IMPACT

Your workforce development magazine

REBOOT YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

HR NIGHTMARES

NAILING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Making data matter

Middle Management Mud

mental health in the workplace

THE FUTURE WORKPLACE IS ALREADY HERE

Money, fashion, health and more

Kombucha Craze

Issue 2 October 2018
Value - Priceless

ISSUE NO 2 OCTOBER 2018

The art of communication is the language of leadership

James Hume

From the Editor of IMPACT

It gives me great pleasure to bring you the second issue of IMPACT – Our workforce development magazine.

The response we had from our first issue was amazing. We now know that you enjoy reading about the challenges and triumphs of modern business and thank you for supporting our contributors. I am confident you will enjoy reading this issue just as much.

The workplace in 2018 looks very different to the workplace 10 years ago. As we struggle to keep up with an ever changing workplace landscape, we must continually remind ourselves that people are at the core of every organisation.

As stress levels rise and our time with family and friends decreases, we need to remember that technology and the digital world is there to make things easier for us, not more difficult. Technology is there to help save time at work, not make us spend more time at work and technology is there to support our relationships, not to replace them.

I was presenting to a young team a few weeks ago who collectively had never sent out a handwritten thank you card or thought about a personal gift for a special client and spent most of their time communicating with colleagues and clients by email rather than picking up the phone and starting a conversation.

All business is about relationships, the future workplace will need to rely on high level communication skills training being an integral part of any workforce development strategy.

More than ever before do we need these skills to stay ahead of the game. Once thought of and referred to as ‘soft skills’, now are recognised at the leadership skills needed to take us forward into the future.

Our tag line for IMPACT is **'The future workplace is already here’** are you ready for it?

I hope you enjoy the words of wisdom from our contributors in this issue of **IMPACT.**

Paula

PAULA SMITH
CEO OF THE GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF TRAINING AND PRESENTING
PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER CSP, AUTHOR AND YOUR EXPERT IN PRESENTATION INTELLIGENCE ®
LIFELONG LEARNER

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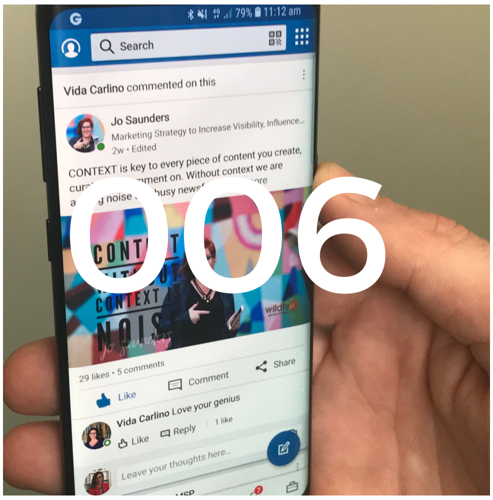
We invite you to contribute to the next edition of IMPACT
Send in your expressions of interest and articles to kayleen@gitp.com.au

www.gitp.com.au



Within the pages of IMPACT

A smarter way to build your home

Will you ever choose a traditional builder again?

On your feet

The perfect solution to being on your feet all day.

Splash your true colour at work

Tips to help you create a workplace wardrobe that truly reflects who you are.

Kombucha craze

Have you joined the Kombucha craze? Jess Longley from Short Street Kitchen gives us the truth about Kombucha.

PUBLISHED BY GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF TRAINING AND PRESENTING PTY LTD

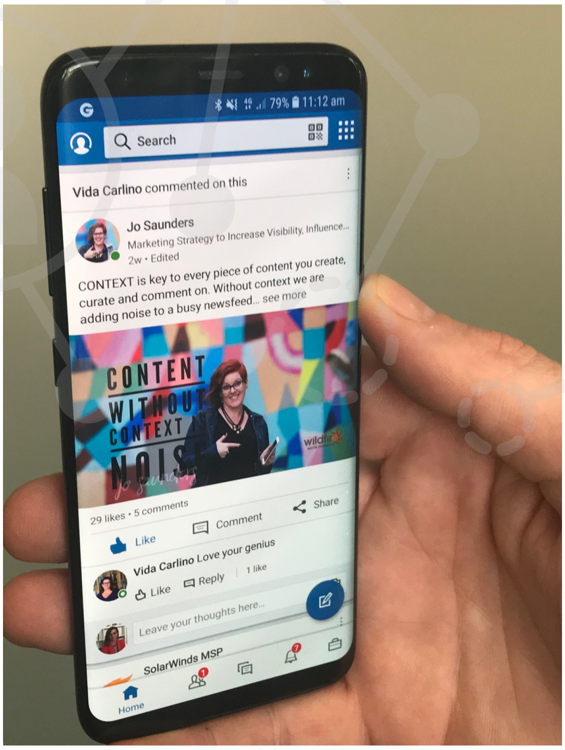
HOW TO GET NOTICED ON LINKEDIN

By Jo Saunders
Wildfire Social Marketing

LinkedIn is the biggest, most powerful professional social network, and ranks highly in Google search results.

To create the best digital first impression, it is important to pay attention to your LinkedIn profile.

It starts with building a professional personal brand and taking the right actions. Let's unpack what you can do to make an impact.



1. PURPOSE

Get crystal clear on your reason for using LinkedIn, and the reason you do what you do. Your purpose will be anchored by your values and your big vision, wrapped in your voice.

Take a look at your current profile and ask yourself does it...

- tell your professional story?
- uncover what drives you?
- share the problems that you solve?
- highlight your personality?
- use the language of your audience?

2. PRESENCE

Is your profile more than an online resume or biography? To really get noticed you need to have presence.

Think about the person who enters a room who has captured attention. They are confident, well dressed and friendly. How can you embody this online?

Presence on LinkedIn comes from the professional persona you have created – which is you at your business best. It is communicated in your profile photo, your background image, the way you communicate, your media, and the way you enter conversations.

Start with reviewing your profile photo. With seconds to make an impression, this photo is how people initially connect to you, along with the words you use in a conversation. Make sure your profile is dressed to impress. Is it you on a good day in business? Is your photo recent, sharp, vibrant, friendly and cropped to head and shoulders?

3. PROOF

Your LinkedIn profile must have 'social proof'. What someone else says about you is equally, if not more important than what you say about yourself. Your words and professional story will help your profile be found more often by the right people, but the words and endorsement from others will validate what you say.

Social proof shows up in recommendations, skill endorsement and the media links to other resources, such as portfolios and videos. Video evidence and testimonials are a fast way to connect and communicate the impact you and your organisation make.

4. PEOPLE

Whether you are in an internal role or a customer facing role, the way to get more from LinkedIn is to look at it as a relationship building tool. To be seen by the people that matter most, start by building a network of the right connections for you, and those who are influencers of those people.

How you connect is important. Stand out by personalising your invitation and using the connection process to start a conversation. Network online as you would in person.

LinkedIn works in 3 levels of connection. It is important to understand the relationships to really make an impact. To reach more people, you not only need to connect to the right people but engage with them.

Find your voice and start small

5. PUBLISH

Content around your area of expertise is part of building your authority and thought leadership and increases your visibility.

Create your own posts or long-form articles, or curate content from others with your thoughts. If writing isn't your thing, create videos or images to anchor your message. LinkedIn allows you to upload images and video natively, which tend to get more exposure than sharing content hosted outside of LinkedIn.

Should you wish to use video, keep them short and to the point. They can be up to 10 minutes, but I recommend aiming for 30 seconds -2 minutes.

Find your voice and start small. 1 high value post each week can give you better results than 5 posts each day. Always ask why are you sharing, and what you want to achieve. Aim for value over volume.

6. PROMOTION

Everything we do is promotion of our personal brand and our organisation, but always promote yourself through providing value, not by selling.

Social selling is a term you may hear, but it isn't about selling, it is about relationship building, and selling is a result of building relationships. Building trust takes time. LinkedIn is a long-term strategy but a highly effective one.

