Donna Beck

Working with the STARS of Foot Locker

Plus

101 Tasks Helping New Managers to Survive
How to Recycle the Talent in Your Organisation
Flexible Working and the Law
Weight Loss Tips
Hi and welcome to the March issue of PA Enterprise, DeskDemon’s digital magazine.

This month’s cover story is an interview with Donna Beck, an Executive Assistant at Foot Locker, Inc, the worldwide retailer of sports and athletic wear. Donna is based at the company HQ in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where she supports multiple managers in the Information, Service and Technology dept. You’ll find her interview on page 11 where she lets us know how she manages her job and about the star quality people she supports.

In April the UK Government will extend the right to request flexible working to all parents with children up to 16. In our feature, Flexible Working and the Law, Julian Cowans answers some of the questions you may have about the legal responsibilities between you and your employer.

PAs are in a leadership role without the leadership title, they are an extension of their manager(s). Take a minute to review 101 Tasks Helping New Managers to Survive. Can you take any of these tasks to heart and put them to practical use in your position supporting your manager? If you look at them and take the time to think about the answers, it may provide some self awareness or give ideas on what you need to work on to help manage others better.

We can recycle cans and paper, but how do you recycle knowledge? In our article, How to Recycle the Talent in Your Organisation, Julia McVey explains why talent should be recycled, how to do it and how it helps organisations.

And finally, we have a Lifestyle article on your health. Weight Loss Tips - Diet Difficulties, Excuses, and How to Tackle Them exposes some of the lies we tell ourselves and reasons to rethink our indulgent eating choices.

If you would like to be featured in PA Enterprise or have a story you would like us to cover, please let us know. We’re always delighted to hear from PAs, secretaries and Administrators, working from offices all around the world. So, if you think your relationship with your boss is something worth shouting about; you’ve created peer to peer training or set up systems that’s made your life and that of your colleagues’ easier; overcame a difficult situation to triumph or tackled and juggled the impossible – we would love to hear about it. Send your story to susan@deskdemon.com

That’s it for this month, we all wish you a very happy Easter break.

Until next month!

Susan Silva
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Bread and Water on the Recession Menu

Firms feeling the pinch of the credit crunch might be eating bread and water at company conferences from now on.

With the UK officially in recession, Best Western is offering meeting and conference organisers ‘message focussed menu options’ to help companies ensure they deliver their event objectives.

For example, alongside its more traditional offerings, Best Western has added the ‘bread and water’ option on its brand new ‘Venues’ menu for sales teams that are not performing or management teams that have missed their targets.

Best Western Venues has been launched by Best Western – the largest group of independently owned hotels in the UK - to offer a new standard for meetings and events to organisers demanding superior service and flexibility while at the same time expecting value for money and clarity of costs.

James Parkinson, Corporate Marketing Manager from Best Western hotels says: “We launched the Venues brand in order to meet modern customer needs, and with the current economic climate we thought that we should offer some menu options that organisers can use to help support their messages, be they a rallying cry, a celebration or ‘could do better’.”

The ‘bread and water’ idea originated in the US. The CEO of a major company arranged a meeting for his management team in a well known San Francisco restaurant, and fed them bread and water after reporting poor financial results. That marked the turning point in the company’s fortunes and it then went on from strength to strength.

James Parkinson continued; “I should add we are not advocating that anyone should actually feed their staff on bread and water for a whole meeting or conference, but a meal of that sort certain grabs people’s attention.”

Best Western Venues offers over 1,300 meeting rooms at more than 240 hotels across the UK and offers flexible billing options, Daily delegate and 24 Hour delegate rates.

A taste or Brazil in London’s Covent Garden

Guanabara is one of London’s most popular late night music venues, open seven nights a week with different bands, DJs and lots of dancing. The soul of Brazil in the heart of London, Guanabara is hugely popular with Brazilians and Londoners alike – selling over 3000 caipirinhas a week!

The Head Chef Pietro Lima Rocha, formerly at the Copacabana Palace Hotel, has created a menu that showcases the variety and styles of cooking from across Brazil, from the African influenced north eastern Moqueca to the southern grown Picanha.

They have large tables which are perfect for work parties, great platters of Brazilian food ideal for sharing and they have their ‘Sunset Session’ Happy Hour between 5-7 every day, where you can get tasty caipirinha cocktails for only £3.20.

