

HREye...

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Quote of the Month

“The true way to render ourselves happy is to love our work and find in it our pleasure”. Francoise de Motteville, (c.1621-1 689)

If you would like to contact HRI about this newsletter please contact Karen Adams on 0870 351 3510 or email k.adams@hri.co.uk

Foreword

Happy New Year to all our readers.

Talent management is a top strategic issue for HR professionals in 2001 according to ORC's Worldwide HR Priorities Survey. Access our free, online New Year Talent Management Health Check questionnaire available on our survey site : http://www.pengower.com/apps002/_penLogon.aspx?Fairplace:SurveyManager:Respondent&ident=wxvfm dJYw0q

This is a long link and works best if you cut and paste it into your internet browser or you can use the "click here" link in our covering email.

In this first issue of 2001 we look at changing demographics and research that considers developments in the job market and the impact of information technology on work. A more knowledge-intensive world of work, where people work with their heads more than their hands, appears to be a relatively benign development for workers.

Communication is a regular feature and in this issue we point you to research by Investors in People that shows poor communication around promotion issues driving many employees to switch organisations to further their careers. We also look at research from CHA showing that UK employees say the best leaders are those able to communicate clearly and simply. Sadly we also report on a CIPD survey that finds relationships between employers and employees in many British workplaces are like "a marriage under stress". Complementary to this is an item from the Harvard Business Review, that we précis, which looks at how new managers cope with their first leadership role and misconceptions about what it means to be in charge.

The REC reports that a healthy demand for staff is driving staff salaries up so that employers will have to differentiate themselves from competitors if they want to attract the best. We look again at internet recruitment and networking sites. Be careful what you post on these sites - there have been several stories recently of applicants whose extravagant claims were more widely disseminated than they expected! Fame for all the wrong reasons is not what you are aiming for. Recent research found that about 63% of employers **decided against hiring** someone after seeing content the person had posted online.

Age discrimination crops up again with more than 16% of HR managers admitting they are aware of discriminatory policies and practices within their organisations. On a lighter note we look at the decline of the great British lunch hour as half of the UK workforce does not have time to leave work to get lunch and 18% of workers never take their full break. Being tied to the desk like this is a bad thing - it's important to try and get into the habit of **taking a break to help keep your mind and body properly energized.**

We review an older article from our favourite business journal the Harvard Business Review. Herminia Ibarra's December 2002 item on career change is as relevant today as when it was first published and a natural topic for the New Year. Ibarra takes a hard look at the usual means of approaching career change and recommends some positive action. Career transition takes time and while you may think you need to plan ahead "Change actually happens the other way around. Doing comes first, knowing second".

As always we would be delighted to hear your views.

Carole Bodell
Managing Director
HRI

Contact Carole on c.bodell@hri.co.uk

Managers & Professionals Dominate New Job Growth

Relatively well-paid managerial, professional and semi-professional type jobs have grown faster than any other sort of work in the UK over the last decade, new analysis from The Work Foundation reveals. The report finds that far from there having been a boom in low-paid, low-skilled service sector work since the mid-1990s, in fact, low paying jobs have grown less significantly than 'good jobs' at higher levels of the labour market.

The report finds that among men, managerial jobs grew by 12.73%, professionals by 8.13%, and associate professional jobs (such as nurses and computer technicians) by 16.98% between 1995 and 2005. More striking still is that fact that the decade has seen more women move into managerial and professional work. Among women, the number of managers grew by 29.53%, professionals by 15.01%, and associate professionals by a huge 56.89% (although the overall numbers of workers in these categories remains relatively small - for example, women in associate professional roles comprised just 16 per cent of all workers in 2005)*.

Ian Brinkley, director of the knowledge economy programme at The Work Foundation and co-author of the report, said 'The idea that the decline of manufacturing has meant the end of decent jobs paying decent wages for vast numbers of people is clearly unfounded. Economic change is never painless. However, a more knowledge-intensive world of work, where people work with their heads more than their hands, appears from these findings to be a relatively benign development for workers.

'The report challenges a hefty number of popular theories. In the 1990s, it was widely claimed that work and society were becoming more divided, while breaking into the elite would be nigh on impossible. That story no longer looks right. Instead, what seems to be happening is that, if anything, the world of work is upwardly mobile. Although there has been some polarisation among men, with the growth of shelf-stacking, van-driving type jobs alongside the lawyers, accountants, and management consultants, overall the knowledge economy does not seem to be creating a new class divide. And among women in particular, there seems to have been a fairly smooth transition into higher skilled, higher paying work.'

