what she and her department is doing to develop the careers and effectiveness of the organisation’s administrative workers. In his regular column, this week entitled A Committee of One Is Better, DeskDemon’s chief marketing officer Dave West outlines how to go from “too many cooks spoil the broth” to “small is beautiful” when making business decisions. Then we bring you How to Organise a Successful Business Event: Though organising events isn’t the simplest job, it’s pretty rewarding!

In this issue you’ll also find a Worksmart article, Microsoft Office Excel 2007: Password Protecting Documents, on how to get peace of mind that your documents are secure, plus UK Office Supplies: What Does it Mean to Be Green? on the importance of considering all parts of the supply chain when making green decisions.

You’d have to have a pretty thick skin to fail to notice that it’s very cold out there now, and so we get seasonal in this issue too. Get Fitter by Christmas in Five Easy Steps, on how to say no to unhealthiness this winter, Fashion Trends for Women, Autumn–Winter 2007, and Eating in Season: Autumn’s Harvest all give you the information you need to prepare for and make the most of the winter months!

We very much hope that you enjoy this second issue of volume two. We always try to provide you, the working professional, with the tools and information you need to succeed and excel in your careers and life. So, please let us know if there is anything you’d like to see in future issues of the magazine. And, don’t forget, our Management Support Fellowship Award is still in full swing. If you have moment, take a look at the nominations and cast your vote – and if you think that you know of anyone who needs to be nominated than go for it! This award is of such value: outstanding administrative professionals are so often the unsung heroes of organisations up and down the land.

Have a great month.

Susan Silva
Managing Editor
susans@deskdemon.com
Did you know that we print out around 45 sheets of paper on average every single day?...and that we then spend some 400 hours a year looking for those papers?

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Networking for Personal and Executive Assistants

By Susie Stubley

Discover the joys and value of networking

Networking is something that is often associated with high level business people who have deals to make and contacts to schmooze in mysterious private clubs and at exclusive corporate boxes in the most sort-after sports and entertainment venues. But, in truth, everybody networks informally to some extent whether they realise it or not – and personal and executive assistants are without a doubt one group that gains an enormous amount from this most congenial of activities.

So what exactly is the point of formal networking with your contemporaries? Is it a waste of time, serving only to intrude into the increasingly pressurised demands of work and home? Or is it a vital part of your own business life?

I’m a firm believer that networking is an absolutely vital resource for all PAs and EAs. From my own experience, so many opportunities have come my way through someone saying, “I know someone I could introduce you to who can help you” or “I met somebody who specialises in the thing you were looking for last week; let me give you their number”. I got one of my previous jobs when working as a PA through networking with other PAs and meeting someone who was leaving to go travelling and looking for a replacement.

Networking enables you to meet other personal and executive assistants in an informal way and it often has the added bonus of being fun, with a glass of wine and nibbles thrown in!

There really are so many professional and personal benefits to networking; as a PA or EA I’m sure that you have experienced some level of isolation in your role – you are a keeper of secrets and often working at senior management or CEO level where very few people really understand the pressures of your role. Due to confidentiality, it can often be difficult to “off load” onto someone who really understands the unique nature of what you do.

A Meeting of Minds

Meeting with other PAs in a social environment can give you a sense of “professional identity” – that you are not just a random person in the organisation with no professional group. By networking with other PAs you will connect with people out there in the same position as you.

It will also give you an insight into the differences in how PAs and EAs work. Learning about how other people operate stimulates how you think about your own role and often gives you fresh ideas to take back to your own job.

Established PA and EA networking groups often hold their own training and development sessions for members. I recently had the great pleasure of presenting at the UK European Management Assistants annual training day. It offered many different types of PAs the opportunity to make new friends, swap contact details and develop professional skills. I don’t think one PA left the weekend empty handed!
Susie Stubley is the Managing Director of Castalia Coaching Ltd, a specialised company based in London that is dedicated to the professional development needs of senior corporate PAs and executive assistants across Europe and beyond. The company website can be found at www.castalia-coaching.com.

Getting the Low-down

It’s also a great way to share information on high quality and reliable suppliers and venues, or any other resource that you may need. If you suddenly find that your boss has asked you to book a bodyguard for an overseas visitor and you’ve never done it before, whom on earth do you ask for a recommendation? Chances are if you have a strong network of fellow PAs someone will be able to help, saving you a great deal of work.

But the very idea of networking strikes fear into the hearts of many a competent and confident PA who then misses out on making new contacts and friends a. So how do you become a master networker?

- Find a networking group that suits your personal needs – consider the location, cost, regularity of meetings and a membership that is on the same level of you.
- Be brave! Joining can be a daunting prospect, but if you don’t take that initial plunge you won’t gain the benefits.
- Take business cards. If you don’t have business ones, get some cheap and cheerful personal ones to hand out to other PAs you meet.

When you first arrive at a networking event look around for people who are also on their own and introduce yourself and relax! If no one else is on their own then join the edge of a group and wait until there is a gap in conversation and introduce yourself.
- Be interested in other people. Ask questions and show you are interested, while being open about yourself.
- Read the newspapers for a couple of days before the event so that you have current affairs that you can chat about. Don’t over do the alcohol to steady your nerves!
- Don’t give up! Sometimes the first meeting will feel tough but don’t give up after one event; the next time you go back you will be able to confidently walk in and already know people!

Going along to training events, conferences and exhibitions is another great way to network with fellow PAs. The two most influential networking associations for PAs in the UK are the European Management Assistants (www.euma.org) and the IQPS (www.iqps.org).