7. PRODUCTIVITY

If it sounds like there is a lot to do to get LinkedIn working for you, it comes down to focussing on the right activity. Know who you want to build a relationship with, what actions you will take and how you will measure your success.

Is it time your LinkedIn profile had a makeover?

Consistency is key to success on LinkedIn. Get noticed more by the right people for the right things

Jo Saunders
Australia's LinkedIn Demystifier

THE POWER OF STRATEGIC NETWORKING

WITH DUC PHAM
PERTH BUSINESS NETWORK

Many small businesses require the power of networking to generate revenue by building a pipeline of potential work. However, many business owners are stuck in the day to day operational aspects of the business and fail to keep a consistent networking schedule.

If you are able to, endeavour to work 'on' the business rather than in it. Making powerful connections and building a quality network is priceless. Moreover, if it's the lifeline of your business, then make sure you do it right. Free up your time for networking by delegating and outsourcing tasks which detract you from achieving your goals and priorities

There is a plethora of networking organisations and opportunities in WA, they range from free monthly events to a paid annual membership fee. Deciding which networking group to join is not that hard. Information is readily available and there is a good chance you already know someone in the network. The real question you need to ask should be: Is this network the right fit for me? To be able to answer that question you need to look introspectively. The key here is to identify the qualities and values that you hold dear because, ultimately, you want to connect with people who share the same values. The timeless, and well regarded, attributes of integrity, honesty and transparency are universally revered, and people are naturally drawn to those who exhibit these virtues.

It is vital at networking events to let others know why you are different and how your business creates value. If you can articulate this clearly, then your chance of securing a follow-up meeting is significantly improved. So, what Is your point of difference and value proposition? Many business owners tell me that personal service is what sets them apart from others, however, if everyone is out there saying this then the message is somewhat diluted. Having a concise and coherent Value Proposition and Point of Difference Statement is a step in the right direction to differentiating your business.

When I attend an event, my goal is to connect with two or three people then organise a follow-up meeting to explore opportunities. The ideal mindset is to identify ways to help people rather than think what is in it for me? because in the long term, there will be many more opportunities. Furthermore, approaching a relationship from a giving perspective is a much more sustainable and rewarding approach to conduct business.

HR NIGHTMARES

The most troubling HR issues for organisations might not be what you first think.

Stealing food products from the company's commercial kitchen. Watching porn on the company computer. Driving a vehicle whilst under the influence of drugs. Calling in sick and then being seen working elsewhere for another company. These are all true HR 'horror' stories however, real HR nightmares are often much less dramatic and regrettably for most business owners, seen as the least sexy parts of HR. Yet it's these issues which will come back to haunt the business if not done well.

Recruitment, terminations, performance management and misconduct investigations all need to be executed effectively to get the best return and reduce the organisational risks. Often businesses neglect these areas, or don't put in the required effort, as they're seen as being unimportant or purely compliance issues.

For HR professionals these are 'bread and butter' issues and if done well, can free up more time to undertake value add activities, focusing on culture and strategic planning, organisational development and engagement.

So, what are the best ways to avoid, or more effectively navigate, some of these HR nightmares?

1. Policies. Have some.

(I warned you it wasn't sexy!) Many companies don't have any in place which creates a huge risk. For some that do have them, they don't actually follow them. Many cases that involve workers taking action against their employer find in favour of the employee because the organisation failed to follow their own policies to the letter. That's a technicality!

2. Legislation. Keep updated.

Case law can change, and your practices need to be consistent with the relevant legislation. Stay up to date to make sure your decisions are based on **the most recent information.**

3. Investigate. Do it properly.

Too often rash, instinctual judgements are made about a situation without following proper processes to gather all relevant information. Use a trained investigator if it's complicated but whatever the process, make sure you afford procedural fairness to the person suspected of misconduct.

5. Document. Keep records.

Take, for example, performance management issues. On innumerable occasions, a manager has approached me to say their team member is not performing. My first question would always be 'have you spoken to them and where is it recorded?' Can you recall the exact conversations, word for word, that you had on the 12th February? No? Then make sure you document conversations and actions to assist with any future processes.

Overriding all these however, is the benefit to any company in having the right organisational culture. Those shared beliefs and values allow staff to operate at their best. Accountability, respect, loyalty, trust and collaboration are all increased when there is a strong culture.

Engaged employees, who are happy in their work, allow organisations to have better productivity, greater communication, less turnover and greater retention of corporate information. Oh, and to considerably reduce HR nightmares!

4. Select. Is an interview enough?

You want to recruit team members who are invested in the organisation and bring you a return be that through sales, productivity or service. Is one thirty-minute interview enough time to gauge if that individual will fit with your team? Look at what other methods you can use. The return on a good employee, far outweighs the initial cost of selection.

Carrie Puzzar
HR Specialist
Carrie & Co.


Middle Management Mud

Stuck in the Mud: the problem with middle management

Consider the concept of 'middle management mud'. You know, that group of people stuck between meeting the demands of senior leaders and the needs of the people that they lead. Whilst I totally empathise with their plight, the damage middle management mud creates for organisations is far reaching. In fact, I'm stunned by the frequency and consistency of themes that staff report relating to:

• "There's no clear direction - we don't plan well"
• "I'm not involved in decisions that affect me - we don't manage change well"
• "Communication is our biggest problem - it's on a need to know basis"
• "It's his/her way or the highway - there is no point in speaking up"

What's of interest to me, and the reason for the concept of there being a 'problem' with middle management mud, is the lengths that the 'middles' will go to in order to please the 'tops'. Noted, we have a natural desire to look good in the eyes of our leaders, however, the unintended consequence can be unhelpful defensive behaviours when we encounter conflicting priorities, mistakes, bad news and perceived obstacles or outcomes that are not in support of the leader's need - or what one perceives and assumes that need to be.

A classic example of what people will do in order to satisfy authority figures can be found in the research by Stanley Milgram in the 1960's, commonly known as 'the Milgram Experiment'. It's a fascinating yet disturbing study of obedience and the acceptance of authority. Milgram's research found that the majority of people went to extraordinary lengths to obey authority figures by delivering what they believed to be severely painful electric shocks of 450 volts to another human being [the research actors]. Later studies found that people assumed only a very small percentage of people would agree to hit the last switch; that the general reaction would be to refuse. Likewise, I'm hearing you say, "people wouldn't do that now". Yet, the results of Milgram's study were repeated last year. That's right, in 2017, 90% of the participants were willing to press the 10th lever in the experiment and administer what they believed to be extreme electric shocks.

This research is important because whilst leadership and management training can be helpful, it does very little to attend to the dilemmas middle management face when they are stuck between doing what they believe or have learnt to be better practice for leading teams and doing what is required to get the results that will please the perceived need of their senior leaders. The net effect is that they become 'stuck' in the mud, which can lead to the corruption of role. They may act in ways that are in direct contrast to their preferred leadership and management style [and ethics] because they believe this is what's necessary to be successful in the organisation. The findings from the Royal Commission into Banking, the Volkswagen scandal and Crown Casino allegations are all recent examples of just how far employees will go to appease management.

In the digital era, it is becoming more and more critical for employees to challenge and 'disrupt' the status quo. Yet, Milgram's experiment and later studies demonstrate just how difficult this is. Thinking [and hoping] that your employees wouldn't go to extremes in order to please you is a fundamental attribution error and it is possible that you simply don’t know the truth about the current reality in your organisation - that the 'middles' are likely to act in ways aligned with what they feel they 'ought' to do to get the results that the leaders want.
It is the 'tops' role and duty to know the current reality. Do the 'tops' make the time to check and verify that their 'middles' are getting the results in an ethical and humane way? Or is it easier to turn a blind eye; relieved that the results are documented [even if doctored] and keep the Board and shareholders happy? And are senior leaders stuck in the mud too - trying to appease yet another authority greater than them? The occurrence of defensive behaviours is real, it’s dangerous and we need to get better at talking about it.