The report also shows the impact of the spread of information technology on work. Administrative and secretarial work, traditionally the preserve of women, has fallen sharply, while personal service jobs - jobs which are by their nature immune to computerisation and off-shoring - have risen. And for men, process, plant and machine operative-type jobs have also fallen.

Insight into the nature of work in the UK can also be seen in the most popular low-paying and high-paying occupations (including both full and part-timers)**.

In 2005:

The **top five low-paying occupations for women** were: sales assistants; care assistants; educational assistants; kitchen and catering assistants and general office assistants.

The **top five high-paying jobs for women** were: marketing and sales managers; hospital and health service managers; personnel managers; primary and nursery teachers; and management consultants, actuaries, economists and statisticians.

The **top five low-paying jobs for men** were: sales and retail assistants; goods handling and storage occupations; kitchen and catering assistants; cleaners and domestics; labourers, builders and woodworking trades.

The **top five high-paying jobs for men** were: marketing and sales managers; ICT managers; construction managers; medical practitioners; and software professionals.

However, while it is jobs at the top that have grown most quickly, the UK still has relatively large numbers of people in low skilled, low-paying jobs. Some 7 million jobs require no qualifications, while 26% of men and 35% of women earn below the median level of income.

Dr Rebecca Fauth, co-author of the report, said: 'The knowledge economy deserves a reasonably clean bill of health. Contrary to the predictions, it does not appear to be creating a new underclass. From our analysis it seems that more workers are moving towards professional and managerial work over the last decade.

'But with labels like 'manager' there is always an issue of 'title-creep' - people calling themselves managers when 'administrator' or 'supervisor' might be more accurate. Unfortunately, statistics do not really help with such issues.'

* Percentages computed by per cent in 2005 minus per cent in 1995 divided by per cent in 1995 - i.e. the difference in percentages divided by the original percentage.

** High-paying is defined as more than twice the median level of income in both 1995 and 2005. Low-paying is defined as 60% of the median level of income.

Efficiency and Labour Market Polarisation by Rebecca Fauth and Ian Brinkley is available from The Work Foundation. The report is the third from the knowledge economy programme, www.theworkfoundation.com

Internet Recruiting and "People Search Engines"

As the saying goes, "Information wants to be free." Savvy job-seekers know this. Millions of people go online every day to research companies and compare potential employers. Company web sites, job boards and other recruiting sites, and blogs posted by disgruntled former employees and upset customers provide a treasure trove of information to help us make career decisions.

The web is also finding application for recruiting purposes. Increasingly, employers are using social and professional networking sites and "people-focused search engines" to identify and evaluate candidates early in the recruiting process.

While referrals still rank as the most valuable recruiting source, according to a recent Direct Employers/Booz Allen Hamilton study, social networking sites have edged out employment web sites as the number two recruiting source, based on the number of new hires recruited and employers' recruitment budget allocations.

One such tool is Zoominfo, which bills itself as "the premier summarization search engine." Zoominfo approaches information found on the web like pieces of a digital jigsaw puzzle. It aggregates and cleans data and manipulates the pieces until a clearer picture of each subject emerges. As of November, 2006, the site boasts profiles on more than 33 million individuals and 2.6 million companies.

Variations include Ziggs, which focuses only on professionals and Blue Chip Expert an invitation-only site for top-calibre hires. Newcomer Spock will take the invitation-only approach to the masses. Spock aims to have 100 million profiles when it goes live in late 2006.

Internet recruiting isn't limited to third-party search tools, however. Some recruiters use candidates' own words to weed them out. According to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, one in four employers use social networking web sites such as Facebook.com or MySpace.com to screen out applicants based on the information they post there. A CareerBuilder.com survey found that about 63 percent of employers decided against hiring someone after seeing content the person had posted online. Remarkable!

As user adoption reaches the tipping point, expect these sites to become even more robust and include more tools and options that delve even deeper into personal and professional lives.

From "The Herman Trend Alert," by Roger Herman and Joyce Gioia, Strategic Business Futurists. www.hermangroup.com. The Herman Trend Alert is a trademark of The Herman Group, Inc.

Becoming the Boss

The January issue of Harvard Business Review carries an article by Linda A. Hill that looks at common misconceptions about what it means to be in charge.

Even for the most gifted individuals, the process of becoming a leader is an arduous, albeit rewarding, journey of continuous learning and self-development. The initial test along the path is so fundamental that we often overlook it: becoming a boss for the first time. That's a shame, because the trials involved in this rite of passage have serious consequences for both the individual and the organization. Executives are shaped irrevocably by their first management positions and organizations suffer considerable human and financial costs when a promoted manager fails to adjust successfully to management responsibilities.