For the UK’s leading conference for PAs visit www.iir-events.com/IIR-conf/ExecPASecretary. Also, try to attend exhibitions that are in the key areas you work within such as managing travel (www.businesstravelshow.co.uk) and managing events (www.international-confex.com). Many of these exhibitions now have seminars specifically designed to help PAs, EAs and secretaries.

Look Within

I would also stress that networking with other PAs is not purely about joining external organisations; the chances are there are several, if not many, PAs within your own organisation. Arranging a lunch or a drinks reception for the PAs at your organisation is a great way to share information and get to know your colleagues better. Plus if you cannot get out to meet your peers, you can always network online utilising forum boards such as DeskDemon’s ‘The Hub’ (www.deskdemon.com/community/forums/forums.php). Here, you’ll always find help at hand on a diverse range of topics from where to find products and services across the globe, suggestions for handling projects to dealing with difficult situations.

So be brave, get yourself out there and start networking – the benefits will be worth it!

Susie Stubley is the Managing Director of Castalia Coaching Ltd, a specialised company based in London that is dedicated to the professional development needs of senior corporate PAs and executive assistants across Europe and beyond. The company website can be found at www.castalia-coaching.com.
DAVE’S MARKETING TIPS

A COMMITTEE OF ONE IS BETTER

In many organisations these days, senior leaders ask their PAs and secretaries to schedule planning, review and approval meetings with a wide range of colleagues who know or care little about the topic at hand. This decision-making trend seems counterproductive.

The assistant is given a monumental task of soliciting the participation of the uninterested and uninformed. Although this may be touted as democracy at work, more often than not the approach is ineffective.

It has been my experience that having too many people involved drives up costs and inhibits instead of generating creative thinking. Twenty great minds can yield few ideas and lots of cronyism and/or cynicism. The smart PA should politely suggest to her boss that “too many cooks spoil the broth”.

Group efforts can be productive, but - from the Mona Lisa and penicillin to Federal Express and the personal computer - great achievements usually come through the focused effort of one or a few individuals dedicated to the goal.

If you have the boss’s ear, try the “small is beautiful” approach first before wasting their time and yours. It’s often the writer and artist on Skype, the detective and forensic psychologist over coffee, or the lone sanguine person on the team, freed up for the day with pad, pencil and deadline, who makes that brilliant decision and comes up with that astounding idea.

You could save your organisation money, time and headaches by simply saying, “Rosa is really good at this and ready to go; let’s give her the opportunity to make it happen and call this meeting off; you’ve got more important things to do.”

More often than not this will bring agreement and results.

Dave West
Associate Publisher & CMO
DeskDemon.com
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NB: Client names have been removed for confidentiality reasons

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‘A BIG thank you...to you Agnes and the Holiday Inn for helping us to arrange our very successful AGM. The Orchard room was ideal and the food was wonderful.’ - Holiday Inn London-Sutton

To request a free copy of the EMEA Meeting Planner today, please visit www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/venues/holidayinn/october

For more information visit www.holidayinn.co.uk/meetings
Carmel Brown is Director of Secretarial Services at PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), the UK firm of the global professional services organisation.

Since 2005 Carmel has led the development and implementation of PwC Secretary, a career development and support programme for the firm’s 900+ secretaries and personal assistants across the UK. “It has been a very interesting and challenging, if sometimes daunting task!” says Carmel.

The programme was launched two years ago as part of PwC’s UK wide people strategy, providing a new vision and ‘career deal’ for secretarial roles at the firm. The programme covers everything from how PwC recruit secretarial staff, develop, retain and reward them, to day-to-day information, support and networking.

Having been appointed to the role, Carmel’s first step was to get together and engage with PwC’s secretaries. Through a series of events which took place in PwC’s offices around the country, Carmel had the opportunity to meet and hear about the issues affecting secretaries, their aspirations, what they thought was right about their organisation and what could be improved.

She listened carefully to their feedback and with the support of the PwC secretarial management team, rolled out the PwC Secretary programme to co-ordinate and improve the support and communication that secretaries receive.

Every secretary is now automatically enrolled in the PwC Secretary programme, and they receive a monthly newsletter which provides news, hints and advice on dealing with day-to-day tasks, useful information sources and articles about PwC secretaries.

The firm is also currently developing a dedicated intranet site for secretarial staff, providing a knowledge store of help and assistance on all aspects of their work, and hints and tips on how to do things more efficiently, as well as links to other internal career and development opportunities within PwC.

A strong development programme has also been implemented, including a series of ‘Knowledge Boost’ lunch time learning sessions. Providing bite sized learning on a huge range of topics, they are designed to provide PwC’s secretarial staff with the opportunity to further develop the skills they need in order to be effective in their role. The programme is delivered across PwC’s UK office locations, so that there is the least disruption to the business.

PwC places a very high importance on client relationships, and the firm’s secretaries’ roles is no exception. Secretaries from PwC have taken the initiative on this, and are starting client secretarial networking forums around the UK. The PwC Secretary programme supports these with development sessions around networking and impact skills.

Celebrating the role of PwC’s secretarial community is also high on the PwC Secretary programme’s agenda. Every year, Carmel and her team co-ordinate the firm’s celebration of Secretaries Day, where PwC managers and leaders acknowledge the contribution of
their secretaries and PAs to the success of the firm.

“It is an energetic and engaged programme that we run for our secretaries” say Carmel, and, as one would expect, not without its challenges. “Creating this programme for secretaries was a change for PwC” she says.