Nicole Barrett,
Psychologist and
Principal Consultant,
Insight to Influence

SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES AND EMPLOYEES WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

By Tasha Broomhall
Director Blooming Minds

If an employee or colleague discloses that they have been diagnosed with mental health issues, do not assume that you know what that means for them. Even if you have firsthand knowledge of the same illness yourself, it does not mean that both of your experiences will be identical. It is important to respectfully ask about their experience, so that together you can determine how it may be relevant in the workplace and ascertain any adjustments or supports that may be required.

Thank them for trusting you with this information.

You could say something like: "I understand a little bit about what... (depression/ anxiety/ schizophrenia/bipolar) means for some people. Can you tell me what it means for you?" and then really listen to them.

Ask them about if it is likely to impact on them in their work functioning? If so, is there anything that might help with this?

Have an open honest non-judgemental conversation.

It is important to respectfully ask about their experience

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Supervisors and managers need to have a broad understanding of common mental illnesses and their possible functional impacts, so that when they identify these impacts, they will be able to meet their obligation to implement reasonable adjustments where possible. When designing reasonable adjustments, it is imperative that every effort is taken to balance the organisation's operational needs (including possible impacts on other employees) with the specific needs of the employee in question.

The model below can assist in designing and implementing reasonable adjustments:

DESIGN

Analyse (the core requirements of the job – e.g. key tasks, workflow issues, seasonal variations, KPI's, location/work area issues, etc.), Assess (the employee's functional capacity against these core requirements, using multiple sources of information – the individual, their supervisors, work output measurements, observations, etc.),

• Identify (possible reasonable adjustments to accommodate for the functional impacts).

ARTICULATE

The identified adjustments may require approval and discussion with HR/ senior management:

Engage and articulate the process and decisions to the employee as you progress.

Be conscious of confidentiality obligations and only share private employee information appropriately.

Determine with the employee how any visible adjustments will be articulated to other employees.

DOCUMENT

Keep a record of the process:

the determined adjustments,

time frame for trial and review,

KPI's for review and how the adjustments are being articulated to others.

FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

It is a good idea to start with a trial period and assess from there if the adjustments can or need to become permanent.

Some examples of adjustments:

Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctor/counsellor/ other supports and provide a private place to do so.

Flexibility with work schedule – hours/start time/work from home/change of duties.

Minute all meetings and expectations to assist with memory and concentration issues.

Don't force people to attend social events.

Be more inclusive in the design of work functions to meet a variety of needs and interests.

LEADERS SHOULD:

Consider how you can be flexible with leave; Encourage the employee to access your EAP provider.

Recognise the possible impacts on their functioning and explore reasonable adjustments with them.

Develop an overall Workplace Mental Health Strategy so employees know what support is available and leaders develop the knowledge and skills to fulfill their obligations.

RESOURCES FOR MANAGERS PREVENTION

www.prevention.workplace-mentalhealth.net.au
www.returntowork.workplace-mentalhealth.net.au
www.jobaccess.gov.au

The Access for Employers is all about supporting employers with the employment of people with disability. It has information about Support Services, Rights and Responsibilities, and resources.
1800 464 800

IS IT TIME TO GET SOME COACHING?

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE HAVE A GREAT TEAM AROUND THEM

Every successful person needs a bouncing board. A person that can listen to ideas, keep you on track, suggest, guide, inspire, support you and ensure you are moving in the right direction. Paula Smith our GITP CEO is also a busy executive, business and presentation skills coach. Her clients range from Elite Athletes, Franchisors, Professional Speakers, Experts, Business Coaches, Executives, Corporate and Community Leaders and Small Business Owners. They all have one big thing in common; they want to make an impact and that's why Paula chooses to work with them. She shares some tips on how to choose the right coach for you.

Are you ready to invest?

Coaching and consulting is an art and skill, not everyone has the skills to be able help their client's to grow. Choosing a Coach, Mentor or Consultant can be risky business. Ensure you choose one who has a proven track record, understands the distinct difference between all 3 modalities and one who aligns to your core values.

Are you ready to invest in your success?

3 simple tips to help you choose your next ***team you*** member?

Its all about chemistry

Yes, you need a bit of chemistry with your coach, just like any relationship.

This doesn't mean you are going to agree all the time. It just means you have to develop a trusting relationship with your coach. You need to trust each other.
When trust is high, communication is easy, effortless and free from judgement.
When you have high trust, you will feel more confident to step outside your comfort zone knowing your coach is there to support you all the way.
And do you share similar values? Values are what drive us, working with a coach whose values do not align to ours could be very challenging.

Skills and experience

Not everyone is cut out to be a coach. Just because someone is a great listener and is a caring soul doesn't necessarily mean they have the required skills and knowledge to be able to help others to grow and reach their full potential.
Check your potential coach has the required skills and experience to help/support you on your journey. Is developing people part of their skill set and/or qualifications or is it just something they do on the side to earn them a few extra dollars. Do you think they are winging it or are they committed to mastering their skills in this area?
As coaching is a de-regulated industry, it means anyone can start coaching tomorrow - Scary.

Are you looking for a:
Coach (expert in coaching process)
Mentor (been there, done that) or
Consultant (advice and know how please)

Results do matter

An exceptional coach doesn't come cheap, but you know what they say 'you get what you pay for'. Focus on the end value and you won't hesitate to invest.

Ask others - Not everyone wants to tell the world they are working with a coach, however most experienced coaches, who get results, will have lots of satisfied clients who would be more than happy to share their coaching experience.

Although most clients will be looking to achieve different outcomes, it will give you an indication of how professional and committed your coach will be working with you.

Be clear in the initial conversations, what you plan to achieve by working with a coach, mentor or consultant and be upfront asking whether you think the coach will be the right fit for you.

Your coaching journey should be one of great enjoyment and reward. And don't be shy about having different coaches, mentors and consultants for different goals and areas of your life. Choose the right one for the right things at the right time.

"A great coach will empower you, not make you dependant on a coach"

Paula Smith
Qualified and experienced in developing human and business potential

Contact Paula for a no-obligation chat

A CHANGE STORM IS COMING. HOW PREPARED IS YOUR ORGANISATION?

Change is now the number one organisational priority. How change capable is yours?

It's March and already three major initiatives have gone live. People are finally recovering from the anticipated dip in performance – operational metrics are improving – but a slew of bigger changes is coming down the pike. The Head of Operations is tired of telling her people when things will get back to "normal." She doesn't know and she fears she's losing credibility.

A big project is 12 months past go-live and first year benefits haven't been realised. The Sponsor doesn't know how to explain this to the Investment Committee. He won't meet his KPIs and he fears his next project won't get funding.

A major restructure has also been announced and everyone is nervous, wondering what it means for them. People are distracted and unproductive, and rumours are filling the void created by lack of information.

This isn't an exceptionally busy year. This is the norm.

In recent years the rate of change has increased drastically. The global business environment has become increasingly volatile, complex and ambiguous. With exponential improvements to technology, a demographically changing workforce and shifts in consumer expectations, change and transformation are now continuous and business as usual.

To succeed, organisations must be capable of changing quickly, efficiently and successfully.

Traditional step-based, per-project approaches to change management are no longer enough. The contemporary business environment doesn't afford long preparation times, nor does it provide periods of stability for review and improvement.

Today's business challenge is to develop change capability.

A change capable organisation is good at change. Its components facilitate ongoing change and transformation, which help its employees consider change as business as usual and not an obstacle to completing their work.

Change Synergy has partnered with Deakin University to develop an evidence-based, holistic model of change capability. We've identified three key dimensions, with each dimension containing several sub-dimensions.

1. Leadership commitment to change
In a change capable organisation, senior leaders actively role-model behavioural changes, encourage transparency and feedback, assume accountability for benefits realisation, and demonstrate commitment to building change capability at all levels in the organisation.

2. Effective application
This means there is dedicated change management infrastructure and methodology used consistently, initiatives are prioritised strategically and resourced appropriately, and leaders at all levels assume responsibility for capacity management so that change demands do not overload employees.