One of the best nights is their regular Gafieira Tuesdays. With the popularity of Tango, Salsa and Samba lessons, Guanabara are hoping to up the profile of the relatively unknown Brazilian dance, the Gafieira. Every other Tuesday, they hold group classes for free. There are professional Gafieira dancers performing, and the lessons are followed by a live performance from 7-piece band Chico Chagas & Gafieira Brasil + DJ support. It’s one of only a few places teaching this dance in London, and definitely the only nightclub doing so. The lessons are a lot of fun, plus with the band and DJs, it’s a great way to spend a Tuesday night. And it’s all free.

www.guanabara.co.uk

Business travellers to the Channel Islands must ensure they have adequate travel insurance from 1 April. The recommendation comes from the Department of Health as the healthcare arrangements for UK visitors to the Islands are due to change.

The current agreement, which allowed UK travellers to get a limited number of medical treatments in the Channel Islands free of charge, will end on March 31.

Anyone travelling to the Islands, which include Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Sark and Herm, will be required to pay for medical treatment should they become ill or injured there after this date. Visitors should therefore take out adequate insurance before they travel.

Visitors from the Channel Islands to the UK will also now be liable for charges for medical treatment when visiting the UK, so they should also have health insurance cover.

In 2007, there were 104,010 business visitors to Jersey from the UK and 27,000 to Guernsey. Over one third of all visitors from the UK travelling to the Channel Islands, are travelling there on business trips.

Further information can be found by telephoning the Department of Health Customer Service Centre on 0207 210 4850 or e-mailing dhmail@dh.gsi.gov.uk
Green Award for owner of the uni-ball pen brand

As a result of its proactive response to green issues, Mitsubishi Pencil Co, manufacturers of the Uni-ball pen brand, has been awarded an environmental certificate by the British Office Supplies and Services (BOSS) Federation.

The award heralds the company’s corporate policy, which has seen a number of eco-products launched to make efficient use of natural resources. One such product is the Power Tank Eco. This high performance writing instrument features a barrel made from recycled polycarbonate plastic and a comfortable grip made from re-formed sawdust and resin.

The green credentials of this pen are further enhanced by its packaging, which is completely constructed from fully recyclable card and uses no plastic blister – a key focus for the company as it continues to develop packaging with minimum impact on the environment.

Stuart Barker, Marketing Manager at Mitsubishi Pencil Co, says: “We’re delighted to be recognised by the BOSS Federation with this accreditation. As a responsible manufacturer we will continue to develop and distribute products that have a minimum impact on the environment.

www.uniball.co.uk

AVOID THE RED BY TURNING TO BLUE!

Office workers may be surprised to find out that one way to ensure that they perform calmly under tough economic conditions is to make sure their office is displaying the right colours. At a time when businesses across Britain are trying to avoid their finances dropping into the red, psychologists are advising offices to turn their desktops blue in an effort to take control of the credit crunch!

The idea that colour choice makes a difference to the economy may turn some of us pale in the face, but expert psychologist Donna Dawson, on behalf of Avery Office Products, can explain: “Using colour in a conscious, informed way can go a long way to creating a more positive workplace. Displaying a cool colour like blue not only calms us down by lowering breathing and heartbeat rates, but also makes us appear more calm, relaxed and in control, as we will tend to move, think, and talk more slowly.”

In other words, colours affect the way we think and act, and can be the difference between us making a rash and over-emotional decision or taking the time to think things through.

Blue sky at night, workers’ delight!

Surprisingly, this is not a new phenomenon and many industries have been making use of colours like blue for years. Donna Dawson describes: “It is no accident that most airline stewardesses and bank employees wear a shade of blue, as ‘flying’ and ‘finance’ are areas where clients can become ‘emotional’. Such clients need a calm role-model in front of them!”

So what’s the science behind it all? “All colours in the colour spectrum vibrate at different frequencies: colours at the ‘warmer’ end of the spectrum, such as red, vibrate at a higher frequency. Colours at the ‘cooler’ end of the spectrum, like blue, vibrate at a lower frequency. Tests have shown that colour affects bodily functions because it affects brain waves and the functions of the autonomic nervous system. This in turn regulates the body’s internal environment and hormonal activities, affecting us mentally and physically.”

Blue is the new Green!

Pretty amazing stuff! So what can we all do to create a little calm in our own offices? Apart from the colours we choose to wear to work, the little things around our offices can quite easily be changed to help us. From screensavers to magazine racks, from letter trays to desk tidies, we can all find things that we can turn blue. Just have a look around – there’s more in the office than you might think – and a multitude of coloured products just waiting to be found.
Our “Day in the Life of ...” series has been very popular with DeskDemon’s users and we would like to extend it! So, we would like to hear about you and your job and as a thank you we will give you £25 Marks & Spencer vouchers, on publication.