“As with any change there was initially a bit of fear and resistance - from both the secretaries and the business. By showing how the PwC Secretary programme would make a big difference to the careers of PwC secretaries, their managers, and our clients, we are overcoming any concerns that were expressed.”

“We’ve made real improvements and progress, and created a community of secretaries who are happier, more passionate and motivated about their jobs, which makes for a far better experience for their clients. PwC sees the value of this and thinks the investment in developing the secretarial workforce is well the worth effort.”

PwC Secretary provides the secretarial community with opportunities to truly develop their skills and network with people they may not have otherwise had the chance to meet. As part of a new development in the programme, secretaries are now being trained to develop and mentor each other. Indeed, one of the secretaries who volunteered to be part of the programme has been trained to tutor others in how to be more accurate in the work they do. This new development is another example of how the programme has enabled PwC secretaries to drive their professional development and contribution to the business.

PwC Secretaries can also step out of the corporate box and have some fun! A recent event in June saw a group of secretaries crewing a sailing boat in the PwC Annual Regatta. Led by an experienced captain, the un-trained crew had a really exciting weekend sailing around the UK in what felt like the worst stormy weather of the season. Even with the bad weather, they had a real sense of achievement and satisfaction. Sadly they didn’t win the regatta, but did win a prize.

Reflecting on the success of PwC Secretary, Carmel offers this advice to anyone who is considering creating a similar programme. “Being very clear on your goals is really important.”

She suggests tackling some of the smaller things rather than the bigger issues first, so as to make the benefits of the programme quickly visible. “If you succeed at some of the smaller things, you will be more likely to get support on the larger things. Some of the most visible successes include tackling issues like how to improve travel arrangements or book meetings more effectively. Small things can make a big difference.”

She continues, “Any programme needs a business sponsor, at partner or senior executive level. They need to be right behind you, helping to open doors and break down barriers.”

The final piece of advice from Carmel is, “You need to be passionate, you need to care and you need to want to change things. If you do all these and get a great response, you can make a difference.”

Carmel personally and passionately believes secretaries and PAs make a difference to all organisations, “Secretaries and PAs have not been valued as much as they should have been in the past, but organisations are now beginning to sit up and understand that this is a vital resource for most businesses and the glue that holds the organisation together. If you invest in this community the dividends are amazing.” Her advice to companies is to look out for their secretaries and PAs, invest in their development and you will see significant rewards.” It has certainly paid off for PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Editor’s note:
If your organisation has set up something similar to support the secretarial community, we’d love to hear about it. E-mail editoruk@desk demon.com

Catherine Church, member of the PwC Secretary team ‘Secs on Boats’ takes the help at the 20th Annual PwC International Regatta.

The PwC Secretary team in the 20th annual PwC International Regatta celebrate their team’s prize in the event for the Most Creative Team Name - ‘Secs on Boats’. Pictured are from back left: Jessica Doorbar, Sarah Baptisse, Christina Kerr, Claire Kingshott, Catherine Church. Front left to right are Vicky Aucliffe, Joy Winton, Jannette Richardson.

Catherine Church, member of the PwC Secretary team ‘Secs on Boats’ takes the help at the 20th Annual PwC International Regatta.
Top PAs and EAs know confidentiality is an important part of the job, and consists of more than just not gossiping at the water cooler. Confidentiality means protecting sensitive data you have been entrusted with from unauthorised viewing, even if you think the information is safe on your computer.

A password on your computer is not enough protection to keep your important documents safe. What happens if you are out of the office and the temp that has been called in gets curious or a disgruntled employee finds your drive on the network and starts snooping at your files? How do you keep the latest fiscal data safe, or the travel document where you keep your boss’s credit card numbers?

One way is to password protect your documents. Microsoft Office Excel 2007, a powerful tool you can use to create and format spreadsheets, makes password protecting documents easy. Here are some step-by-step procedures for ensuring your Microsoft Office Excel 2007 files stay safe and private, which is better for both you and your organisation.

**Keeping Your Documents Safe**

**Tip:** Remember to create strong passwords – come up with a word that isn’t in the dictionary, at least eight characters long, and also mix in some numbers along with your letters.

**Encrypt Your Document and Set a Password to Open It**

To encrypt your file and set a password to open it, do the following:

1. Click the Microsoft Office Button , point to Prepare, and then click Encrypt Document.
2. In the Encrypt Document dialog box, in the Password box, type a password, and then click OK.
3. In the Confirm Password dialog box, in the Reenter password box, type the password again, and then click OK.
4. To save the password, save the file.

**Set a Password to Modify a Document**

To allow only authorised reviewers to modify your content, do the following:

1. Click the Microsoft Office Button , and then click Save As.
2. Click Tools, and then click General Options.
3. Do one or both of the following:
   - If you want reviewers to enter a password before they can view the document, type a password in the Password to open box. By default, this feature uses advanced encryption, but unlike using the Encrypt Document command described above, it does not allow you to type up to 255 characters, only up to 15 characters.
   - If you want reviewers to enter a password before they can save changes to the document, type a password in the Password to modify box. This feature does not use any encryption method. It is designed so you can collaborate with content reviewers you trust. It is not designed to help make your file more secure.

You can type up to 255 characters. By default, this feature uses AES 128-bit advanced encryption. Encryption is a standard method used to help make your file more secure.
Tip: Note both passwords. You can assign both passwords one to access the file and one to provide specific reviewers with permission to modify its content. Make sure each password is different from the other.

