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Here's your personal copy of this week's [Workplace Effectiveness News](#) from [JBA](#).

Trust-based workplaces

Respect – and the trust that surrounds it – is something that is also preoccupying **John Blackwell** as he argues for more trust-based workplaces, particularly as work itself becomes disparate, outsourced, and virtual.

In this environment, trust can bring much-needed cohesion and play a key role in recruiting and retaining talent. However, this approach also means business leaders need to demonstrate humility, something that often does not come easily.

"Building a culture that inspires trust isn't about putting their stamp on everything, and creating dependency," John writes. *"Leaders must be focused on their organisation's success and reputation, not their personal gain (bankers take note)."*

[Read the full story on Management-Issues »](#)

If you would like a personal copy of our report on creating trust-based workplaces and its accompanying case studies, just drop Sam Thornton (samantha_thornton@jbassociates.uk.com) and we'll get a copy straight off to you.

The JBA Team

Hot Topics – in association with Management-Issues

Largest companies must make biggest changes...

Could it be the case that the most successful companies – those used to large market shares and solid revenues – are going to be the ones that need to make the most radical changes in their thinking in order to weather the current economic storm?

Bob Selden thinks so, in fact, he argues that in difficult times, too much success can lead to failure. Why? Because successful companies often lack people who have the courage to say **"NO"** or who can see the need for making a painful decision? Or who are able to look at a situation and think differently about how a decision should be made. In short, they're unable to shift their decision-making mindset.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues »](#)

Why good leaders make bad decisions...

The reasons so many of us are unable to embrace new ways of thinking are explored in a new book that has passed our way recently. *"Think Again – Why Good Leaders Make Bad Decisions and How to Keep it From Happening to You"* suggests that it is the shortcuts our brains have learned over the course of evolution that derail our decision-making.

As one of the authors, Professor Sydney Finkelstein, put it in a recent interview, *"in the majority of decisions, our brain's ability to recognise patterns and our emotions help us make reasonable decisions quickly. If our ancestors had to sit down and debate what to do when a sabre-toothed tiger was attacking, rather than making a fast exit, we wouldn't be around today,"*

But while this may be a very valid reason for poor decision-making, it is not an excuse for refusing to own up to our mistakes and learn from them – something our business and political leadership seems to find difficult, if not impossible.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues »](#)

It's not my fault...

As Robert Heller explains, however, it's never easy for anyone to admit they have taken and executed extremely bad management decisions. If the prize is sufficiently large, he suggests, managers will fool themselves into thinking the fault doesn't exist or that the recession is to blame for all their woes. And if that doesn't work, convenient scapegoats are always close to hand – with finance directors usually the first in line.

So as is usually the case in mismanagement, human nature is at the root of the problem. Once an incorrect decision is made, up pop those classic human responses, delay and denial.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues »](#)

Other News, comment, and Views

[The Working Week](#)

Wayne hears from Pauline Crawford about her vision for a new blueprint for business that shifts the dynamic of the workplace from one that is inherently masculine to one where there is a balance between the masculine and the feminine.

[Thought Leaders](#)

[How to find out what someone is really like](#)

Most of us make poor judgments about whether a person is competent and can deliver what they promise or are worthy of our trust, says Myra White.

[Little fish – little pond](#)

Peter Vajda suggests that since many of us spend enormous amounts of time and energy trying to convince ourselves that we are big fish in small ponds, it might be time we tried a different pond.

[More News](#)

[Mind the leadership gap](#)

Baby-boomer retirements mean that a leadership vacuum within many firms will be almost inevitable.

[Expat talent comes home](#)

Managers are being told to pack their bags as international assignments become the latest cost to be curbed.

[Buddy, can you spare a corporate dime?](#)

As the economy continues to spiral downwards, it's not just businesses feeling the pinch, but the charities, arts and sporting bodies they used to fund.

[Are layoffs finally bottoming out?](#)

There are signs that many companies have completed their wave of mass layoffs and redundancies - for now at least.

Leaders are a bigger risk than the economy...

If you're starting to get the impression that leaders pose almost as much as a risk to their organisations as the global recession, you could well be right. Underlining this, a new study by consultancy Development Dimensions International suggests that many senior executives simply lack the skills and vision to see their organisations safely through to the other side – so much so that the actions and attitudes of some executives could actually be a hindrance as the crisis continues.

In the maelstrom that is the current economic and financial climate, DDI's analysis of the performance of 3,623 executives from 49 countries revealed that many senior managers act like rabbits paralysed in the headlights, unable to make decisions for fear of making the wrong ones.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues >](#)

The Evolutionary Provocateur

Work and popular culture

Why does work get such a bad press in both popular and highbrow culture? From Dickens to Zola to the Who, work always seems to be displayed in a negative light, the 9-5 as the enemy of the free spirit. Listen as Wayne digs deeper with his guest this week, author Phil Whiteley.

[Listen to the conversation >](#)

The risk of masculine culture...

A view that's appeared frequently on Management-Issues recently is that the roots of the crisis lie in our aggressive, risk-taking, overly-masculine business culture. Yet if we do want to see more women in senior positions, it is going to take more than good intentions to get them there.

As research released in February by consultancy Catalyst argues, with most organisations still dominated by men at senior levels, talent management programmes will often favour the progression of men or those exhibiting macho, male-oriented leadership characteristics, even if they are not intended to.

In fact, Catalyst claim, even the most sophisticated talent management programme can be vulnerable to this type of gender bias – because they reflect, and therefore promote, the traits exhibited by that organisation's top (and predominantly male) executives.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues >](#)

MBA under scrutiny...

Even that most gold-plated of qualifications, the MBA, has come under the microscope as far as women are concerned, with new research suggesting that female MBA graduates don't tend to do as well as their male counterparts in the jobs' market.

According to academics at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and Harvard University, the reasons for a large and rising gender gap in earnings are differences in training prior to MBA graduation, differences in career interruptions and differences in weekly hours.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues >](#)

Treat us with respect...

But one area in which the differences between men, women, Gen-X and Gen-Y all disappear is around respect in the workplace. As a recent poll by leadership and development consultancy AchieveGlobal found, being treated with respect is the one thing everybody wants.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues >](#)

Create environments where people can flourish...

All of which brings us neatly to a simple question from Dan Bobinski. Are people really your most important asset? Countless companies proclaim that they are. Unfortunately, the phrase has become somewhat cliché, similar to saying employees are "empowered." These are valid statements only if companies put actions behind their claims.

In other words, if you say your employees are your greatest asset, do you treat them as if they are the most valuable part of your company? Do they receive the best of care?

If you're serious about creating a workforce that's engaged and productive, you must devote time and attention to creating environments in which the people on your teams can flourish. And when they flourish, you must take measures to ensure they are protected and well cared for, because that's what people do with things they really value.

[Read the full story on Management-Issues >](#)

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