We know from our forum boards at the Hub that networking and support is important to you all. Hearing about each other’s work and offering advice and a helping hand can be invaluable. But not only that, it’s interesting to hear about the experience of others. It puts things in to perspective and offers us the chance to see how others got to where they are, overcoming challenges and what they think of their role. And that’s why our “Day in the Life of...” series is so fascinating.

We are looking for PAs, secretaries and Administrators from a wide range of sectors and from the smallest to the largest organisations, so get in touch if you would like to share your thoughts with us all.

If you would like to be featured on DeskDemon’s “Day in the life of ...” series, please visit: www.deskdemon.com/pages/uk/career/dayinthelifeof2009
Flexible Working and the Law
By Julian Cowans

Flexible working is transforming the world of work and the UK Government has announced that in April 2009, it plans to extend the right to request flexible working to parents of all children up to 16. This means that millions more employees will soon be flexible working and the days of working 9-5 in the office will be a distant memory for many.

But many employers are unsure about their legal responsibilities in this new world of flexible working.

The simple answer is that they are exactly the same - even if your employee is now teleworking from a garden office at their home or from a WiFi hotspot whilst they are working on the move.

The company has precisely the same duty of care to the employee whether they are working on the company’s premises or teleworking from a remote location. This includes if they are working at a home office, a garden office or at an Internet café somewhere on the M5.

It is news to many employers that all Health & Safety Executive (HSE) workplace legislation includes workplaces in the home and that they will need to think afresh about their procedures, in order to fully embrace flexible working within their business and minimize risk.

Risk assessments should still be carried out for example on all display screen equipment that your employee is using. What’s more, if your business has a policy of PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) electrical equipment, then equipment used in a home office should be tested as well. And any procedures your company may have for accident reporting and so on should still apply when your employees are flexible working or teleworking.

In fact, it is worth knowing that every single one of your legal responsibilities in the workplace are carried into a flexible working environment, including Health & Safety, Data Protection and Discrimination. Overall, there are many advantages of flexible working and it represents a huge opportunity for businesses, increasing productivity and improving work life balance for employees.

However, as with all change, it demands new thinking and a fresh approach, which can be challenging.
One of the challenges is rethinking the way that the law now applies to your business and redefining the place of work to include remote locations.

A very good starting point is to ask your employee to complete a self-assessment checklist of the places where they will be flexible working. Common sense and care will help avoid most potential pitfalls and a lawyer should be consulted for advice on any areas that remain unclear. One of the biggest dangers facing those flexible working at remote locations is the simple and obvious danger of trailing leads and wires.

Apart from Health and Safety, the other main area where employers are often concerned is how flexible working will affect the tax or insurance situation. In fact, there are normally no tax implications for employees who are remote working or working from a home office. If the employee is given equipment to work flexibly, perhaps a laptop for example, and this is also put to personal use this could incur a benefit in kind tax liability, so that is something to watch out for.

Importantly, employees who work from home should always inform their home insurer, especially if there is additional valuable equipment now kept in the house.

There can be significant tax implications if an employee working from a home office starts to claim things like a proportion of council tax, rates and décor for the home office. This could then make the employee become liable for capital gains tax when the property is sold - a situation they will certainly want to avoid!

Finally, employers often wonder if they need to provide a new contract of employment if their employee is now flexible working.

In a nutshell, the answer is ‘No’. Provided the existing contract is legal, the employer can provide a ‘Flexible working agreement’ covering matters like the extent of flexible working the agreed ways in which an employee will be contactable when flexible working whether or not the flexible working arrangements are for a limited trial period and so on.

By getting up to speed with the legal and tax implications of flexible working and taking heed of a few simple guidelines, businesses can step confidently into the brave new world of flexible working enjoying increasing productivity and improved staff retention as a result.

Julian Cowans is Project Manager of actnow flex, a project funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, Cornwall Enterprise, BT and other partners. actnow flex offers advice on HTML flexible working and the law including legal matters overview. www.flexible-working.org/employers/legalMattersOverview.
Do you ever have a problem and wish you could get objective advice from your peers?

Ask on The Hub

Join in on topics from your peers around the world. DeskDemon’s The Hub is a forum for networking with your peers. Share your thoughts, experiences, and advice worldwide.