4. If you don’t want content reviewers to accidentally modify the file, select the Read-only recommended check box. When the reviewers open the file, they are asked if they want to open the file as read-only.
5. Click OK.
6. When prompted, retype your passwords to confirm them, and then click OK.
7. In the Save As dialog box, click Save.
8. If prompted, click Yes to replace the existing document.

Change a Password
1. Do one or both of the following:
   • Open the file using your open password so that the file is opened as read/write.
   • Open the file using your modify password so that the file is opened as read/write.

2. Click the Microsoft Office Button, and then click Save As.
3. Click Tools, and then click General Options.

4. Select the password, and then press Delete.
5. Click OK.
6. Click Save.
7. If prompted, click Yes to replace the existing file.

By making use of these Microsoft Office Excel 2007 functions you can feel secure in the knowledge that yours and your organisation’s data is safe and sound.

This is just one of many new features that 2007 Microsoft Office system can offer you. To find more about how it can help streamline the way you and your colleagues do business visit: www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/microsoft/demos
Do you know a PA, Secretary or Administrator who has what it takes to win DeskDemon’s Management Support Fellowship Award 2007?

If you have a peer you think does an outstanding job or you are proud of YOUR accomplishments, submit a nomination to the Management Support Fellowship Award.

Grand Prize winner will receive £10,000! Their nominator receives £2,500!
Monthly winners receive £250! Their nominator receives £100!

You can submit a nomination at: http://www.desk demon.com/pages/uk/awards2007/nomination-form
Or by e-mail to editoruk@desk demon.com

Please include:
- Your name
- Your E-mail
- Your telephone number
- Nominee’s Name
- Nominee’s E-mail
- Nominee’s Phone
- A short paragraph on the accomplishments and why the nominee should be chosen

http://www.desk demon.com/pages/uk/awards2007/index

Congratulations to the following monthly winners - as voted by DeskDemon users. Each has picked up a cool £250 and now have the opportunity to win a Fantastic £10,000! Thanks also to their nominators who each take home £100

October 2007 Winner
Carolyn Truscott of IPC Media
Nominator: Wendy Sloane

September 2007 Winner
Mei Suen of The Diamond Trading Company
Nominator: Mike Page

August 2007 Winner
Emily Robe of Ashtead Plant Hire Company
Nominator: Stephen Shaughnessy

Have you voted for your favourite candidate to win November’s heat?

E-Mail: fellowship@desk demon.com
Tel: 0870 410 4030
I am currently planning a major regional event here in the UK. If you have to plan a prestigious event yourself, you might appreciate my guide on the aspects of arranging an event.

1. Define Your Event Aims
What is the concept? Before you can start to organise your event, write down a few lines about what the event is going to be about and what you hope to achieve. It’s helpful at this stage to have a meeting with everyone involved to discuss the event. Here is a list of points to cover:

- Decide on the subject for the event
- Discuss what you hope to achieve, for example
- Raise the profile of your business/organisation
- Network with some sales prospects in a relaxed environment
- When do you want to hold the event?
- Where do you want to hold it?
- Who do you want to come to the event, and how many?
- How and where will you promote the event to ensure that they come along?

- Do you want outside speakers? If so, who? What will they speak about?
- What budget do you have for the event?

Some Things to Consider
What else is going on at the same time as your event (both within your organisation and externally)? Will this have an impact on your event?

If you are, for example, running a training session, have you identified that there is a sufficient need for that particular topic?

If you are inviting outside speakers, always make sure that, where possible, you have a “reserve” choice in case your first choice isn’t available. If you have existing contacts that is fine but make sure you know they will be competent and “on message” – if in doubt contact an agency for advice (I recommend http://www.speakers-uk.com for no other reason that they will always spend time with you to make sure that you have a list of the right people at the right price). Watch out for expenses and clauses, as they can be hidden costs that will mess up your budget.

2. Planning and logistics
Nominate a lead person to keep track of all the tasks for the event:

1. What has been done
2. What still needs to be done
3. Who needs to do it
4. When it needs to be done by
5. Budget and actual expense

Create a spreadsheet detailing all the tasks for the event. This ensures that all tasks for the event are recorded in one place, so that nothing is missed or forgotten.

Hold regular progress meetings for everyone involved in the event to ensure that everyone is aware of what stage the event is at, as well as any problems that have arisen. Any further tasks arising as a result of these meetings should be assigned and logged in the planning spreadsheet. Depending on the number of people involved, you may also find it useful to take minutes of the meeting.

Here are some of the main areas you will need to consider, although it will vary depending on the nature of your event.
Timescale

- Allow plenty of time to plan and organise the event, particularly if you are inviting outside speakers as their diaries fill up quickly. A month is probably the bare minimum – more if it’s a large event with many speakers.
- Check deadlines!
- Make sure that everything is arranged in plenty of time before the event, so that you’re not left with a last-minute panic the day before.
- If you find yourself with only a few people signed up with only 2–3 weeks to go before your event, don’t panic. This is fairly normal – we find that most people don’t sign up to our events until a week or two beforehand.

Venue and Catering

- Decide on a venue for your event, bearing in mind the following factors (depending on the nature of the event, your needs will vary):
  - Location – is it easily accessible for your intended audience?
  - Size – ideally you want a venue that will fit everyone in, but not so big that you have lots of empty space.
  - Cost – can you afford it? If your event has a charitable cause attached to it, please remember that some venues offer a discount for charities and not-for-profit organisations, so it’s worth asking.
  - Availability – many popular venues book up months (even years) in advance, so you may need to hunt around.
  - Facilities – do they provide catering? Do they have disable access? Do they have event equipment (e.g. data projectors)?
  - Cancellation policy – if you have to cancel your event for any reason, you should check whether you’d lose any money.

