PA ENTERPRISE

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The rise of 'Presenteeism' in the workplace

76% of workers want physical contact banned from the workplace

Top office hacks to increase efficiency

How to effectively manage a heavy workload
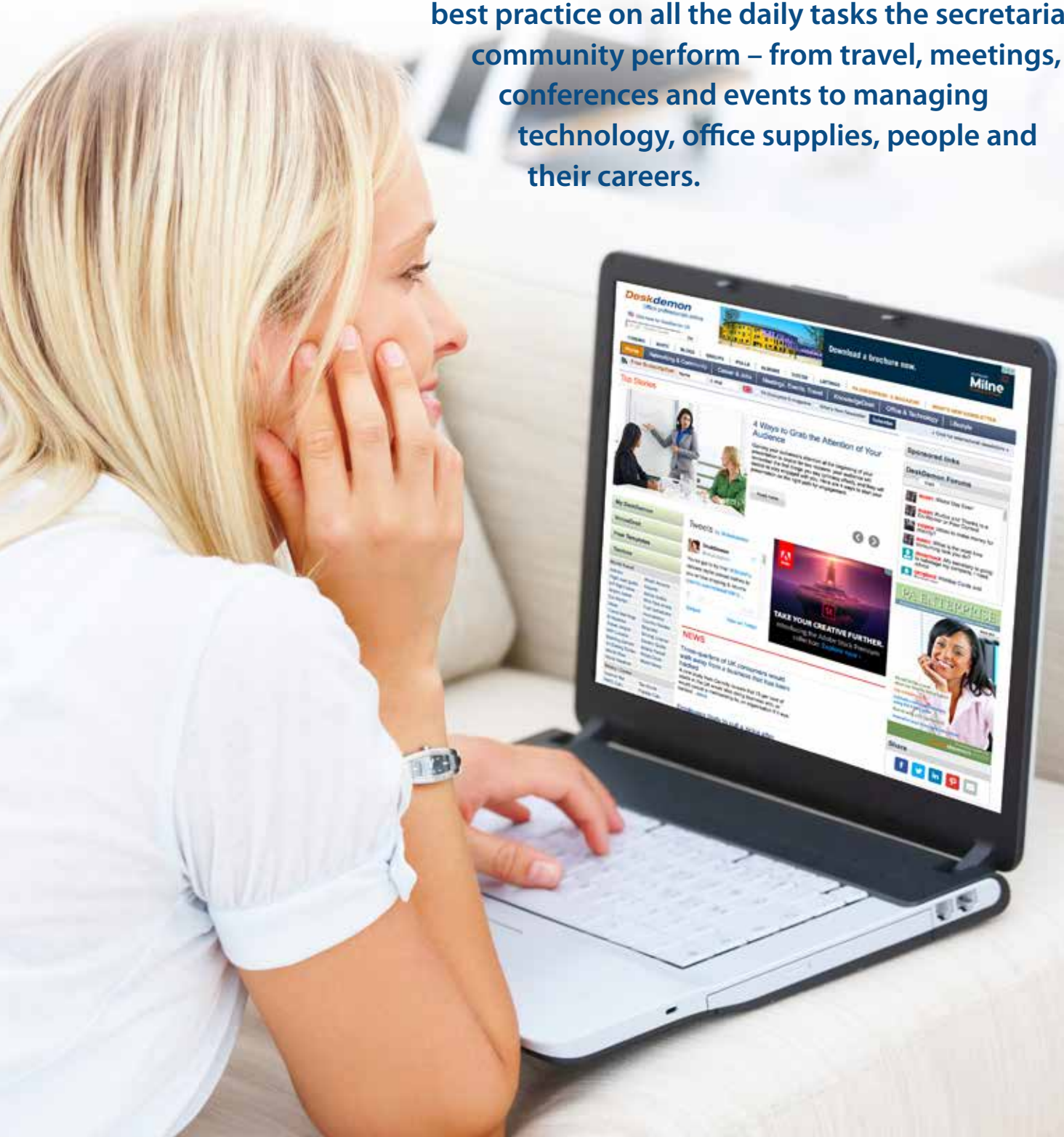
Why it's important to get cyber savvy

Bad bosses impact productivity and staff retention

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PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

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The rise of 'presenteeism' in the workplace

How many times have you gone in to work when you're really not up to it? It's called presenteeism and it's on the rise. A study by health insurer Vitality has found that more than 40% of employees said their work was being affected by health problems - a figure that's risen by a third over the last five years.

The research reveals that three-quarters of ill-health related absence and presenteeism in 2018, equating to £61bn, came from factors such as depression, poor lifestyle choices, and stress, all of which are can be targeted by businesses through health and wellbeing initiatives.

The data – from Vitality's Britain's Healthiest Workplace study, which is developed in partnership with RAND Europe and the University of Cambridge – found that British businesses lost the equivalent of £81bn as a result of ill-health related absence and presenteeism in 2018 overall, a £4bn increase on 2017.

The study also revealed that employers lose, on average, 35.6 working days per employee per year due to health-related absence and presenteeism.

The companies with the best results in the study demonstrated a 30-40% reduction in productivity loss linked to ill-health, compared to other companies in the survey. Interventions from business were shown to have a marked effect on employees' health and these top performing companies all showed common characteristics such as embedding a culture of health, having capable line managers who supported employees and having high awareness and participation in their health and wellbeing programmes.