Post a question or a thought or join in to comment or help others.

The Hub has a section for everyone. Sound Off, Admins4Admins, Cafe Admin, Topical Climates, and The Humor Zone

Take a minute to visit The Hub at DeskDemon:
http://www.deskedmon.com/community/forums
Donna Beck’s unique ‘Team’ at Foot Locker, the international shoe retailer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin includes Walt Disney, Steve McQueen, Oprah Winfrey and Sarah Palin. Donna explains why understanding personalities is key to doing a great job.

Tell us a bit about your background.
Well, I have over 12 years of progressive experience in Office Administration and have spent over nine years working as an Executive Assistant in high-end companies including Foot Locker, Inc., Zeigler Investments and Firstar Bank. Overall, I have 14 years experience working in office administration supporting senior level management.

In my current role as Executive Assistant (Administrator), I report to Foot Locker’s Divisional Vice President of IS&T, (Information Service & Technology) her four Directors and their Managers and the rest of the IS&T team. I am required to manage a range of general administration and perform specialised tasks in a timely and accurate manner. This includes organising meetings, distributing agendas, taking minutes at various management meetings and sending them to the relevant attendees. I have solid Microsoft Office skills and have used these to help produce reports and use in documents. I help the entire group of IS&T professionals, coordinating their calendars, organising and prioritising correspondence (email, packages, calls, etc.), arranging travel, greeting and hosting visitors, and more. I bring a sense of commitment, dedication, and professionalism to every aspect of my work - this career is very challenging in many ways - and can be very rewarding – and I enjoy being part of a team.

You have a good working relationship with your “team” can you tell us a bit about it?
Let me tell you a bit about “Working for the STARS”! On the 26th floor of Trump Tower, Norma Foederer, who is the assistant to Donald J. Trump and is considered by many in our field to be the epitome of the apogee of personal assistant-hood, is fielding requests for her boss, something she does daily. On the main floor of the Foot Locker, Inc. office (Milwaukee) I too work for STAR/S.

Not all admin jobs are created equal. There have been jobs where I enjoyed being an admin and others where I have wondered @%@!. So, WHAT, what really makes the difference? It IS who you work for - Working for the STARS! Some may say (admin skeptics) that is, oh sure, as in Hollywood – the stars get a little nip/tuck action, and only want to make themselves look good, but not this STAR team it’s au naturel!

I feel very fortunate to work with such a great group professional people. They each have such dynamic personalities. My immediate boss is the Divisional Vice President and is what I would perceive it would be like if I were working for Oprah Winfrey herself. Now anyone who knows anything about Oprah knows she is one heck of a communicator, professional, strong, supportive and approachable. She gives the best and expects the best and NO LESS. Yes, this is my boss! She uses humour, positive attitude, and high standards to motivate staff excellence.

The Directors (in no particular order and their Hollywood comparison) … are very unique…
Bill Johnson: (Walt Disney) – Director of Systems Technology… Now, anyone who has been to Walt Disney World knows how incredibly that place is run and how much fun it is. The ‘happiest place on earth’. He is so organized, focused, very creative (a real pioneer) and FUN!

Chris Schaefer: (Sarah Palin) – Director of Production Services … It would be difficult to miss this woman on T.V last year. Chris is a super articulate...
speaker, clear, sharp and precise…… very dynamic!

Paul Stewart: (Steve McQueen) Director of Telecommunications - This Hollywood favourite knows had a very strong, work ethic, lifelong love of motor racing and was one of the best actors of all time. (Hard Work). Paul is always very professional and appreciative, one of the best. He also has some pretty cool cars!

Mark Imig: - Director of Technical Services…..Chevy Chase - NSL Saturday Night Live. If you’ve seen this show, you might know the line, “I’m Chevy Chase, and you’re not”. Mark, is very particular about everything, and I mean everything from work, to eating. He is also very sharp and smart.

"Knowing each personality brings strengths and different approaches which means having balance and sensitivity to every day. ”

Do you have any traits or skills that you use across the board with all those you support?
I try to demonstrate professionalism, excellent time management, follow-up, excellent organisation, and communication skills. Discretion, integrity, trust and maturity, is also a must, along with a sense of urgency, and sound judgment – these are all required of me in supporting these multiple managers.