- Once you’ve booked your venue, check when it needs to be paid for – then make sure it’s paid on time!
- Decide what catering you need for your event (this may be dependent on your budget). People tend to be happy if they’re well fed and watered – so make sure there’s enough food and drink for everyone, as this is one of things they’re sure to remember about your event!
- If you’re using an outside catering company, check if they have a delivery charge, as this can add to your costs.
- Ask your attendees if they have any special dietary requirements and, where possible, try to meet their requirements. As vegetarianism is fairly common now, make sure there’s enough vegetarian food (as a rough guide, order half veggie, half non-veggie).
- Check the deadline for ordering catering – and again, make sure it’s paid on time!

Speakers

- Once you’ve decided whom you would like to speak at your event, invite them. Initially, this can be a phone call to check their availability, but this should be followed up with an email/letter outlining:
  1. What the event is about and when it is
  2. What you want them to speak about, including a list of bullet points of issues you want them to cover
  3. What time you would like them to speak (this is particularly important if it’s an all day event, as they may not be able to commit to a whole day)
  4. Who else is speaking at the event
  5. The intended audience for the event

- The venue (if this has already been confirmed)
- Keep your speakers up-to-date with any changes to the event, and email them a full outline/agenda for the event once it is confirmed. You may also want to send them copies of any promotional material you produce. I like to meet my key speakers a week or so before the event to tie up any loose ends.
- For seminars/conferences in which your speakers are giving formal presentations, it is useful
to prepare handouts for the delegates of all the presentations, as well as speaker biographies. Therefore, you will need this information beforehand from your speakers. Tell them that you need their presentation and biography at least a couple of days before the event – although you may find that you don’t receive it until the day of the event! If this is the case, ask them to bring copies with them.

It’s also useful to have the presentation beforehand so that you can load it onto the computer you’re using, to avoid any last minute IT hitches. It also helps to prevent any surprises in the presentations!

Complying with Legislation
• Public liability insurance is required.
• Public entertainment licence/gaming licences may be required for fundraising events – check with your local authority about their requirements for public events.
• Risk assessment – guides are available from the Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk/pubns.

Invitations and Promotion
Once you’ve decided who you want to come to your event you need to work out the best way to get them to attend.

• Think about your event and the people that you want to attend – what is so special about it? Why should people come to your event and not someone else’s? What will they get out of attending your event? List at least three reasons: these are your unique selling points (USPs) and should form the basis of any promotional material that you create for your event.
• If you have a mailing list for your target audience, send quality personalised invites to them. Be sure to include details of how to book a place or where to get further information. The invites can be sent by email or letter. Both have their pros and cons and which method you choose depends on your resources.
• If your organisation has a website, list the event on it. If other organisations working in the same field have event diaries on their website, ask them to list it on there.
• Find out if there is an e-news bulletin that is sent to people in your target audience. If so, see if you can get the event listed in it. This is a particularly good way to promote your event, as the recipients will have chosen to receive the e-news bulletin and are therefore interested in the field.
• If you plan your event far enough in advance, you can also have it listed in the events page of magazines and newsletters. Again, check what your target audience reads – and don’t forget to check the deadline!
• Depending on your budget, you can also get flyers printed for the event. It’s worth making sure that these are printed to a high quality, as this will make your organisation appear much more professional, which is particularly important if you’re trying to attract a professional audience! Again, check schedules with printers before committing yourself – there’s nothing worse than having a box full of flyers and no time to distribute them before the event.
• If you do get flyers printed, plan where you’re going to distribute them and the resources involved. You may want to invite the press, particularly if it’s an outdoor or family event. Write a press release regarding the event or get someone like the Press Release Writing Service to write and distribute one (www.pressreleasewritingservice.co.uk).
• It’s usually best to invite your local press rather than a national newspaper or magazine – people are more likely to read their local newspaper cover to cover than any other! Also, if one of the aims of your event is to raise the profile of your organisation, or get more local people involved, then some local press coverage is a great (free!) way to do this. If in doubt, use a local marketing and PR company.

Once people have signed up to the event, confirm their booking – either by email, phone or letter. Ask them where they heard of the event, so you can evaluate what promotion methods work best.
3. The Day Before and on the Day

Hopefully everything should have run smoothly up until now, and there are no last minute panics...

### The Day Before

- If appropriate to the event, compile a list of all the attendees and make name badges (don’t forget the speakers!).
- If appropriate, create and compile delegate packs. What you include is up to you and depends on the nature of your event, but it could include an agenda, copies of the presentations, speaker biographies, delegate lists, feedback forms, promotional material about your organisation, upcoming events and details of further suggested reading.
- Decide who is going to do what during the day, and make sure everyone knows what their role is, where they need to be and at what time.
- Create a checklist of everything that you need to take to the event. Start collecting it all together in one pile, and tick things off the list once they’ve been added to the pile.
- Decide who is going to be responsible for bringing the materials to the venue, and who is going to take them back.
- Book a taxi to take you to the venue in plenty of time to set up before the event starts.

### On the Day

All the logistics of the event have been pre-organised so you need to stick to that but obviously prepare for the unexpected (such as rain, delayed trains, speakers not turning up and so on).