For a decade and a half, the author has studied people – particularly star performers – making major career transitions to management. As firms have become leaner and more dynamic, new managers have described a transition that gets more difficult all the time. But the transition is often harder than it need be because of managers' misconceptions about their role. Those who can acknowledge their misconceptions have a far greater chance of success.

For example, new managers typically assume that their position will give them the authority and freedom to do what they think is best. Instead, they find themselves enmeshed in a web of relationships with subordinates, bosses, peers, and others, all of whom make relentless and often conflicting demands. "You really are not in control of anything," says one new manager.

As one disillusioned new leader put it, "Becoming a manager is not about becoming a boss. It's about becoming a hostage".

Another misconception is that new managers are responsible only for making sure that their operations run smoothly. But new managers also need to realize they are responsible for recommending and initiating changes – some of them in areas outside their purview– that will enhance their groups' performance. The more power managers are willing to share with subordinates in this way, the more influence they tend to command. When they lead in a manner that allows their people to take the initiative, they are building their own credibility as managers.

Many new managers are reluctant to ask for help from their bosses. But when they do ask (often because of a looming crisis), they are relieved to find their superiors more tolerant of their questions and mistakes than they had expected.

Harvard Business Review, www.hbr.org

Key Issues for 2007

A new publication from IDS - HR Policy and Practice : Key Issues for 2007 is designed to help you prepare your HR agenda for the year ahead and brings together six of the most popular HR Studies titles :

- Absence Management
- Employee Recognition Schemes
- Employer Branding
- Flexible Benefits
- Job Families
- Succession Planning

IDS, www.incomesdata.co.uk

Leaving to Get Ahead

Research from Investors in People reveals that confusing promotion processes are driving employees to pastures new. As the annual performance review and promotion season gets under way, new research shows UK employees have little faith in career prospects at their current organisation. Nearly half of employees (48%) feel they deserve to be promoted within six months, but 60% say they will have to switch organisations to progress their career.

The research, conducted by Investors in People (UK), suggests that the secrecy and poor communication surrounding the promotion process could be to blame for employee frustration. Over half (53%) of employees questioned said that their organisation's approach to promotion remains a mystery, and more than three quarters (77%) were unsure of how development in their role was linked to promotion prospects.

Highlighting just how frustrating the promotion process can be, the research found that a third of employees believed they had been overlooked for promotion in the past. For half of these employees (55%), the knock-back was compounded by the fact that the reasons weren't explained to them. A further 18% said that although the reasons were explained, they didn't understand them.

Commenting on the findings, June Williams, Director at Investors in People (UK), said:

"This research clearly highlights the dangers of bad communication. Employers aren't always in a position to offer promotion, but the way they handle this can have a huge impact on employee motivation. Bosses need to be much clearer about the opportunities available and create a clear plan of action to help employees achieve their goals.

"Managers should also remember that promotion isn't just about new titles or salary increase – for many employees, being given new responsibilities is more important. What's more, without new challenges, the temptation is to seek progression by moving on elsewhere. Not only does this cost employers as they spend time and money to replace them, it ultimately benefits the competition who are only too happy to snap up new talent."

When asked how their bosses could improve the process for promoting people, employees called for clear guidelines for staff at all levels (57%). Over half (54%) cited individual development plans and 47% pointed to a robust appraisals process as important factors.

YouGov interviewed a nationally representative quota sample of over 1,300 employees in companies throughout UK & Ireland between September 29th and October 3rd 2006. Those who are self-employed and work on their own were excluded. The full sample has been weighted to the known profile of the GB and Northern Ireland population.

Investors in People, www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Talent Management is Top Workforce Concern for 2007

ORC Worldwide finds HR executives' current capabilities must expand to address impending workforce issues. Finding, developing and keeping talent are among the top concerns for human resource (HR) executives for 2007, according to the ORC Worldwide HR Priorities Survey, which annually polls a group of global HR executives from a cross-section of industries.

Six out of 10 respondents (61.7%) said the most pressing strategic HR issues companies will face in 2007 fall into the realm of "talent management."

Accordingly, talent management, which encompasses acquisition, assessment, development and retention of key talent, is the top category that will consume senior HR executives' time in 2007 (as stated by 33% of the respondents). Following talent management, 23.1% of the respondents anticipate that transforming and leading the HR function will be a key area of focus, up from 17.2% in 2006.

"The real driver for this focus on talent management is that companies have not only recognized the value of talent as a competitive advantage, but they are developing the tools and processes that help optimize organization capacity and performance," said ORC Worldwide President Robert Freedman.

Rounding out the "top three" HR priorities for 2007 are activities related to cultural transformation (as stated by 7.7% of respondents).

