



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

Welcome to the "Era of Interdependence"

There's striking disagreement on the shape of the economic upturn – being touted are 'J', 'L', 'V', 'U', 'W' or even a 'saxophone shaped upturn', however, what's sure is the looming recovery is completely shredding the work rulebook!

The economic meltdown has brought together a unique mix of; unemployment, disenfranchised staff, shrinking talent pools, virtual working, and unsustainable office utilisation. The result is we're entering the 'era of interdependence', a time when all business dimensions – HR, real estate, technologies, culture, and management practices – must work in harmony to deliver effective performance ([read the full article on M-I](#))

Our "[Workplace of the Future](#)" report has shed considerable insight into how organisations are responding to changing work practices – a change gap that's tripled since 2006. You can obtain a free copy of the "[Workplace of the Future](#)" report from the online JBA research repository.

Effective work lecture at Durham University

On the 22 October '09, Durham University is holding its auspicious [Corporate Forum](#). This event focuses on "[Creating a Fitter, Healthier, and More Effective Working Environment](#)" with John Blackwell keynoting alongside the Vice Chancellor of the University and the Dean of Durham Business School.

Space is limited but we'd love to see you there – drop Sam Thornton (samantha_thornton@jbassociates.uk.com) or call us on 01491 628654 to reserve your place.

[The JBA Team](#)

Hot Topics – in association with Management-Issues

Smart alternatives to restructuring

There's been a marked difference in the way companies have approached the problem of redundancies during this recession. Granted, there are still plenty of examples of companies making knee-jerk job cuts, but others have at last woken up to the fact that this may not be the smartest way to ensure their longer-term future.

Companies such as KPMG and JCB have adopted shorter working weeks, extended leave, pay cuts or even (in the case of telecoms giant BT), loaning out staff to other companies as alternatives to making redundancies. As KPMG acknowledged, redundancies are not a "quick fix" and risk instead alienating those who remain and damaging the company's reputation and brand in the market.

This new-found openness on the part of some employers and their willingness to retain their staff has a big effect on the so-called "psychological contract" - the unwritten, often unspoken, set of expectations that both employees and employers have about each other.

As Graham Dietz of Durham Business School explains, a recession can blow all these expectations out of the water. Obligations made in good faith when the money was piled high are prone to be abandoned when the bottom line loses a few noughts.

As he points out, if employees find only rhetoric in the psychological contract, productivity will plummet. "*The truth, however unpalatable, is much preferred to the rumour machine or empty exhortations of fanciful optimism.*"

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

Open and honest communication boosts engagement

In fact, often the simple things such as open and honest communication do most to boost employee engagement. Research by Professor Richard Wiseman at the University of Hertfordshire suggests that simply by ensuring staff think daily about something positive that happened at work the previous day can boost employee

Regular columns & blogs

[The Working Week - It pays to be nice](#)

This week, Wayne discusses corporate kindness with Kristin Tillquist, author of *Capitalizing on Kindness: Why 21st Century Professionals Need to Be Nice* - someone who believes that contrary to popular belief, nice guys and gals don't always finish last.

[Is the economy inspiring your entrepreneurial drive?](#)

It's an unpleasant truth that all jobs are temporary and people can be let go at any moment. Bearing that in mind, Dan Bobinski suggests that perhaps it's time to make things happen on their own.

[Pamper power](#)

Despite what bankers continue to claim, Joe Barnhart says that money buys neither happiness nor loyal employees.

[From the Blog](#)

[The importance of not doing a Hillary](#)

Anyone - even in the most senior position - can lose their cool now and again.

[A rule about hiring and firing](#)

There are two very difficult things to deal with as a manager. The first is hiring the right people. The second is firing someone.

[UK plc driving out talented women](#)

Why are so many women in the UK turning their backs on conventional 9-5 jobs and to go it alone?

[What makes a smart manager?](#)

It's a sad fact that many of those in managerial roles are just not suited to being in charge of other people.

happiness by 15%, leading to improved employee engagement and productivity.

Expressing gratitude, smiling, and carrying out an act of kindness were also cited by Professor Wiseman as quick wins for improved workplace happiness.

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

The cost of bad behaviour

Likewise, rudeness at work can lead to a \$300billion loss in productivity, according to USC Marshall School of Business professor Christine Porath and co-author Christine Pearson, a professor of management at Thunderbird School of Global Management.

In their new book *The Cost of Bad Behaviour: How Incivility is Damaging Your Business and What to Do About It* they argue that texting in meetings, spreading rumours, taking credit for others' work, ignoring emails and simply not saying "please" and "thank you" are hitting the bottom line

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

The neurological basis of change

But getting staff to change behaviour is no easy matter. Management Issues regular Peter Vajda offers a reason as to why people find it so difficult to change behaviour on a permanent basis.

Even though scientific research increasingly tells us the brain is plastic and capable of changing, people find it so difficult to change because they are stuck in a neurological groove, he says, just like a bowling ball in a ball return groove. Many of us operate with the same behaviour groove we had as children, and only by smoothing out these grooves can we start to change in a lasting way.

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

Middle managers lead strategic directions

And these are all important lessons for middle managers to take on board. Why? Because, according to research by the Economist Intelligence Unit, companies across the world will be relying more on middle managers for strategic input in future.

Nearly half (47%) of the 229 respondents to the survey said middle managers would be gaining more input into strategic direction. Bottom of the list came IT and HR.

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

The need for "new old management"

Finally, the managers chosen for this strategic input may like to consider the views of MillerCoors director and author of *The Death of Management*, Jack Buffington.

Steadily over the past century, management has become broken, he says, and removed from the principles that founded it. We need a "new old management" he argues, in the first instalment of two-part article for Management Issues. It is time for managers to reacquaint themselves with their roots.

[Read the full article on M-I](#)

The Advice Clinic

[My team is dysfunctional: help!](#)

Louisa's teams spend too much time backstabbing and finding reasons to complain. All her attempts to get their behaviour back on track fail. "I could really use some help," she says.

Other news

[Confidence over successful organisational change falling](#)

While increasing numbers of companies are expecting to have to undergo change, those pessimistic about the prospects of this change being successful is also growing.

[Temporary work risks employee mental health](#)

People lacking stable long-term employment and engaged only on a series of temporary, contract, casual or fixed-term positions are more likely to suffer mental health issues, new research suggests.

[Women directors 'hounding' CEOs into falling profitability](#)

Companies embracing diversity and increasing the number of women at board level may be heading for a profit slump if they already have good governance structures in place, a leading academic has warned.

[How to stop your 'snow birds' flying](#)

Rather than just clipping the wings of older "snow bird" workers, managers should use them as mentors, give them access to learning, and be more flexible about how they work.

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