- Appoint a chair, if appropriate, to start the event (maybe the lead person who would know the speakers and audience). Their job can include welcoming attendees and informing them about the event, for example:
  - The purpose/objectives of the event
  - Introducing the speakers and the presentations
  - When Q&A session will take place
  - When breaks and refreshments will be provided
  - Reminding attendees to complete their feedback forms and return along with their name badges
  - Providing practical information (such as facilities, cloakrooms, fire exit and assembly points)
  - Make people feel welcome and remember to smile! And if problems arise remember we are all humans.
  - To collect data about attendees (and to know who didn’t attend) have a spare person available to register people – even if that is just collecting people’s business cards.

### 4. Follow up and Evaluation

Evaluation and follow up after the event is as important as the planning and organisation, and shouldn’t be forgotten.

- Thank the speakers (and volunteers) for their time, by email, phone or letter.
- Provide general feedback on the event to your staff and remember to let them know if they have done a good job.
- If possible (or appropriate) email the attendees; ask if they need further information, invite them for further dialogue or to sign up to mailing lists for future events.

Keep track of the feedback and importantly evaluate it. Revisit it every six months.

- List and digest what worked and what didn’t work. Nothing is ever right first time, so it’s important that you take note of what didn’t work so well and make improvements in the future!

That pretty much wraps it up. It’s a steep learning curve, but the rewards are great. Well, I have my event to start planning so wish me luck…

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John Hicks is a marketing and press and public relations consultant supporting small to medium sized businesses in the UK through his company Headline Promotions Press & PR. John’s company website is www.headlinepromotions.co.uk and his blog can be found at www.headlinepromotions.blogspot.com.
Well it is November, and in the UK the weather is turning a little colder and wetter. The Christmas decorations are already up in the shops – even though nobody wants to think about it all yet. Before we know it we will be force-fed mince pies at every turn, and the festive season will be upon us.

After weeks of eating party food, and not making it to the gym because there is just too much to do January will arrive and find us flabby, unhealthy and rushing to buy the latest detox book and join the newest gym. Well, fitness friends, detox is just so last year; this year we shall pre-tox!

With the winter months now here, it is a great time to knuckle down to some healthful living: lose the extra pounds, eat well to fight off colds and infections, get outside in the light for some healthy fitness walking to fend off seasonal depression, and stay fit!

Starting from today, you can revamp your healthy lifestyle and avoid the end-of-year slump. Start working now and spend the end of the year feeling healthy and proud rather than tired and sick. So here come five ways to get fitter by Christmas.

1. Try a New Activity this Week
Do not spend the dark evenings glued to the television. Instead, cheer yourself up by attending a salsa class, check out the new swimming pool, walk to work, try a new class, buy a yoga video – and try it out – dust off your bike and go and get muddy at the weekend, or ignore the weather and go for a run (and enjoy the looks of admiration from the people who you pass by!). Look in your diary and find an hour to try something new, and then book a fitness date with yourself. Even better, make a date with a friend to do something together, and then you will have to do it regardless of the dark/cold/wet/must-see-soap.

2. Revitalize Your Gym Programme
Everyone gets bored of the gym if they do the same thing over and over again. Get yourself some fresh motivational music and jazz-up your routine. The body will progress with challenge, so do something new; set yourself a challenge, such as being able to do five full press-ups by Christmas, or being able to run five km by New Year. Build yourself a little circuit, mixing high intensity cardio with weights and other exercises. Use the free weights.
rather than the machines and be inventive with available equipment like the stability and medicine balls. Book an induction if you need some help, and tell them you want something new and interesting. Often magazines such as Men’s health and Ultra-Fit will have good tips on using the gym inventively.

3. Go for a Walk
Many people are affected by the lack of light from November onwards. This may make them feel tired, unmotivated, a bit down or depressed. Avoid this by making the most of the available light; get out into the light each day for a brisk walk (just twenty minutes during your lunch break at work is one-hundred minutes of walking a week), as it will contribute greatly to your fitness routine. Top it up with longer walks at the weekends. Treat yourself to waterproofs, and you may start to relish battling the elements.

4. Take Your Healthy Routine to Work
Pack a healthy lunch box, and take a big bottle of mineral water. A great lunch is vegetable soup in a flask with some wholemeal pitta bread. Take healthy snacks with you as well, such as fresh fruit, oat or rice cakes and a little pot of yoghurt. Ignore the food and drink machines, and resist the urge to drink lots of coffee and tea. Take the stairs and keep active where possible. If you are at a desk, take mini-breaks to stretch and revitalise yourself.

Get your work buddies interested in being healthier: organize an after-work netball or football team or a fitness challenge. Work is a big part of your week, so don’t leave being healthy to the weekends.

5. Buy Some Seasonal Vegetables
UK markets are groaning under the weight of healthy fruit, vegetables and nuts at this time of the year: pumpkin, squash, turnip, swedes, many varieties of cabbage, parsnips, cauliflower, leeks, chestnuts and apples. Get to the farmers market and you will be surprised at the variety on offer. Fill a basket and go home and make some warming soups, roast some pumpkin with thyme and olive oil, bake some vegetables and steam some cabbage. For a lovely winter pudding, core an apple and stuff the hole with dried fig or raisins and a little honey and put it on a slice of whole meal bread brushed with milk. Bake until soft all the way through and serve with some natural yoghurt or half-fat crème fraîche. The winter can be an opportunity to eat well; resist the temptation to cram in the calories with unhealthy fatty and sugary “comfort” foods.

The winter months affect everyone differently, but many people seem to “hibernate”, reacting to the colder and darker environment by becoming less active, eating more and eating so called comfort food, staying inside and missing their usual classes because of a reluctance to go out in the evenings.