"In the past few years, we have seen HR executives become increasingly focused on activities related to cultural transformation," continued Freedman. "Performance management and 'pay-for-performance' programs are among the important tools in transforming culture, and we have seen our consulting work increase in those areas."

In addition, HR executives foresee continued responsibilities in supporting the Board of Directors and the senior management team as changes in regulatory and reporting requirements, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, continue to demand the attention of board members and executives. Respondents also anticipate activities related to supporting company growth and expansion as an important area of focus in 2007.

Survey participants were asked to consider common categories of HR responsibilities and initiatives, and rate the importance of the emerging HR issues of most significance to their companies on a scale of 1 to 5. Among the most important issues ranked were leadership development and succession planning, HR technology, workforce planning, executive compensation and diversity. For these same categories, however, capability ratings were consistently lower than those for importance, indicating that HR executives' current capabilities will need to expand by securing additional resources, both internal and external.

"Global companies are increasingly concerned about locating sufficient supplies of talent in challenging places such as China, India, Eastern Europe and Brazil," said ORC Worldwide Director of Talent Management Jodi Starkman. "We are being called upon by clients to help them develop a global workforce -- and leadership -- that can be deployed where and when needed to meet changing business markets and operating requirements. Part of our undertaking is to provide clients with the necessary processes and tools to guide planning and operational decision-making related to managing talent, from workforce planning and acquisition to development, assessment, and reward and recognition."

The ORC Worldwide HR Priorities Survey revealed that medium and large companies, spanning from 10,001 to more than 70,000 employees globally, continue to view leadership development and succession planning as top HR issues. Meanwhile, the smallest companies, with up to 10,000 employees globally, rated diversity as a top emerging HR issue.

For the largest companies (more than 70,000 employees worldwide), globalizing HR policies and programs was the third most important emerging issue for 2007, with an average importance rating of 4.63 (out of 5). This is consistent with findings that HR executives anticipate focussing efforts on activities that will support company growth and expansion -- both of which benefit from more consistent global practices.

ORC Worldwide, www.orcworldwide.co.uk

Career Change – Making It Happen

In December 2003 the Harvard Business Review carried Herminia Ibarra's advice on changing careers. The start of the New Year, with spring in the air, is a good time to take stock and evaluate your options.

We've all heard of someone, smart and talented, who lost their enthusiasm and ditched a 20 years career to pursue something different. The investment banker who set up an art gallery or the lawyer who gave it all up to become a writer.

"Am I doing what is right for me, or should I change direction?" Ibarra considers the experiences of those she has studied over the years and says there is no doubt that a true change of direction is very hard to do. "This isn't because managers or professionals are typically unwilling to change; on the contrary, many make serious attempts to reinvent themselves, devoting large amounts of time and energy to the process at great professional and personal risk. But despite heroic efforts, they remain stuck in the wrong careers, not living up to their potential and sacrificing professional fulfilment".

The author says the problem lies not with motivation but method, and that changing careers means redefining our working identity. Her ideas fly in the face of conventional wisdom – we like to think the key is to know what we want to do next and then use the knowledge to guide our actions, making use of advice from those we know and trust – the plan-and-implement approach. It seems reasonable to know where we are heading before making a move but the author says it is too cautious. "Change actually happens the other way around. Doing comes first, knowing second".

"To make a true break with the past, we need to see ourselves in a new light". She discovered that most people create new working identities on the side at first, by getting involved in extracurricular ventures and weekend projects. The advantage of this is that we can try out new professional roles without compromising current roles or taking on new roles too quickly. Ibarra maintains that in almost every instances of successful change she has observed the person had already been deeply engaged in a new career for quite some time.

Find a new job always requires networking outside our usual circle and a guiding figure or new professional community can help light the way and cushion the leap but she suggests that often it is strangers who are best equipped to help us "see who we are becoming".

Next you need to find or create catalysts for change and use them to make sense of the changes unfolding in your life and deal with issues around career change and fulfilment. You need to find a peg on which to hang your reinvention story. We know what we want to escape, says Ibarra, but finding an alternative that truly fits cannot be accomplished overnight, she says that most career transitions take about three years.

The essence of her argument is that you should start moving towards your goal now; don't wait for the perfect role in the ideal organisation to pop into your sights. Start writing and submit your work to journals or publishers; start freelancing, make contacts in the field that really interests you; network; start making changes. "Reaching outside our normal circles to new people, networks, and professional communities is the best way to both break frame and get psychological sustenance". It may take longer but she says that "taking smaller steps can allow a richer more grounded redefinition of our working identity to emerge".