3. Change-ready environment
Are people ready and willing to deal effectively with change? In a change-ready environment, the workforce is comprised of individuals who are responsive to, motivated by, and ready to deal effectively with change. In addition, front-line leadership creates an environment of support and openness during change, and leaders at all levels are prepared adequately to perform their role in the change equation.

Organisations that are truly change capable will deliver initiatives faster, cheaper, more successfully and with less disruption. This means a greater return on investment and more opportunities to get ahead of competitors.

Consider your organisation or your clients. Are these elements in place and working together?

What can you do to improve?

Ian Roughsedge
Managing Director
Change Synergy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All business is about relationships

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Master Minds
Meaningful Meetings
Mindfulness in the Workplace
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NLP – Programmed for Success
Personal Leadership
Present with Impact – Exceptional Presenter
Productivity Power
Sales and Negotiation Success
Speak and Profit
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STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP? MAYBE IT'S TIME TO REBOOT YOUR PRODUCTIVITY!

Productivity in business is defined by some form of output such as increased sales or profit or improved processes, but it doesn't take into account the human element.

24/7 connectivity and increased pressure to get more done, means organisations are searching for the magic bullet (the latest tool or software program) that will "flick the switch" and turn on a productive, profit machine.

Whilst a strong business case might suggest it, technology on its own is often not the key to increased productivity.

Adding "stuff" without considering the human element can sabotage success and result in increased absenteeism, presenteeism and staff turnover.

Instead of adding to your already overloaded world of "stuff", the answer lies in simplifying what you use to reboot your productivity.

Here are three simple ways to reboot your own, or your team's productivity without adding more "stuff".

1. Time

We all know to lose weight you need to expend more energy than you eat, but when it comes to everyday technology like Word, Excel or Email, we tend to keep doing the same things, repeating the same processes taught by a well-intentioned colleague or what we've learnt along the way. Often we believe we know all we need to know and rate our expertise in comparison to those around us.

If someone like Richard Branson can find the time to read books, you can make time for you and your team to get better too. Whether it's regularly committing to reading or watching some "how to" videos on Excel to make analysing data easier, or working out how to get those darn numbers in Word to line up how you want them to, just focus on learning 3-4 new things each month.

Action: *Create a recurring weekly or monthly calendar entry with the goal to reboot your productivity by spending 10-15 minutes to learn something new about programs you use every day.*

2. Tools

When it comes to technology it's easy to be attracted to the latest app, tool or gadget, but realistically, do you NEED it?

When they were first released, many organisations purchased tablet devices for their field sales teams to use, but never gave the team any training, preparation or expectations on their use, then wondered why staff felt stressed, overloaded and frustrated.

Just because someone else is using something, doesn't mean you should.

Rather than adding more "stuff" consider changing the way you work with the programs you already use.

Not only is it less expensive, it simplifies the number of programs you need to know.

Action: *Reboot your productivity by taking time to explore apps, programs or tools you aren't utilising and stop using them. Identify the ones that you DO use but need to learn to leverage more.*

3. Team

Organisations categorise areas of business as departments or teams who often interact with each other. Reality is, many teams and individuals within teams tend to operate as silos.

Like a silo, we store knowledge and information within ourselves or our team. It is usually unconscious and we don't tend to actively share what we know, because we are either too busy, or have never been encouraged to.

The impact of not sharing comes to the light when someone leaves the organisation and what that person did, or knew, is exposed as a gaping hole, leaving you or your team needing to close the gap, and close it quickly!

The gap doesn't have to exist if time is taken to regularly communicate and share knowledge and insights within teams rather than assuming everyone knows whatever they need to know.

Action: *Reboot your own, and your team productivity by allocating time at your next team meeting to discuss everyday technology and how you use it.*

“If you’re not getting better, you’re getting worse.”

Here are three questions to get you started:

1. What’s working for you?
2. What’s not working for you?
3. What do you need help with?

Time + Tools + Team as a framework for building a collaborative and supportive environment for people to reboot their productivity. When we encourage our team to look at technology as a tool to streamline our work as opposed to BEING THE WORK itself we all become so much more productive and happy.

One of my favourite quotes comes from former coach of NBA Basketball team, the LA Lakers, Pat Riley. He says “If you’re not getting better, you’re getting worse.”

So what are you doing today to get better?

Donna Hanson
PRIME Solutions and Author of
Reboot Your Productivity
Certified Speaking Professional

SO YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK AT THE NEXT INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

BY PAULA SMITH

Tips for first timers

Tips for first time keynote speakers

So, you've been asked to be THE speaker at your industry conference? You are now feeling a mix of emotions, somewhere between excitement and sheer terror. If you believe you have something of value, accept the offer and get to work. There's a bit of work to be done if you want to create a powerful keynote presentation. If you put in the time, it can be a great career move.

A Keynote Presentation is described as the main presentation at a conference, seminar or event.

Professional speakers are usually called upon to be the Keynote Speaker at an industry conference, not always the subject matter expert, as Keynoters require a specific set of skills.

Event organisers sometimes underestimate the value of using professional speakers or a professional MC at their event because of the cost factor but they can make the difference between a hugely successful event and one that flops.

However, there are times when you, the industry expert, CEO of an organisation or the community representative has been asked to step up to the platform and share. Accept the challenge and get tot work.

Don't wing it. The preparation is always evident, so if you agree to speak, give your presentation all the attention it deserves.

Before you start planning remember consultation with conference organisers and key stakeholders is key.

Here is a bit of a checklist to help you plan and prepare for the big day.

When preparing a keynote presentation for the first time consider the principles below:

1. A keynote should be based around a central idea.

2. Choose your key message/s carefully and not too many.

3. Your opening should incite curiosity and set the scene, give them something they don't expect.

4. When designing your keynote – decide what type of journey to take your audience on.

5. Shine your thought leadership.

6. Will you be using slides, props or any other visual stimuli?

7. Less is more in a keynote – you are not providing a training session.

8. Is your content brain-friendly? E.g. metaphors, flow, pace and structure.

9. Variety is the key to engagement - share a relevant story too.

10. Are you comfortable on a big stage? Get some practice as it feels different and try not to get stuck behind a lectern.

11. Emotion trumps logic? How is your keynote emotionally relevant?

12. Have you rehearsed?

13. Are you presenting or performing? (Try a bit of both).

14. A keynote is not a speech. It is a journey.

15. Keep to time – don't steal anyone else's stage time.

16. Your closing should reinforce your memorable key message and the behavioural impact.

17. Do you need a little coaching to ensure you rock that platform?

Less is more in a powerful keynote

Paula Smith CSP
Keynote Speaker, Author, Master Trainer
and your expert in Presentation Intelligence

SURVIVING MY TEDx TALK

and raising awareness for Childhood Brain Cancer

An interview with Professor Moira Clay

There are a lot of special people across the globe who have presented either a TED or TEDx talk. This week, yet another TEDx presenter, along with many others I had the pleasure to coach, survived and thrived on the TEDx platform.

Professor Moira Clay's talk and message about childhood brain cancer was not only listened to by a local audience but her talk was streamed across the globe.

No pressure at all.

I caught up with Moira after her presentation to talk about her decision to apply to speak at a TEDx event and her journey along the way.

Have you got something to share?

Besides TED and TEDx platforms, there are many other groups across the globe giving researchers, philanthropists, academics, professionals, artists and thought leaders an opportunity to share their ideas, talents and causes with appreciative audiences at live and on-line events almost every day.

Thousands show up or log in to show their support, to listen to their favourite experts or to learn all about the latest trends and research. And the best thing of all, you can access most of it all for free.

Here is what Moira had to say about her journey to the TEDx stage.

You'll be able to listen to Moira's talk by following the links on the TEDx Fremantle website or facebook page and you can help support Childhood Brain Cancer by visiting www.theadventurers.com.au

Why did you apply to do a TEDx talk?

A friend told me about it and encouraged me to apply. I've always been a follower of TED so I jumped at the opportunity!