Then there’s the need for outstanding work ethics, the ability to work well in both team originated and self directed environments; being dependable, outgoing, eager to learn and grow professionally. Did I mention being tech savvy enough to fix a paper jam in a printer is a also must?! However, the most important, non obvious trait is emotional and functional compatibility with the rest of the team. Particularly the “boss” is just a few requirements of my job.

Phew…working for the STARS!

Now with all that being said, it is not to say that some days are not without conflict or that feeling of a big fat lump in my stomach because I goofed up or didn’t know how to do something. But that is when I have to remind myself to keep moving forward …. turn up the “lights” refocus the “camera” and keep moving forward “action” - Lights, Camera, Action – Working for the STARS!

I also believe the key to achieving more than you currently are, no matter which area of your work or life you are focusing on now is change. The old saying rings very true: ‘If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you’ve already got’. I have found two things to be true about change. One, it is simple. Two, it is not always easy. But, I believe, if the process is well thought out, and if we have the guts and determination to carry it out, change can and will happen. Seeing the future change - before it becomes present. Think about it: How amazing you can be? Your past will never change; it is your past. And your present is what it is. But……your future can be anything you want it to be! Don’t ever bypass experience and believe in yourself!

I thank my lucky stars!

Super
Talented
Amazing
Rewarding
Sincere………………..Team

Do you have any advice for the admin who is just starting out and will need to support multiple managers?

Granted, every workplace is different and every member of staff is different. But, using one of these steps, or a combination of them, can help when working with multiple managers.

Besides educating yourself in every aspect of the field and learning as much as possible, prioritise and organise, and meet with your managers individually.

Staying organised will help you keep up with the work and the requests from your managers. For people who work on multiple projects, this is doubly important. The best strategy is usually to take on one project at a time, based on its deadlines and order of importance to the organisation.

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How to Recycle the Talent in Your Organisation

By Julia McVey

What is mentoring?
In the 21st Century we are encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint by recycling resources and consider how our daily actions can save energy for the future of our planet. As consumers, we are now prepared to repair rather than replace and buy second hand rather than new.

This shift towards seeing the value in what we already have is now beginning to lead corporate organisations to not only recycle paper but also to recycle the talents of their people by introducing mentoring into their corporate culture.

For those who are unfamiliar with the concept of mentoring, it is often surprising that as soon as I start to explain and give examples, everyone recognises that at some time in their life they have experienced the benefits of mentoring. We can all think of times when a parent has given us good advice or a teacher gave encouragement. Do you remember who helped you to ride a bicycle? What you may not have done is thought of this person as a mentor.

Mentoring is “the informal learning that happens in many different environments, making it an exceptionally effective option for businesses or organisations” (Glasgow Mentoring Network). To support through periods of change by giving advice and support to someone who values your knowledge and experience.

In our personal life, mentoring comes to us in different forms; for example, family, peer group, teachers, religious leaders, youth leaders, friends and neighbours, all of whom could have given good advice or support at times when we needed it most.

How can it help my organisation?
Organisations need to ask whether their people have all the skills they need and display behaviour that delights customers every single day.

Large organisations are beginning to understand that by using their existing talent they are creating an environment where everyone wins. Mentors can help colleagues develop new skills, improve confidence, resolve potential conflict, encourage creativity and speed up the learning process.

Smaller organisations find mentoring a much more efficient way to retain and develop existing talent. As the business expands and grows there is natural succession-planning which allows the business to maintain quality for the customer; staff tend to be promoted from within, whilst new employees can be recruited for skills and behaviour that will align to the existing brand values of the company.

Who are the Mentors?
Mentors are people who have knowledge, skills and experience that can be replicated within a business or organisation. All organisations will have employees who do a fantastic job;
they understand the business, turn up everyday, can work on their own initiative and would be sorely missed if they left. It is sometimes striking that the ‘indispensable employee’ often seems to be invisible. Many managers spend most time on what is not going well, whether it be a process or a behaviour; attention rarely falls upon the employees who keep the wheels turning ‘come hail or shine’. This may undermine motivation, promoting feelings of apathy for those employees who are committed and deliver for the organisation.

Mentoring can help create an environment where doing a ‘good job’ is recognised and appreciated, employees gain recognition by peers and where a culture of self-improvement can be nurtured. The acknowledgment of skills and talents in individuals promotes a culture where mentors can pass on their knowledge and experience to other colleagues in a way that benefits both mentor and mentee (person being mentored). Inviting an employee to mentor a colleague acknowledges the role models within the business; recognises good work and serves as a fantastic motivator.