Ibarra's overall theme is that we need to devote the greater part of our time and energy to action rather than reflection, to doing instead of planning. "Give up the search for a ten-point plan and accept instead a crooked path". She posits a learning-by-doing practice that anyone can adopt – start by taking action!

Harvard Business Review, www.hbr.org.

Good Communicators Make the Best Bosses

It is not their public persona, their business insight or their political connections that make the best leaders, but clear and simple communication, according to UK employees. Communicating with staff (76%) comes way ahead of having a clear vision (43%), business acumen (40%), public reputation (30%) and political acumen (5%).

The findings of *Straight Talking* a new report by CHA, the workplace communications consultancy, bring the verdict of the workforce: employees view the best leaders as the straight talkers, those who eschew performance for authenticity and manage to stay true to themselves as they move up the ranks. The survey of 1,103 employees reveals four distinct styles of leadership communicator: considerate, controlling, understated and charismatic. Over a third of employees are lucky enough to experience the considerate approach, with these all-rounder's most prevalent across UK workplaces. More than half of employees rate them good communicators and almost two fifths rate them excellent.

Colette Hill, chief executive, CHA says: "This is good news for leaders weary of being straight-jacketed into a presentational style better associated with evangelism than business management. The message is clear: leaders must communicate more frequently and directly with their employees, in a way that is open and frank, to strengthen their respect and loyalty."

Around a third of employees are led by controlling communicators and of these 60% rate their communication approach poor or dreadful. 17% of employees say their leaders take an understated approach to communication, so although they may be straightforward, their lack of energy and passion make them appear half-hearted. Just 6% of employees rate them excellent communicators and 5% rate them dreadful.

Only 15% of employees view their leaders' communication style as charismatic - over half this group are judged good leaders and 7% are ranked excellent. Although undoubtedly good communicators, they are most keen to communicate with customers rather than staff.

The majority (85%) of employees want to know about their organisation's plans for the future and two thirds are interested in what's going on in their organisation, even if it doesn't directly affect their job. But only 40% of those employees say their leader communicates effectively with them. In the largest organisations, with more than 1,000 staff, this dips to just 36%.

The research was conducted on behalf of CHA by Explorandum, an independent market research agency, in October 2006. It included a representative sample of 1,103 employees in organisations with 60 or more staff.

A full copy of *Straight Talking* is available in PDF format at www.chapr.co.uk.

Growing Demand for Staff Drives Salary Inflation

Lindsay Anderson of Complinet says that growth of permanent staff placements accelerated to a 33-month high in December, while demand for temporary workers rose at the sharpest rate for four months, according to new research. The demand for staff has continued to strengthen, fuelling further inflation of wages and salaries, the "Report on Jobs" from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and KPMG found.

Michael Carter, partner at KPMG, said: "The figures show a strong start to 2007 with permanent and temporary placements continuing to rise in December. Given that demand is growing at the strongest rate for over two years, this type of activity shows no sign of slowing down." The survey results showed a continued deterioration in the availability of permanent staff in December. Inflation of permanent staff salaries remained close to November's 71-month high in December, while candidate availability fell at an accelerated rate. Within such a strong recruitment market, Carter said that employers would have to differentiate themselves from competitors.

"As part of being an employer of choice, employers should ensure that employees and potential employees are fully informed of the value of their total remuneration package (including salary and all benefits), so that they maximise their

own packages and can be sure that potential employees are comparing like-with-like when deciding which opportunity to take."

Marcia Roberts, chief executive of the REC, believed that migrant workers would play an important role in the UK by helping to fill some of the vacancies. "This is especially timely within the context of discussion regarding the status of workers from the new EU member states — Romania and Bulgaria," she said.

With the demand for temporary staff increasing yet again, Roberts indicated that employers could cope with seasonal peaks by having a flexible workforce.

Complinet, www.complinet.com

Ageist Stereotypes Still Rife Among HR Professionals

Organisations still have a long way to go to eliminate age discrimination at work and become fully compliant with the recent UK legislation, according to the latest findings from the Recruitment Confidence Index (RCI), produced by Cranfield School of Management.

The latest research shows that while most organisations (89%) claim to have introduced or changed their policies and practices to comply with the legislation which came into effect on October 1st 2005, almost a quarter (24%) still **do not have an age discrimination policy** and only just over half (54%) provide training to managers with regard to age discrimination.

In addition, more than 1 in 7 (16 %) of the responding HR managers admitted to being aware of current discriminatory policies and practices within their organisation, and over a quarter (28%) could not confirm that their Board or senior management were fully committed to eliminating age discrimination at work.