I thought it would also give me the opportunity to raise awareness about childhood brain cancer.

How did you go about planning your talk?

I reached out to several people I knew who had done TEDx talks – They all gave me some very useful advice.
I wrote my script and I practiced and then I practiced some more. I think it is fair to say that my cat knows the contents of my talk very well!

I accepted every bit of help offered by the curation team.
I did many practice sessions and rehearsals AND I worked with a great speaking coach!

I checked and double checked my facts and rehearsed some more.
I asked a former colleague to arrange a larger audience for a practice talk. This was so helpful as it gave me a practice run of managing nerves and also gave me some great feedback on content.

My coach said the preparation is always evident and I think she is right. I put in the work and I felt so prepared when the time came.

Which are your favourite TED talks?

The best TED talks are the ones that stay with me. Not just for a day or a week but for years! And even better are the ones that inspire me to take action.
My favourite is the first TED talk I ever saw - Simon Sinek's "How Great Leaders Inspire Action". Simon has a great way of taking you on a journey. His speaking style is very natural and easy to listen to. His thinking is backed up by great examples!
I had the privilege to meet literary agent Kristen Moeller before I knew she had talked at TEDxJacksonHole. I saw her talk "Forged by Fire" several months later online and it blew me away. Kristen shared the story of her home burning down and the impact this had on her. I felt every moment of her fear, her panic and her resolve. What I learned from that talk was not to sweat the small stuff.

How did working with your speaking coach help you?

Working with my speaking coach Paula was invaluable. She really shifted my thinking from "giving a lecture" (behind the safety of a lectern) to sharing a story (with no lectern and no notes).
Paula helped me with delivery, messaging, slides and what to wear on the day.

How were your nerves leading up to and on the big day?

The moment I was advised my application was successful, I was terrified! Every time I practiced and sought help, I could feel my fear subsiding. In the end, I knew I could do it and the main thing was controlling nerves on the day. My husband and I had prepared for the day and planned the morning out to be very relaxing and chilled out. He drove me to the venue and I sat with him to take in the first half of the program. After that, I retreated back stage to the green room and had some tea. Then it was my session! I was the second speaker and during the first speaker's talk, I listened to some very motivating music and just got into the zone. Then the MC was introducing me and my heart was racing but I stood tall, hands on hips (another coach tip), shoulders back and took some deep breaths. Then I was on and the hardest part was done!

How rewarding was the experience?

It was such a privilege to be selected to give this talk, among others of such high quality with such rich ideas to offer. The most rewarding thing was the journey. Learning from the curation team, the other speakers and the speaking coach was so valuable – it transformed me.
And now so many more people know about childhood brain cancer and how they can support the cause.

TELEPHONE TALK

ARE YOU MAKING THESE COSTLY MISTAKES OVER THE PHONE?

By Ava Lucanus

The telephone is often the first point of contact for your customers. That means when you answer the phone or make a call, you are responsible for the first impression of your company.

It takes only 3 seconds to form a first impression over the phone. Your caller cannot see you, so he/she will make an instant judgement of you and your company simply by the tone of your voice. In the crucial first 3 seconds, your customer will determine whether they trust you enough to do business with you or go elsewhere.

Studies show that unhappy customers, on average, will tell up to 20 people about their experience. These days, where social media is commonly used as an avenue for complaints, bad news travels like a rocket at the click of a mouse!

Can you afford to lose valuable customers?

Here are the 3 most common mistakes that could cost you in business and reputation and how you can avoid them:

1. Multi-tasking when answering the phone

Your company is cutting back on resources to improve their bottom line, so multi-tasking has become necessary. You hear the phone ring, but you need to finish typing that email or continue with the filing you were doing. As you pick up the phone, you are feeling distracted and unprepared.

Customer's Reality – I can hear the distraction in your voice tone. You are disinterested, not listening and too busy for me. I'm irritated because you've asked me again for information I've already given you.

The Solution - Prepare yourself to create the perfect first impression each and every time. As soon as you hear the first ring, stop what you are doing. Pick up a pen, put a smile on your dial and answer with an upbeat tone of voice on the third ring. You'll be more productive and make less mistakes. You may be encouraged to do two things at once to increase productivity, but it does not work when a phone call is one of those tasks.

2. Not using your caller's name

Your caller has already given you their name. You don't use it in the conversation. Worse still, you ask them again for their name.

Customer's Reality - You are not listening, you don't really care about me and you don't value my business.

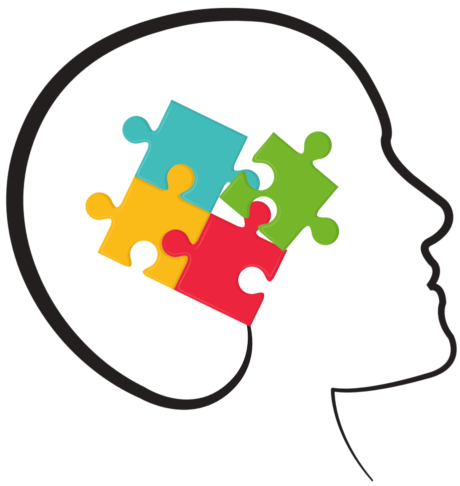
The Solution – When the caller gives you their name, write it down. To help control the call and convey interest, use it a couple of times during the conversation and at the end of the call.

3. Not following up with a phone call

Things haven't gone to plan, and you don't have an answer yet. There's no point calling your customer back as you don't have any news.

Customer's Reality – You have forgotten about me. You have broken your promise and the trust you have put so much effort into building is fast eroding.

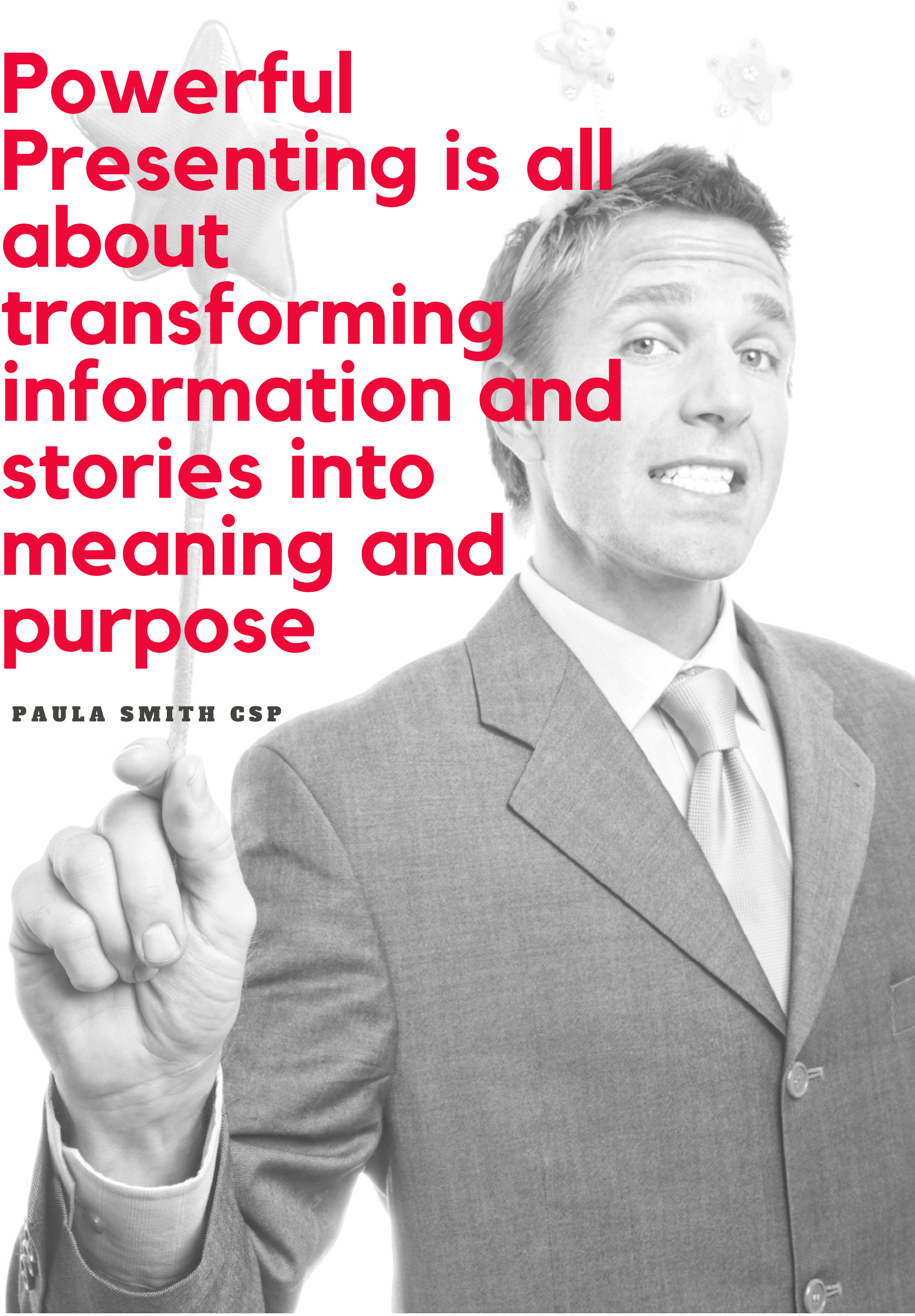
The Solution - Your customers are not mind readers and don't know what is happening at your end. Always give progress reports and offer alternatives when things don't go to plan and you're unable to give an answer by the promised time. Make it a practice to return phone messages the same day, even if you don't have all the information yet.