This new-found recognition and pride in the role makes it easy for mentors to share their knowledge and experience with other employees in an informal way that creates an atmosphere of trust between the mentor and mentee. The mentor is neither a trainer nor a line manager; the role is one of a colleague who is there to help another employee to acquire a new skill, be a sounding board and to share knowledge.

Although there is rarely financial reward for becoming a mentor, the best mentors will already be nurturing some employees without even realising. This is what skilled staff and good managers tend to do - somehow intuitively; however this may often go unrecognised as a legitimate and worthwhile activity. Mentorship needs to be a formalised and structured process and mentors will need training or coaching. The process of sharing knowledge and experience with other employees can evoke feelings of contribution and self worth for mentors.

The top benefits for mentors are:

- Status and satisfaction - acknowledgment of positive contribution to the business by peer group.
- Helping others to acquire new skills - sharing personal experience improves feeling of self-worth.
- Increased self-awareness - identifies qualities and skills that the mentor may not have been aware of.
- Enhanced interpersonal skills - improves communication and listening skills.
- Career progression - may open doors to opportunities that may not have been considered before.
- Contribution - "true happiness and feelings of self-worth do not come from disposable material possessions. Instead, happiness comes from making a positive contribution to individuals or groups of people." * Martin Seligman author of Authentic Happiness

So how does it work?

There are certain things that need to be in place for mentoring to work effectively in any business or organisation. The most important thing is that mentoring should never be forced upon anyone, as the commitment and rapport between mentor and mentee is crucial to its success. The mentor should be comfortable to share knowledge and experience and should never be expected to divulge information that he/she is uncomfortable with, therefore there needs to be ground rules. There needs to be a genuine interest, commitment and clear objectives from both the mentor and the mentee; once the relationship of trust is established the ability to give and receive open and honest feedback will ensue. This sharing of knowledge and experience can really speed up the learning process for the mentee and further develop the skills of the mentor.

Whilst ideally it is best to match mentor and mentee based on similarities of personality and interests, this is not always possible due to the numbers involved and workplace limitations; however mentoring works well with limited matching, allowing rapport to develop naturally.
Initially, mentors and mentees meet to start building that all important relationship. The informal nature of mentoring allows for the mentor to act as a sounding board for the mentee. The time and place of meetings are agreed between mentor and mentee and commitment to regular contact is essential. The mentoring itself may take place in a variety of settings e.g. over a cup of coffee or a telephone call. Many companies encourage their mentors to be as creative as possible in this process.

Once the mentoring relationship is established, the key skill of the mentor is good listening and the ability to encourage even when things might not be perfect. A mentor does not replace a line manager, their role is to listen, share knowledge and experience and encourage.

The key thing to remember about mentoring is that it is a two-way relationship where both parties gain. Below are just some of the benefits for people being mentored (mentees).

**The benefits for the mentees:**
- Help to acquire new skills - provided in an informal manner.
- Learning will be faster - the sharing of good and bad experiences by both mentor and mentee can put things in perspective.
- Open and honest feedback - from someone who is viewed as a friend is very powerful.
- Increased self awareness - provides opportunity to compare against a more experienced peer.
- Enhanced interpersonal skills - helps with communication and listening at all levels.
- Faster career progression - the ability to learn quickly will open up opportunities.
- Regular meetings - dedicated person who will take an interest in your progress.
- A confidential sounding board - the ability to talk confidentially and informally with a colleague who can offer advice.

Who will benefit from mentoring?
Anyone who wants to learn from another person’s experience and knowledge will benefit from having a mentor. Mentoring is applicable in any organisation, from top executives to an unskilled workforce, in both the private and public sectors. This valuable resource can change behaviours and attitudes for the better and create environments that focus on developing and building on what is already going well within many organisations. Mentoring is the perfect way to recycle experience in the workplace.

Julia McVey of U-Can Coaching Services has introduced multi-national companies and public sector organisations to the benefits of mentoring. For a free information pack, call 0845 6033230.

www.u-cancoachingservices.com
People often ask me for my thoughts on becoming a new Manager. My immediate reaction is ‘great, fantastic, go for it, it can be a great and diverse career move’, quickly followed by ‘Do you know what you are letting yourself in for?’ Many years ago, I moved from a technical role to my first management role. Suddenly I was managing a small team, being accountable for their deliveries/service and not just my own, as I was before!