The results also show that stereotypical attitudes towards both older and younger workers are prevalent among HR professionals and senior managers who completed the survey. Older workers were seen by respondents as being less likely to grasp new technology and less able to accept new ideas, as well as having better time keeping, being more likely to think before they act and being more loyal, conscientious, reliable and dependable. Younger workers were seen as enthusiastic and ambitious but also inexperienced, more likely to take time off sick, and less likely to stay in the job long.

Commenting on the findings Dr Emma Parry, Research Fellow at Cranfield School of Management, said "These results give particular cause for concern as the respondents are HR managers, who should be responsible for championing the elimination of age discrimination within organisations. The results also demonstrate that the creation of policies regarding age discrimination is not enough. Training and education programmes are needed in order to address these attitudes and the discrimination that is commonly associated with them."

The latest RCI findings also show that:

32% of respondents had experienced some form of discrimination themselves, with 24% having being discriminated against for being too young.

- Age discrimination is perceived as being most likely to occur in recruitment and selection. Only a fifth (21 %) of respondents had a desire to work beyond normal retirement age.
- The attitude of the Board/CEO and senior management were seen as potential barriers in the elimination of age discrimination at work.
- Access to wider skills and experience, a more flexible workforce and reduced recruitment difficulties were seen as the main benefits of a workforce that includes people of all ages.
- The Recruitment Confidence Index is a quarterly survey of public and private sector employers that measures expected changes in recruitment activity and business conditions during the next six months. It also looks at recruitment methods, skills shortages, staff turnover and pay rates.

Cranfield School of Management on www.som.cranfield.ac.uk

If you would like to contact HRi about this newsletter please contact Karen Adams on 0870 351 3510 or email k.adams@hri.co.uk

The Decline of the Lunch Hour

PruHealth reveals the nation's lunchtime habits

- One in five employees feel taking a full hour's lunch break is frowned upon
- Nearly half of all British employees do not have time to leave work at lunchtime
- Only 4 per cent say they use their lunch hour to do any moderate to intense exercise

Tied to your desk? Feel guilty for taking an hour's lunch break? Only have time to grab a snack with no regard to the nutritional content? If yes, then you're not alone. A study by PruHealth into workplace eating habits has revealed that nearly half of the working population in the UK does not have time to leave work to get lunch. What's more nearly one in five (18 per cent) of workers *never* take their full lunch break, 20 per cent feel if they do so it is frowned upon, and a further third (31 per cent) only have lunch away from their desk once a week or less.

Hardly any people use their lunch break to do any moderate to intense exercise – a measly 4 per cent of employees say they go for a swim or to the gym during lunchtime. And as if lunchtime wasn't enough, nearly one in four (24 per cent) have *more than one* meal a day at their desks.

Nick Read Direct Marketing and Partnerships Director at PruHealth said: "There is a distinct gap between the lunch break entitlement and the reality of the UK's typical lunch hour habits. While it's understandable that many people feel it's better to work through their lunch breaks in order to meet deadlines – it's something we all have to do from time to time – it's important to try and get into the habit of taking a break. Not only does the break itself help keep your mind and body properly energised, it also gives you a chance to choose a healthier option, rather than just grabbing the nearest thing which is often not the healthiest.

"Taking time out to get some fresh air and eat a balanced lunch will actually make you much more productive than pushing through without a break. Furthermore, the pressure you put on your body by not eating a regular, healthy diet and following a high-stress lifestyle could have adverse effects on your health in the long term."

So what is the great British public eating at lunchtime? Not surprisingly, the sandwich – named after the 4th Earl of Sandwich who liked to eat meat between bread to stop his hands getting sticky – still reigns supreme as the most popular option. 82 per cent of employees say they are most likely to opt for a sandwich and half of those who buy lunch (50 per cent) pick up their lunch from a local sandwich shop.

Healthy eating drives seem to be working too. Nearly four in ten employees (38 per cent) will usually eat fruit as part of their lunch at work and one in five (19 per cent) will usually opt for a salad. When it comes to our choice of foods we are starting to sit up and take notice of the recent healthy eating campaigns, such as the government's 'five a day' drive and TV shows such as 'You Are What You Eat'.

Fiona Hunter, an expert nutritionist, commented "It's really important, both in terms of health and productivity, to make time for lunch. Although it's tempting to skip lunch, particularly in the run up to Christmas when we're all busy, a healthy balanced lunch will prevent energy levels from flagging in the afternoon and help protect against winter colds and flu. Shop bought sandwiches are fine but can be high in salt and fat. It's worth checking the nutritional label on the information before you buy. In addition to a sandwich, a healthy lunchbox should include some fruit and a bottle of water or carton of fruit juice."