Practice these three tips daily and your customers will perceive you as professional, helpful, and trustworthy. And they will happily rave to others about their amazing experiences.

Looking after your existing customers saves you the expense of continually finding new ones. If you look after the customers you have they will do your marketing for you with rave reviews, If you don't, they will find someone who will and that will be your competitor.

Ava Lucanus
Customer Experience Specialist
Edge Communication


Powerful Presenting is all about transforming information and stories into meaning and purpose
PAULA SMITH CSP

OLD-HAT WISDOM FOR THE NEW-HAT WORKER

10 PIECES OF WORKPLACE WISDOM WE CAN'T LEAVE IN THE PAST FROM NINA SUNDAY - THE WORKPLACE MAVEN

1 Fine-tune your Handshake

Some people judge you by the quality of your handshake, so it makes sense to perfect it. A 'just right' grip is firm, web-to-web, coming in at the right angle, with your hand vertical and with a firm pressure – neither a 'bone-crusher' nor a 'limp fish'. One definite pump is fine, while some people like one-and-a-half pumps. And make good eye contact at the same time.

2. Handwritten thank-you card

Because the handwritten thank-you note is so rare these days, writing one helps you stand out. Writing a personalised handwritten note of thanks communicates that you value someone's contribution. A follow-up email or phone call might 'do', but it doesn't 'differentiate'.
A card sent in the mail exceeds expectations. When was the last time you sent something this personal?

3. The Morning Tea Effect

Group sit-down morning teas disappeared from workplaces from the late 80s when it became regarded as a time-waster. Convinced that a short, group morning tea away from workstations enhances team communication, I instigated regular morning teas with my team and here’s what I discovered. Face-to face communication over a short break builds trust, increases friendliness, reduces tensions and creates a positive work environment. It’s a problem-solving opportunity. To-and-fro email clutter is reduced. We return to our desks refreshed. Happy staff stay and clients enjoy dealing with a business where team members are happy and connected.

4. How to properly introduce a VIP

With introductions, remember one simple rule. Start by saying the name of the most important person first e.g. a visitor to your workplace, a senior manager. After that, everyone else is introduced to that person. Simply use the phrase ‘this is’.
< Important person’s name >, this is < lesser authority person’s name >.
Correct etiquette does matter.

5. Know when to pick up the phone

Ever found yourself rewriting the same email paragraph over and over? That's a sign to pick up the phone instead. To persuade someone to say 'yes' or there's no response to a request - pick up the phone. A deadline looms and you need to convince someone of the urgency - it's time to phone. Need to convey disappointing news? Pick up the phone.

6. Greet people upon arrival and leaving

Make it a point to say hello to everyone in your work area upon arrival and good-bye at end of the day. It’s civil, it’s friendly and it’s common courtesy, which is the glue of team relationships.

7. Don’t eat lunch at your desk

Too much sitting is bad for your brain and decision-making. Instead of eating lunch ‘al desko’ (at your desk), go for a short break, stretch your legs and refresh your brain. You’ll be more productive when you return.

8. Dining etiquette some people don’t know

Unless you want to display your 'don’t know your table manners', here’s what you need to know:

*At a group dinner, bread plate is on your left, drink glass is on your right.

*How to eat a bread roll: Place a small pat of butter on your bread plate. Break off with your hands a small piece of bread and, while holding this piece in your fingers, butter it, one bite at a time. (Never butter the entire roll at once).

*Correct cutlery grasp - index finger points down the back of the fork or knife towards the tines or blade.

*Spoon soup away from you.

*Cutlery code to indicate to the server you are ‘still eating’ is utensils separated at 8 o’clock and 4 o’clock. To indicate ‘finished eating’, place utensils together with handles towards you, at 6 o’clock, or to the right at 4 o’clock

9. Clothing stains

Of 1000 people surveyed in Australia by Galaxy Research, one in seven admitted they are okay going to work with a stain on their clothing. Yet more than 60% of those surveyed form a negative opinion of wearing stained clothing in public.

10. Talking about money

Asking a colleague from the same organisation how much they earn is the biggest no-no at work! It’s confidential and asking can create waves.

Nina Sunday CSP
Speaker, Author of 'Workplace Wisdom for 9 to Thrive'
Communication and Influence Expert
BrainpowerTraining

PLAIN ENGLISH FOR BETTER BUSINESS WRITING

By Shirley Taylor - Singapore

Do you think using big words and long sentences will impress your readers?

Do you think using a long phrase is better than one word?
Do you think it's fine to use abbreviations, jargon and management buzzwords?
Do you use phrases like 'Please be informed' at the beginning of some sentences?
If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be making your writing at work much more difficult than it should be. And more importantly, you're making reading much more difficult for your reader.

I'm really happy to see that more organisations are taking action to simplify their language in official business documents and messages.

This movement is called Plain English.

Words Have Power

With limited time and so much mail in our inboxes, readers want to read messages that are simple and clear. Readers want to read and understand messages easily, and know exactly how to reply.
Readers today deserve plain English.
If your readers are confused or can't focus when reading your messages, you could be missing out on countless business opportunities.
Writing in plain English will mean you can click 'send' with confidence and your reader will easily understand what you're saying. And that means you are more likely to get the right response.

So what Is Plain English?

Plain English is writing that's fuss-free and 'fluff-free'. It's easy to read and easy to understand. Plain English involves using short, clear sentences with everyday words. Plain English contains no redundancies or jargon.

Tips For Writing In Plain English

Using plain English will help you and it will also help your readers. So before hitting 'send', here are some tips to help you fine-tune your messages.

Get straight to the point

Delete any redundant introductions in your sentences, like Please be informed, Kindly be advised, I am writing to inform you.

Use every day words

Simplify long or old-fashioned words, for example use share or distribute instead of disseminate, agree instead of concur, about instead of regarding, please instead of kindly.

Keep your sentences clear and crisp

Watch out for jargon and buzzwords like think out of the box, moving forward, double down and game changer. Consider how you can delete them or say such phrases differently.

Focus on active verbs

Look for long phrases that could be reduced to a simple active verb, such as conclude instead of come to a conclusion, improve instead of make an improvement, sign instead of help me to sign.

Make your writing reader-friendly

Put the reader's head on. Read it as though you are the reader and if anything is not quite clear, change it. Simple, clear and precise language will help you cut down on all the email ping-pong that's happening in inboxes all over the globe. It will also help you to achieve better results.