Was I scared/fearful? You bet I was. I was scared of making a mistake, looking stupid, ruining my reputation and not being able to do the job I had just been promoted to. I couldn’t turn to anyone for help, could I. Well you can’t can you! You have just been promoted and you don’t say to your boss ‘Err, I’m not too sure what to do, err, can you help me?’

Don’t get me wrong, great managers will always support their staff to improve, but asking for help/support after just being promoted is a bit of a ‘no-no’.

So what do you do? Public library? Internet? Book shops? There is a huge abundance of information available. Some good, some not so good.

Therefore, based on my 25 years as a manager, here are the top 101 tasks/activities you have to deal with and master some, now you are the new manager:

1. Know how to get on with your boss
2. Who you should build relationships with?
3. How to build relationships
4. Find out your teams services/deliverables
5. What issues are your team experiencing?
6. What does your customer feedback say about your service?
7. Who are your main customers?
8. What are the priorities?
9. What are the strengths of each member of your new team?
10. What is the morale like within the team?
11. When did the team last celebrate for a good job being completed?
12. What do your new peers think of your team?
13. What does your manager expect from you?
14. What are the key measures in place to measure your service?
15. What is you 3 month/12 month and 5 year plan?
16. Where is the company going?
17. Does your staff have individual/team/company objectives?
18. How well do you run meetings?
19. What meetings are required to manage your team/service?
20. How do you need to dress now, as the new manager?
21. What are your ambitions/goals?
22. Be flexible, courteous and persistent
23. Take accountability for all your team’s services/deliveries
24. Ensure you give credit where credit is due, to your staff
25. Take some risks
26. Grow your network
27. Ask lots of questions
28. Believe in yourself
29. How effective are the processes already in place - do they need changing?
30. What do your staff want fixed?
31. You are going to have to publicly speak - how good are you?
32. What can you improve within your team?
33. Which of your services are highly thought of and which aren’t?
34. How do you manage your emails?
35. Do you have the support of your family/spouse (you may be working longer hours in the first few weeks)?
36. What are you going to do to relax / re-energise?
37. What is stressing you out and what are you going to do to rectify it?
38. You must be super self-confident
39. Get yourself a mentor
40. What formal training would be beneficial for you?
41. How well do you know the companies products?
42. What tools do you need to be more efficient?
43. What customer feedback mechanisms are in place?
44. Get really efficient with your time management skills
45. Stay fit - exercise

46. Make sure your staff know what to expect from you
47. Make sure your staff know what you expect from them
48. Know the process for dealing with difficult staff
49. Know the latest Personnel rules / guidelines i.e. Age Discrimination act
50. Know how to say thank you
51. Motivate your staff by praising and giving honest feedback
52. Become assertive but not aggressive
53. Ask your new team, what changes they would make to improve the service
54. Remove small obstacles which are stopping your staff providing a great customer service
55. Treat all your staff the same - no preferences for your friends
56. Get on and do it - what ever it is - don’t suffer from procrastination
57. Share new knowledge / ideas gained with your peers and boss
58. Make your boss look great in public (and never do the opposite)
59. Praise your staff in public
60. Be a team player
61. Read your staffs most recent performance review
62. Never burn your bridges
63. Book out an hour a day to give yourself time to think / plan
64. Surround yourself with great supportive people
65. Understand the team’s finances
66. Embrace and accept change
67. If information is confidential, treat it that way
68. Develop your staff
69. Listen more than you talk
70. Question things you don’t understand
71. Go for a walk and think
72. Know how to delegate - fast!
73. Be optimistic about your performance
74. Deal with distractions - fast
75. Keep that work / life balance
76. Use your initiative
77. Be open to advice
78. Gather as much information about the job you can
79. Make sure you deliver your promises
80. Hold one-to-one conversations with all your staff, whether they report to you directly or not
81. Be comfortable with communicating the bad news as well as the good
82. Get rid of any thoughts that, just because you are a manager, it gives you the authority and the power to do whatever you feel like
83. Help your employees get rid of obstacles
84. Remember, work is being judged by how well your team performs
85. Put in place a continuous improvement plan
86. Take time to understand the business in which you are operating
87. Walk about and be seen
88. Don’t pretend you know all the answers
89. Don’t take all the credit yourself
90. Don’t expect employees to be perfect
91. Don’t ignore problems - identify and resolve them
92. Create a sense of urgency
93. Question past practices
94. Identify and implement efficiencies
95. Thoroughly research all sides of issues
96. Make decisions - don’t waver
97. Guide others who use your services
98. Take initiative. See what needs to be done, and do it. Don’t wait for tasks to be assigned.
99. Buy coffees / cakes for your staff to show you value them
100. Roll up your sleeves and get your ‘hands dirty’ when necessary
101. Have fun and laugh; don’t take things too seriously

So there you have them - 101 tasks / activities you will have to deal with now you are a Manager.