If this sounds a bit like you, then give yourself a shake, wake yourself up and embrace the winter with the different opportunities that it has to offer. Don’t turn into a couch potato, get fitter up and down.

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If the worrying predictions of climate scientists are correct, London will be severely affected if measures are not taken imminently to address the threat of global climate change. Whole swathes of the city could be submerged by 2050 if forecasted sea-level rises are accurate. The lush green expanse of Hyde Park could more resemble the dry, dusty plains of sub-Saharan Africa by the end of this century. All around the UK we could see similar situations arising. Every individual, family and organisation needs to play their part to keep this future from happening, including companies whose trade is to supply the country’s offices with the products they need to operate.

A Growing Awareness
There are clear indications that some of the UK’s office suppliers are taking their environmental responsibilities seriously. The changes in attitude are partly being led by industry leaders, but also by their customers who, for a number of reasons, expect the trade to help them achieve their environmental objectives. The image-conscious industries of London, including advertisers and marketing consultants, are keen to show potential clients their green credentials to help win business. Charitable organisations consider their responsibilities to the environment an integral part of a broader moral purpose. Generally speaking, there is a growing awareness by the UK’s companies of the connection between their activities and the potential consequences outlined above.

There is a huge business potential in the supply of green office products. A swarm of online retailers who offer a range of everyday products that are green in varying degrees has emerged to capitalise on the demand. These companies are very keen to trumpet their virtues, but are not so willing to acknowledge that their goods tend to be delivered in diesel transit vans that spew out carbon emissions to and from their destinations.
in the office supply trade, product sourcing and delivery makes the largest contribution to a company’s carbon footprint. If the UK’s offices want the goods they buy to be greener, they need to look beyond what their products are made from and examine the broader implications of production and delivery.

More established office suppliers are gradually making important changes to their businesses to address environmental concerns. If your company’s trade is to supply office products, van deliveries are a necessity, not an option. Companies that run their own fleet of vans, are better positioned to reduce their carbon footprint. RED BOX, for example whose large and varied customer base is located within Greater London, once prided itself on the same-day delivery service it provided. The company now actively encourages its customers to opt for next-day delivery. The streamlined delivery schedule reduces the number of split deliveries, but still provides the level of service that demanding London companies expect. It also enables the company to reduce costs that can be passed onto the customer in the form of savings.

**Green Alternatives Becoming the Norm**

Established office suppliers are also introducing green alternatives to commonly bought products. Last year, 34 percent of RED BOX customers bought green products; now the figure is closer to 40 percent. In 2006, the average spend on green products was 5.6 percent. As customers are being made aware of green ranges and, in some cases, demanding them, the figure has risen to 6.3 percent. Unfortunately, many products used by the creative industries do not have green alternatives, but there are indications that this situation is changing.

Xyron systems presents a viable alternative to spray adhesive. The machines apply a sticky layer to materials but do not contaminate the air or emit the CFCs that destroy the fragile ozone layer. Many other products may not be particularly environmentally friendly, but there are plenty of initiatives that can be taken to limit waste. For instance, many types of toners can be recycled. Instead of plastic packaging, reusable cardboard delivery boxes can be used. When the customer is finished with them, the boxes can be returned when the delivery driver makes the next delivery.

Alongside the office suppliers making genuine efforts to change their businesses to meet these aspirations there are others that are, perhaps cynically, using green language and hollow gestures to present an image of environmental virtue. There are signs that green window dressing is no longer good enough to win the custom of environmentally conscious customers. An increasingly well-informed customer is emerging who is prepared to challenge the claims made by companies in the industry.

RED BOX recently had a customer who felt their use of plastic packaging to deliver her goods contradicted their ethics that their so proudly display on their website. All her company’s orders are now delivered in the distinctive red reusable delivery boxes. However, for unscrupulous customers, the shallow claims made by some office suppliers are enough to satisfy their green aspirations.

The office suppliers who have a genuine interest in reducing their carbon footprint will have to work hard to help inform customers and potential customers about what they truly need to do to be green. For many office suppliers, the logical conclusion of efforts to become greener is to reach carbon-neutrality and in turn sustainable growth.

Almost all human activity in some way generates a degree of carbon emissions. In the case of office suppliers, the greatest carbon-burden is released through the sourcing of products. Office product manufacturers are under pressure to produce their goods in countries with low labour costs such as China and parts of Eastern Europe to remain competitive.

**Sourcing Products: The Challenges Ahead**

Unfortunately, the products have to travel a considerable distance to reach their markets in places such as the UK, with similarly considerable emissions. Once the products land in the UK, they must be taken to distribution centres and then onto suppliers – sometimes through wholesalers on the way – and these journeys obviously also produce carbon emissions.

Because of this, addressing the issue of sourcing presents the greatest challenge to the industry. Drastic measures to reduce the carbon footprint will not make a company completely carbon-neutral. It’s inevitable that commercial enterprises will generate some carbon. Initiatives such as carbon-offsetting and carbon-capture schemes can help to compensate for this. In short there is plenty still to do.

Robert Griffith is a Business Development Assistant at RED BOX.
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Take a minute to visit The Hub at DeskDemon: http://www.deskdemon.com/community/forums
Keep it seasonal this November, with a tasty curried parsnip soup and a delicious walnut and pear lattice pie. Also there's our main of cod fillets with tarragon sauce, which tastes great whatever time of year it is. So why not give this menu a go? It's perfect for when the nights are drawing in and we all begin to go into hibernation mode!