Of those who do venture out at lunchtime in the North, 58 per cent buy lunch from their local sandwich shop/café. 3] per cent of employees in the Midlands and Wales buy their lunch at the supermarket, and the majority of Londoners (24 per cent) buy lunch at well-known coffee shops. 6] per cent of employees in Scotland eat lunch at work in the staff canteen.

PruHealth, www.pruhealth.co.uk

Neglected Employees

Employees feel like 'neglected spouses' according to James Brockett in his 7 December 2006 article for People Management magazine.

The relationship between employers and employees in many British workplaces are like “a marriage under stress”, according to new research. A lack of effective communication and low levels of trust between bosses and staff can lead to underperformance, low productivity and high turnover, a CIPD-sponsored survey of 2,000 UK employees has found.

The research, carried out by Kingston Business School and Ipsos Mori Research, also showed that 43% of employees were dissatisfied with the relationship they had with their manager, while 30% said they rarely or never received feedback on their performance at work.

A similar proportion (42%) complained they were not kept informed about what was going on in the organisation, and 44% said they felt under excessive pressure at least once or twice every week.

Mike Emmott, CIPD adviser, employee relations, said the research indicated that many employees were “feeling like a neglected spouse. Just as in any marriage, relationships need work and commitment. But the findings suggest many managers aren’t doing enough to keep their staff interested. It leads to a situation where the sparkle has gone out of the relationship, and this is damaging productivity in UK businesses.”

Catherine Truss, professor of HRM at Kingston Business School and lead author of “Working Life: Employee Attitudes and Engagement 2006”, said the study showed clearly how much management practice affected people’s attitudes towards their work. “There is so much managers can do to make their staff feel valued and to improve levels of engagement that would be of benefit to both sides”.

The survey also found that workers aged over 55 were the most engaged in the organisation, while those aged under 35 were the most likely to be discontented.

www.cipd.co.uk/research

Well Pukme dot com!

Too late for secret Santa. The distinctive Puk is a squishy, ergonomic omni-directional wrist-rest designed to prevent RSI and carpal tunnel syndrome by supporting your mouse hand, its smooth underbelly allowing it to slide, tracking your movements closely across the desk as you work. Comes in lots of pretty colours and can be personalised or branded, you can buy a single one or thousands! You’ll have to visit the website to find out about the phenomenon of double-pukking though.

It is also apparently, the perfect weight for throwing and the padding means it’s unlikely to cause lasting damage when hurled across the office! Might be just perfect to have to hand for the next round of salary negotiations!

www.pukme.com

Fairplace In The News

The Glasgow Evening Times looked at bullying and interviewed **Cindy Mahoney of Fairplace** who said “managers should be given training to avoid falling into bullying behaviour when trying to motivate or discipline staff. Any form of bullying at any level must be challenged, as every time inappropriate behaviour goes unchallenged it implies it is acceptable”.

Michael Moran’s regular column in CityAM looked at how to succeed in a new job. “Starting a job is one of those rare situations in life where you meet a lot of new individuals all at once, some of whom may have a massive influence on your future success. It never hurts to do some unofficial networking, learning about your co-workers and your manager, their priorities and preferences, how they prefer to get information”.

In The Press Recently

Expatriate Working

A survey by StepStone the online recruiter found through a survey of more than 2,000 European companies, with over 20,900 workers that while 80% of UK employees were willing work overseas only 49% of Dutch workers and 46% of Danes would consider a job in another country. The primary motivation to work overseas is to broaden experience (64%) followed by career development (50%). Workers are least likely to move abroad to follow a partner or for employer brand reason alone. 42% of the companies are currently recruiting internationally, primarily to address specific skills deficits.

StepStone, www.stepstone.com

Mentoring

People Management looked at research from the University of South Florida into what makes a successful mentoring scheme. Key findings :

- It doesn't matter whether mentees had volunteered to take part in mentoring or not
- Geographical proximity is unimportant
- Mentees perceived mentors closer to their own level to be more valuable role models
- The length of training for mentors should be kept short and the benefit of any training need to be established rather than assumed

People Management, www.peoplemanagement.co.uk

Staff Retention

Sirota Survey Intelligence talked to nearly 47,000 employees and found that those with less than two years' service voluntarily left at an average rate of 20% a year, whereas those with more than two years' tenure quit at an average rate of 10% per annum.

Ways to retain new employees :-

- Where possible, try to make their work more challenging
- Be clear about potential career paths
- Make sure that managers are consistent in what they say and do
- Create an atmosphere that makes employees feel valued
- Create a secure environment
- Encourage high standards of personal and professional integrity

Sirota, www.sirota.com

The Human Factor

Richard Donkin considers the metrics of workplace efficiency for the Financial Times. For years, he says, work has been under the microscope of efficiency research. He points out that “no amount of measurement can replace good management and leadership. There has to be something in human achievement – call it talent – that escapes our best efforts at measurement. We all know it when we see it but some important constituent will remain forever indefinable”.