Avoid redunancies

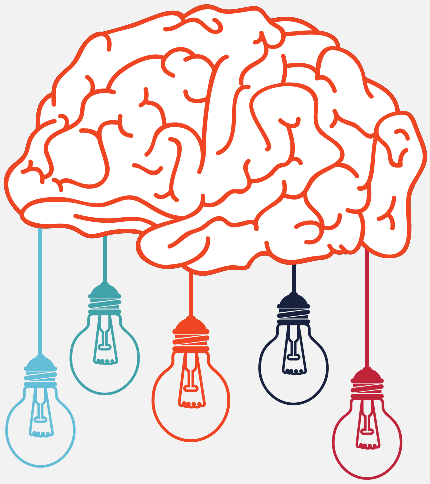
Remove unnecessary words in phrases such as these: 3am in the morning, advance notice, basic fundamentals, in accordance with, in order to, and repeat again. Using unnecessary or redundant words makes your writing weaker.

Avoid acronyms

Be careful with acronyms. There may be several possibilities and too much room for misunderstanding, so it's safer not to use them. For example, some people use FYA to mean for your action, while others mean for your approval.

:
Shirley Taylor CSP
International Speaker and Bestselling Author
Connecting with Heart . Writing with Heart .
Leading with Heart
Shirley is based in Singapore and travels regularly to Australia

MAKING DATA MATTER



KRISTEN TURNBULL,
DIRECTOR, COREDATA WA

Business intelligence is one of the key tools we have in our armoury when it comes to driving business growth – but sometimes the sheer volume of data can be overwhelming.
You're probably gathering a whole host of useful information in the daily interactions you have with your customers, even if it's accidental, rather than a deliberate strategy.
In today's digital environment, accessing the data is not the biggest challenge; the key challenge is knowing how to use it to your advantage.
Years of researching consumer behaviour tells us that people often make decisions based on gut instinct, rather than evidence.
Sometimes our gut serves us well, but when it comes to business decisions, it's too risky to leave things to chance.
By ensuring the strategic decisions you're making are evidence-based, you can drive growth and transformation, turning your business into a market leader and helping you build a sustainable competitive advantage.

How can you use data to make smarter decisions?

There are a number of common problems facing companies that business intelligence can help solve. Some of these include:

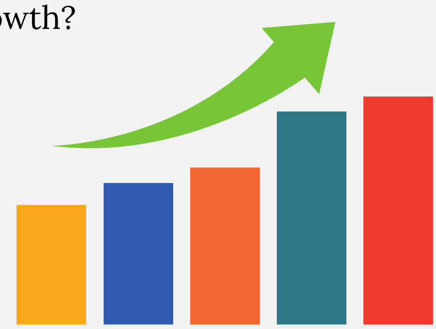
Customer attrition: why are my customers leaving, and what would make them stay?

Building brand awareness: how can I increase awareness and consideration of my products and services?

Manufacturing relevance: how can I get the right information to the right people, through the right channels, at the right time?

Improving SEO: how can I get more people to my website so they hear about my services?

Increasing customer satisfaction: how can I make sure my customers stick around and, better yet, use them as a referral source to drive organic growth?



What data can you leverage?

Many businesses are already capturing useful information that can be applied to these common problems throughout the customer journey.
First and foremost, you'll have demographic information that tells you a bit about who they are. Depending on what your business does, this might range from just a name and email through to age, location, occupation and other personal details.

Human problems are rarely solved by data solutions alone

Turning data into insight

It's important to remember though, that human problems are rarely solved by data solutions alone. It's not the data itself that's useful, it's the way in which you interpret it and turn it into insight that makes it meaningful for your business.

The way in which you use the information at hand will depend on your objectives. Do you want to personalise the service you're providing by tailoring your marketing and communications? Do you want to start a conversation with your target market that demonstrates you understand them? Or are you seeking to improve the efficiency of your internal operations?

Whatever your objectives, use the data to tell a story – whether that's a narrative for your business internally that helps you refine the way you approach operations and customer service, or a narrative for your market via thought leadership and engagement.

Making data matter is all about taking disparate sources of information and bringing them together in a way that enhances your understanding of your customer or market. It's up to you to use those insights to drive profitable growth and differentiation.

Kristen Turnbull,
Director, CoreData WA

WHAT'S YOUR MAGIC NUMBER FOR RETIREMENT?

BY KATIE MCDONALD
FINANCIAL ADVISER
BOUTIQUE ADVISERS

'According to The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, a comfortable income in retirement for a couple is $57,665, and $42,158 for a single person

What's even more interesting about these incomes, is just over half of all couples, and only 22% of single people, are on track for a comfortable income.

So, are you on track for a comfortable lifestyle in retirement? Does, the above income, represent your comfortability?

The aim of the game is to spend less than you earn and invest the rest. But if you don't know how much you will need in retirement, then how do you know how much to invest?

The last thing you want to do is be living on baked beans now, only to live on caviar in retirement. Similarly, you don't want to be having smashed avocado every day for breakfast, and then find yourself living on baked beans when you retire. The ideal situation would be living comfortably now and when you retire just keep on living.

Income

This brings us back to your magic retirement number; everyone's number will be different.

Step 1 – Write down your combined annual household income, after tax

Step 2 - Write down your annual mortgage repayments

Step 3 – Minus your net income from your mortgage repayments.

This is your magic retirement income number.

As an example, Sarah and James earn $100,000 per year each, which equals $147,766 after tax.

They pay $40,000 a year in mortgage repayments, and while they wish they saved money, the reality is they spend everything they earn.

Sarah and James's comfortable lifestyle requires an income of $110,000 per year (rounded). Which is a lot higher than the $57,665 that the government estimates.

You now know what income you need, to lead a comfortable lifestyle. What are the next steps?

Build your net assets (excluding the family home) up to a level, to create an income equivalent to your magic retirement number.

Assets

Step 1 - Write down all your assets (excluding your home)

Step 2 – Write down all liabilities including your mortgage

Step 3 – Minus your assets from your liabilities - this will give you your net assets

Back to our example, Sarah and James have the following assets.

Assets

Combine super $230,000

Investment property $500,000

A share portfolio $20,000

Total Assets $750,000

Liabilities

Investment property mortgage $330,000

Home Mortgage $150,00

HEC debt $23,000

Car Loan $10,000

Total Liability $513,000

Net Assets $237,000

The rule of thumb to use when estimating an income from assets is 5%.
This means Sarah and James assets, will generate around $11,850 income a year.

Sarah and James over the next 20 years, will need to increase their net assets to $2.2m, so they can retire comfortably.

Do you need help with your finances? Do you want to live well now and in the future?

The information above is of a general nature. It does not take your specific needs or circumstances into consideration, so you should look at your own financial position, objectives and requirements and seek financial advice before making any financial decisions.

The smarter way to build your new home

Thinking of building a new home? Choose the smarter way.
As human beings it's almost a prewired default in our minds to go for what everyone else is doing when we make choices.
When it comes to building a new home nothing changes. Most of the time we follow the pack and choose a cookie cutter predesigned, pre finished home, safe in the knowledge that because it's always done that way we won't miss a trick.
Nothing could be further from the truth so the canny thinkers amongst us are now finding a better, smarter way to build!

Enter the role of a building broker

So what does a Building Broker actually do?.

You might reasonably ask. Almost all of us have used or know people that have used a mortgage broker. In pretty much the same way a Building Broker will match your needs with the best value builder just as you would ask for the best mortgage lender from a mortgage broker.
A good building broker will not only get you a great price, they will design you a wonderful home full of your own choices and then help you right through the building process welcoming you in as you take the keys from the builder at handover.

Before getting far into the process, think about where you want to live and what the key factors are that you must have in a home. Make sure that the block you choose meets those needs and if you're not sure if it does, get some advice first. Most good brokers will even help you find and choose the right block so it's never too early to get to know a good broker and ask for their help. Relying on years of experience from a good broker can save you thousands of dollars making a mistake on that ideal block which turns out to be anything but ideal when you put your dream design on it!