You will not be able to and won’t be expected to master them all. You will be expected to master a few. Use your natural strengths to decide which ones you are going to master and surround yourself with individuals who are masters in the ones you are not.

Then go and have a fantastic and rewarding career!

Andrew Rondeau transformed himself from a $4 an-hour petrol-pump attendant to a highly successful Senior Manager earning $500k every year.

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Weight Loss Tips - Diet Difficulties, Excuses, and How to Tackle Them

By Liz Copeland

If you want to eat it’s possible to be very creative and find all sorts of reasons for overeating. These reasons are, of course, excuses. But sometimes we find ourselves in situations where it is very difficult to eat as healthily as we’d like.

Here are some practical tips for dealing with common dieting difficulties:

Diet Difficulty #1 - I have to go away on business

Work out the meals where you can be good and the meals where it is not worth trying. If you are having a celebration meal at the end of a course or project that’s not the evening to go on your lettuce-leaf-only fast. But when it comes to the hotel breakfast you really don’t need a huge fry up (complete with fried bread and black pudding) every day. Be good at breakfast, choose the muesli or fruit and yogurt so that it fits in with your diet plan!

Diet Difficulty #2 - It’s a celebration

Whether business or personal, you don’t have to be a misery at celebratory meals. It’s okay for you to let your diet slip FOR THIS MEAL ONLY. It does not give you permission to abandon healthy eating forever. Do what the slim people do - over-indulge slightly when celebrating then get yourself back on track the next day.

And you don’t have to have chocolate pudding when you’ve already had two courses and a pre-dinner drink and wine. Then there’s the coffee and liqueur and the little minty chocolate that comes with the coffee. Enjoy your meal, but the world will not end if you don’t have all of these little (caloric) extras, so be aware of what you actually want to eat.

Diet Difficulty #3 - I’m visiting my in-laws/parent/boss

The same rules as for the celebration meal. But you also have to consider the hidden agendas here. If you have a “helpful” relative encouraging you to have “another helping, dear” or who says “only one won’t hurt” be prepared for this. Think of what you are going to say if you genuinely are tempted but want to stick to your diet. Practice rubbing your full stomach, saying “I couldn’t possibly, that was delicious” with a look of satisfied-but-full on.
your face. You may want to practice this in front of the mirror so you can act the part well - and when you do it for real, it may turn out to be true.

If they persist, you can escalate the acting and look pained if they suggest second helpings. This is a bit trickier with the boss, who may insist on second helpings. Inwardly remind yourself that you are too nervous to enjoy it and only a tiny second helping is needed. Here the social situation is a lot more difficult to decipher than the dietary one, so go carefully!

Diet Difficulty #4 - I feel like it/deserve it/have been looking forward to it

This is more the realm of emotional eating than dieting. If you really have been looking forward to a food and it consistently sabotages your diet efforts you’ll need to take a look at why this should be so. But in the short term, when you have that treat, savour every mouthful, taste it, enjoy it and ask yourself to stop when you have had enough. If you can discover how to listen to your body it will tell you.

Diet Difficulty #5 - It’s not the meals, it’s the snacks

A lot of snacking is situational. Do you always have the crisps/chips when you settle down to watch TV? Do you have to pick up that chocolate on the way home for work (every night)? Is it obligatory to taste the children’s food when cooking dinner? Has that large glass of wine you have while preparing supper become an essential part of the meal?

These are habits and there are various ways of dealing with them. Taking another route home from work; preselecting some low calorie snacks (choose them when you are not hungry, to be eaten later); take up knitting while you watch TV (melted chocolate and knitting do not go well together); cut down on TV time and do some exercise. These are just some of the ways you can counteract habits so think now of what you can do differently to get away from you bad food habits. Here’s wishing you dieting success and a healthy life.

As a Nutrition Coach Liz Copeland shows people who find healthy eating difficult how to change their beliefs and behaviours around food so they can eat well, look good and feel great. Receive her 5-lesson mini ecourse “Conquer Emotional Eating Forever” and a complimentary subscription to her newsletter No More Rabbit Food - weight loss tips for people who love food at ConquerEmotionalEatingForever.com
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!