Financial Times, www.ft.com

Leading or Managing?

HR Director magazine carried an article in their December issue by Mitch McCrimmon, Chartered Psychologist and author, looking at the differences between a manager and a leader. In summary :

- Leadership is an occasional act that influences a change in direction
- Leadership is not a role, hence it can be operate upwards as well as down
- Management is a role with a responsibility to get things done
- Leadership has nothing to do with working through people to get things done

HRDirector, www.thehrdirector.com

HR Talent Hard to Find

Personnel Today report on research revealing that good HR professionals are hard to find. Salary survey company Celre reports that 9 out of 10 firms had problems retaining HR staff last year. The main factors causing retention problems in 2006 were low salaries and strong competition. Duncan Brown of the CIPD comments “research has told us that HR people feel they have to move on to boost their CV as well as their skills and breadth of experience”.

Personnel Today, www.personneltoday.com



What is the London HR Connection?

LHRC is one of the leading Human Resources networks in London, inspiring, informing and challenging our members. We meet to update our members on issues of current interest in the world of people management and development with a lively and participative talk by a renowned speaker. Meetings start with the opportunity to network in an informal and relaxed setting.

Membership can be either for an organisation or on an individual basis. One of the unique features of the LHRC is that people can join at any stage of their career with LHRC membership assisting with personal development and future career progression.

You do not need to be a member of the CIPD to join the organisation.

Contact us: mail@londonhr.org

Forthcoming Events

For booking details please go the LHRC website www.londonhr.org

[Employment Law Update](#)

Wednesday 7th February 2007 12:00 PM with Chris Walter

Christopher Walter chairs Paul Hastings' London Employment Law Practice Group and is a member of the firm's 200-lawyer Employment Law Department.

Location: Paul Hastings 88 Wood Street London, [EC4Y 8DT](#)

[Strategy and the Implications for HR](#)

Wednesday 18th April 2007 12:00 PM with Roger Bell, Head of Strategy, Slough Estates

Date and Time: Wednesday 18th April 2007 12:00 PM

[The Psychology of Culture Change](#)

Wednesday 9th May 2007 12:00 PM with Dr Julie Bullen

Business Psychologist and Culture Change Consultant

Drawing on the experiences of three companies Julie worked alongside as they went through major culture change programs, she will explore the contribution of a psychological understanding of leadership, teams and communication to the change process.



For further details on events including speakers, venue and times etc. please refer to the website <http://www.cipd.co.uk/branch/clondon/events>

JANUARY

Tuesday 23 Consulting Skills for Internals

FEBRUARY

Thursday 1 Bullying and Harassment – Dangerous Developments in the Law

Wednesday 7 'McJob' Myth: Publicity Stunt or Performance Driver?

MARCH

Wednesday 7 The Changing World of the Trainer

Wednesday 14 Managing Absence and Stress

Wednesday 28 HR Technology Special Interest Group

APRIL

Wednesday 4 Tackling Talent Management

Thursday 19 Retirement – Is the Process Working?

MAY

Wednesday 2 ICE Regulations

Wednesday 16 Central London CIPD AGM (check website for details)

JUNE

Thursday 7 CIPD Upgrading Workshop

Tuesday 19 Employment Law Update

Tuesday 20 Human Capital Management

Wednesday 27 HR Technology Special Interest Group

Please simply book online via our website <http://www.cipd.co.uk/branch/clondon/events>



Forthcoming Events

How to Evaluate Coaching

Friday, 2nd February 2007, from: 11am – 2pm
Brooke House, 4 The Lakes, Northampton NN4 7YD
Refreshments and working lunch provided

This session is important for all HR or Learning & Development professionals who are responsible for the purchasing and design of coaching and other learning interventions.

We hope you can join us to experience what will be a thought provoking and practical session. Please email your response to adele.carveley@fairplace.com. Deadline for responses is Friday 27th January 2007. Alternatively please telephone Adele on 01604 742315.

Really Useful Websites

Freemind - http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page - mind-mapping software that you can download for free. Use it to plan and note ideas. It's a good alternative to some of the commercial offerings.

The OneLook Reverse Dictionary – www.onelook.com/reverse-dictionary.shtml - put a concept into the search engine and receive a list of words related to it. Useful when you know what you mean but can't find the exact word!

Eclipse Crossword – www.eclipsecrossword.com - a fast and free way to create crosswords. Great for newsletters, websites or virtual learning environments.