Paul Cheverall
Managing Director of
Home Builders Advantage
Perth's biggest building
broker

Important things to think of are:

• How do I maximise any views?
• How do I make the most of the winter sun?
• Are there any slopes or changes in level on the block that would get me a split level home?
• What else is built/being built around my block? Am I building something in keeping with those other projects? Will I end up with the most expensive house on the street and over capitalise?
• Single storey or two storeys? Both great layouts in their own right but each with huge positives and negatives linked to your time of life and lifestyle.

The list goes on and on so try to avoid making decisions without sound advice. A good broker will happily hold your hand through all or any of these decisions before even putting pen to paper to start a design process.
Once you've got the block, walk through the home design process with the broker's team, let them guide you to specify great layouts, latest finishes and probably, most importantly, let them manage the budget to get you as much as you can have for the best price.
Take the smarter route, make the smarter choice. Don't go it alone. Visit a building broker and make the right choice when building your new home.


ON
YOUR
FEET

On your feet

Louise Matson
Founding Director
Louise M shoes
Specialising in Luxury Shoes for Airline Cabin Crew and Corporate Women.

A subconscious decision you make every day is impacting your ability to achieve your short and long term professional and personal goals. Have you the ultimate mobility to move when needed? Your choice of footwear affects how you go about your day, your physical and mental health, sociological comfort, and your ability to achieve now and in the future. You can practise positive mind set strategies and list daily outcomes, but the capability to be on your feet daily for years to come will be a determining factor.

The foot has 26 bones, 33 joints, and a network of more than 100 tendons, muscles and ligaments resulting in a high chance that we will experience foot pain at some point in time affecting our ability to focus and achieve and reach ultimate health and wellbeing. As the ancient art of reflexology knows, if our feet are in pain it affects the rest of the body.

It has also been determined that there are physical and mental health benefits from being on your feet. These can vary by purely lifting your mood, and subsequently contributing to an improved mood in people around you, to significant improvements with sleep, stress, depression, and blood pressure.

The World Health Organisation provides the recommendation of 10,000 steps in a day, estimated to be 100 minutes of moderate walking. This is possible for the majority of us to achieve in our daily routine without having to schedule time with a pair of sneakers on our feet. Rather than making 10,000 steps yet another goal to achieve in our day, change the way to move throughout the day and simply choose to walk wherever you can.

There are sociological considerations that also affect the way you manage being on your feet. Our chosen profession, age and experience will influence our decisions along with how we want to be portrayed by our peers and the way we feel. We either want to fit in or stand out with positive lasting impressions being important to us.

Surprisingly, it only takes four seconds to make a first impression and eight subsequent positive meetings to undo a person's negative opinion of you, so it is important to consider how you would like to be remembered by those you meet. We have all seen the high-profile lawyer in bespoke suits and designer shoes to match. As a woman you may choose a killer high heel for a powerful presentation, or a slender block heel that provides the ability to move from desk to boardroom and beyond. For men it might be deciding between an Oxford, Derby or Monk. You have probably made these decisions sub-consciously if not consciously before.

Make a daily decision to wear shoes that will serve you well to protect your health and well being now and in the future, while ensuring your sociological comfort is supported too. Your daily footwear choice could be the difference in succeeding and achieving your professional and personal goals.

5 things to look for when choosing your perfect shoe

1) Quality materials for long lasting comfortable wear.
2) Heel Heights appropriate for the events you attend.
3) Heel shapes that ensure stability and confidence.
4) Good structure for foot, knee, hip and back support.
5) Reputable retailers that are honest and care.

The colours that you choose to wear in the workplace could have a significant impact on your professional relationships and your corporate success.

SPLASH YOUR TRUE COLOUR AT WORK

Are you someone who judges a (metaphorical) book by its cover?
We like to think we don't. But we do. As human beings we're programmed to.

We make judgements on other people all the time – just as they are making judgements on us - and these judgements are based primarily on how we look.

Imagine that you've just been introduced to someone; how are they going to determine your professional or personal standing if it isn't by how you choose to dress yourself?

And it's colour that makes the most immediate impact on our visually-wired brain.

So if colour is so important in making a first impression, how can we wear it to project the professional persona that we want to communicate to our employers/ colleagues/clients/employees.

Here are three easily adoptable tips that will help you to choose clothes that will communicate your professional intentions.

How to look more authoritative

Consider wearing a black or navy suit with a white shirt or blouse. The high contrast of dark and light in your outfit will give your appearance a more authoritative, intelligent and empowered look.

This can be an especially useful tool if you're in a traditional white-collar corporate workplace, you're young or have a naturally youthful appearance and fear that you're not being taken as seriously as you'd like.

How to look more approachable

Soften your look by choosing colours that sit closer to the lighter end of the spectrum. Pale blues, beiges, pinks, soft greys, off whites and other more muted colours look much less austere and relaxed. Or you might choose darker colours but avoid the contrast between darks and lights.

Combining softer colours in the workplace can help you to appear friendlier, kinder and more approachable.

This can be useful if your work place is in the care or service industry. Or perhaps you work with vulnerable clients or are in a customer service or support role.

How to look more dynamic

If you're in a more creative industry, such as advertising, graphic design, public relations or an art curator, you will probably have a desire to express your creativity through your appearance – whilst still appearing professional.
Splashes of bright colour (scarlet, cobalt blue, violet, hot pink and orange) and patterns within a traditional outfit can help to communicate your high energy personality. These pops of loud colour will communicate to your clients and colleagues that you enjoy playfulness, experimentation, and exciting ideas.

So who do you want to be in your workplace? What sort of role are you aspiring to? And are your colours a good reflection of that vision?

To avoid being overlooked for that dream corporate promotion, appearing too unapproachable to your valuable customers or too traditional for your creative job interview, give a moment's thought to the clothes you're wearing and what their colours are saying about you.

Kate Bird
Personal Colour & Image Consultant
Colour me Kate

KOMBUCHA

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Despite its recent appearance in the lunch rooms fridges and on the shelves at the supermarket, kombucha has actually been around for thousands of years and was known in China as 'the tea of immortality'

What is kombucha?

Put simply, kombucha is fermented tea. It starts as a mix of sweet tea and is fermented with the help of a 'SCOBY' – aka 'the Mother', which stands for a 'symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast'. The bacteria in the SCOBY consume the sugar and leave behind a slightly sour, effervescent drink that is rich in vitamins and probiotics

Your first thought might be that anything fermented means rotten, mouldy or alcoholic, but fermentation is an ancient process of food preservation that also comes with health benefits. Don't be grossed out by the idea of drinking something fermented as your fridge is probably full of fermented foods right now – things like cheese, cured meat, yoghurt, beer and wine.

Is kombucha healthy?

You might have read that kombucha is a 'cure-all' for specific ailments and chronic disease, but we prefer to think of it as an adaptogen which is anything that normalises and balances all body systems. Kombucha can aid digestion and improve nutrient absorption and is rich in the B vitamins and probiotics. Being a fermented drink, there is always a small amount of residual alcohol, but it is usually less than 2%.

Is the shop stuff the real deal?

Store bought kombucha may be pasteurised to improve its shelf life which can destroy the live bacteria. It may also contain added sugar, so check the label carefully or learn how to brew your own – it's easy! Making it yourself allows you to regulate the sweetness and acidity and you know that it is the real deal containing live bacteria.

We offer workshops that demonstrate the whole process from start to finish and you leave with everything you need to go home and start brewing. The best part is that you can tailor the flavouring – past workshop favourites include mango and passionfruit, raspberry and vanilla and lemongrass, kaffir lime and ginger. If you are concerned about time, it takes about 15 minutes per week to tend to your brew and provide you with an ongoing supply of kombucha.

Jess Longley
Founder and Creative Director at
Short Street Kitchen

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