**Curried Parsnip Soup**

**Ingredients:**
- 25g/2 tbsp butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- 450g/4 parsnips, sliced
- 2 tsp medium curry paste
- 450ml/2 cups chicken stock
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 450ml/2 cups milk
- 60ml/4 tbsp soured cream
- Salt and ground black pepper

1. Heat the butter in a large saucepan and fry the onion and garlic for five minutes or until golden. Add in the cumin and coriander and cook for another two minutes.

2. Add the parsnips and stir well until fully coated with butter. Stir in the curry paste, followed by the chicken stock and lemon juice. Cover the pan and simmer for about 15-20 minutes, until the parsnips are tender.

3. Ladle the soup into a blender or a food processor and blend until smooth. Return to the saucepan and stir in the milk. Heat gently for 2-3 minutes, then add the soured cream and salt and pepper. Serve at once.
Cod Fillets with Tarragon Sauce

Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 300ml/1¼ cups crème fraîche
- 1 tbsp fresh tarragon, chopped
- 25g/2 tbsp butter
- 15ml/1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 4 cod fillets, skinned and boned
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 30ml/2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and ground black pepper

1. Gently heat the crème fraîche in a saucepan until it begins to boil. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in half of the tarragon. Leave the herb cream to infuse while cooking the cod.

2. Heat the butter and sunflower oil in a frying pan and fry the garlic for a few minutes until golden, then fry the cod fillets for about five minutes on each side. Remove from the pan and keep warm.

3. Strain the herb cream into the pan and cook for a few minutes, stirring until the sauce thickens. Stir in the olive oil and cook for a few minutes. Season with salt and pepper and serve at once, spooned over the salmon. Garnish with some sweet red peppers.

Walnut and Pear Lattice Pie

Serves 8

Ingredients:
- 450g shortcrust pastry
- 450g pears, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 50g/4 tbsp caster sugar
- 25g/2 tbsp plain flour
- 25g/¼ cup sultanas
- 50g/8 tbsp chopped walnuts
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 50g/½ cup icing sugar
- 15ml/1 tbsp lemon juice
- 10ml/2 tsp cold water

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas 5. Roll out half of the pastry and use it to line a 23cm tin that is about 5cm deep.

2. Mix the pears with the caster sugar and flour, until the pears and coated well. Add in the sultanas, walnuts and cinnamon. Put the filling into the pastry case and spread it evenly.

3. Roll out the remaining pastry and use to make the lattice top. Bake the pie for an hour or until the pastry is golden brown on top.

4. Combine the icing sugar, lemon juice and water in a small bowl and stir well. Remove the pie from the oven. Drizzle the glaze evenly over the top, on the pastry and on the filling. Leave the pie to cool in its tin. Serve with extra thick double cream.
Executive PA

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Zig Ziglar, Motivational Speaker and Author

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• Integrate tools, models and strategies to develop yourself and your role
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This season, the biggest style trend is for neutral colours highlighted with bold colours. This creates a chic minimalist look, but gives you room to be feminine and playful and creative with your personality. This season will see new and interesting colour combinations, so be bold and have fun!

The most important thing in fashion is to take what is on the catwalks and adapt it to your own style, and to the occasion. An easy and cost effective way to do this is with jewellery. Here are some hints and tips to accenting your own style with this season's trends.

For the smart/casual look, which gives you the most individual choice as to whether to wear a dress or trouser suit and offers you many colours and styles, go for autumn neutral colours – for example moss green, grey-blue, or this season’s biggest colour, a gentle violet. For a more striking look go monochrome or layer different textures of black. If you want something a bit gentler than black then go for warm coffee browns.

**Say it With Jewellery**
If you have seen a particular colour on the catwalk that you like but feel is too overpowering for you then take it and add it to your neutrals in the form of jewellery. Purple and turquoise are the two of the most widely seen colours this season, so go for a turquoise brooch or a set of matching earrings and necklace instead of the full coloured dress.

For a cocktail party, where the cocktail
dress can be your opportunity to take advantage of the bold colours, remember that turquoise suits all skin tones and purple can be used in any shade this season, so pick one to suit you. To stand out from the crowd use chilli red or a bold flower pattern dress.

When accessorising, go for a simple, elegant choker and matching earrings, or a broach and cocktail ring. The important thing here is to let the dress shine on its own; keep the jewellery understated.

**Classic is Back**
The classic dress – a retro forties/fifties glamour – is perfect for the black-tie do. Either tone down a bright dress with clear crystal or add a splash of colour to a black or neutral dress. Go for the matching set of jewellery to create a complete film star look.

The white-tie occasion is your chance to go for all out glitz and glamour. Again, the complete jewellery set and vintage fashion works well. Hair should be pinned up and extra long earrings worn for elegance, plus a large ring and large pendant to add sparkle. When wearing a V-neck, mirror this with a V or Y shaped necklace; a choker is also elegant or – if you’re not wearing a necklace – a broach at the base of the V will add colour or sparkle.

**A Blank Canvas**
A strapless dress provides a blank canvas for a large bold or glitzy necklace or for long chandelier earrings. Pick up the detail with a crystal bracelet or broach. A short choker or very long necklace suits a square neckline and, again, use long earrings. Thin straps can be matched with delicate jewellery.

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Kirsty Semple has a passion for making and wearing jewellery, writing regularly on the subject. More about her and jewellery can be found at [http://www.squidoo.com/fashiontrtendsforwomen](http://www.squidoo.com/fashiontrtendsforwomen).
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