Mental health was found to be a significant driver of productivity loss, accounting for £38bn of the total cost to businesses last year. Of this, £17.2bn stems specifically from workplace stress, a driver which businesses can address through various interventions and initiatives.

For instance, 83% of people who used one-on-one coaching to support mental health and wellbeing found it impactful and 78% of people said the same for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). 83% of employees who used massage

British businesses lose £81 billion per year as a result of employees' ill-health – which is 35.6 working days per employee, on average.

People are putting aside both mental and physical health problems to attend work.

or relaxation classes also said it had a positive impact on their mental health at work.

Three-quarters of ill-health related productivity loss could be addressed through health and productivity strategies

However, the research demonstrated that awareness of and engagement with such interventions was low. For instance, while 67% of employees have access to interventions in the mental health space, only 26% of them

claim to have knowledge and awareness of the interventions on offer. Additionally, once aware, only 18% of employees actually participate in any of the programmes, demonstrating that not only do employers need to increase awareness, but employees need to engage with the interventions available to maximise impact.

Commenting on the publication of today's data, Neville Koopowitz, CEO at VitalityHealth,

and the overall success of the business. Not only can this bring about a competitive advantage for companies, but it will ultimately build a stronger and healthier society for us all. With this being such an important and compelling ambition, we will be developing a number of initiatives that will support a healthier corporate Britain in 2019 and beyond."

Paul Fairclough, Scheduling Coordinator at United Utilities, commented: "As someone who kept their battle with mental health issues a secret for over a decade, it's positive to see the conversation around mental health becoming more open, and employers – like mine – engaging actively in the discussion. That said, we are still on the journey to enabling everyone to confidently speak up, to access the support they need."

Christian van Stolk, Vice President, RAND Europe, said: "Although it is encouraging to see an increase in the number of employees that have access to health and wellbeing initiatives in the workplace, the data from this year's study also shows that businesses are still failing to properly engage employees, and get their participation, with such initiatives. We know from the Britain's Healthiest Workplace findings that employees report a significant improvement to physical and mental health as a result of workplace interventions year on year. As such, businesses need to do more to drive effective employee engagement – this is critical to addressing the issue of productivity loss across our nation."

said: "For the sixth year in a row, Vitality's Britain's Healthiest Workplace data illustrates the huge cost of absence and presenteeism to British businesses. With this data showing that employees lose, on average, over 35 days each a year, it is becoming impossible for businesses to ignore the link between ill-health and productivity.

"Simply implementing intervention programmes is no longer enough. By prioritising and elevating employee engagement in health and wellbeing within the business, ideally to Board level, we can make a significant difference to productivity

Research suggests too many employers failing to check for fraudulent CV credentials

Careers organisation, Prospects, has investigated 200 potential cases of degree fraud in the last four years and closed down 75 websites falsely offering UK degrees. Now global provider of employment background checks, Sterling Talent Solutions, has urged employers to ensure they are verifying information from applicants.

Prospects has highlighted a concerning number of fake degrees that were being used by applicants and urged everyone involved in the recruitment supply chain to ensure the correct verification procedures are in place. This latest announcement comes at a time when false claims on CVs are on the rise, with research from The University of Law stating that 51% of Brits have felt pressure to lie on their application.

However, despite the rise of fake education and training information on CVs, research from Sterling revealed that one in five employers do not have a background screening policy in place.

Steve Smith, Managing Director EMEA at Sterling, explained why businesses need to ensure they complete the necessary verification checks:

"In a world of fake news where fraudsters are becoming ever more sophisticated in their use of technology to fabricate educational and training credentials, it's perhaps no surprise that Prospects has unearthed a number of illegitimate websites. However, while many firms are more than aware of the trend towards falsifying applications, there's still a worrying number of employers

failing to implement the right checks, exposing themselves, their staff and their company to potential risk. You have to ask yourself, if an applicant has a fraudulent degree, what else they are being less than honest about?"

"For firms seeking to implement robust checks, there are a few basic steps that should be taken. By going directly to registrars (or doing so through third-party screening providers) it's possible to identify immediate red-flags. Diploma mills now also have university websites where you can go to check the validity of a certificate. Of course, as fraud becomes more sophisticated, there will be a need for improved procedures, so it's always advisable to seek out expert guidance."

76% of workers want physical contact banned from the workplace

Workers have spoken. When it comes to workplace interactions, we are a nation uncomfortable with up close contact – from hugs to extended eye contact – and we certainly don't want to be negotiating the minefield of 'one cheek kiss or two'.

Research by leading jobs board Totaljobs found that three quarters of us (76%) want physical contact reduced, whilst 42% go further and call for an outright ban on some interactions, from the workplace kiss (27%) to wishing hugs were a thing of the past (15%).

Cringeworthy clashes

The research reveals one in three (30%) workers experience an awkward greeting at work at least once a month, with those in their 20s enduring the most.

One in five surveyed (22%) have had a 'greeting clash' in the workplace with the most embarrassing of those including:

- A quarter have been trapped in an unwanted hug (25%)

- One in five (19%) have been on the receiving end of an unexpected kiss

- One in seven (15%) have received an unwanted chest touch, after one has opted for a handshake, the other a hug

- One in eight (13%) have had an accidental kiss on the mouth thanks to ill-timed air kisses

- Another one in eight (12%) have had an accidental headbutt

In fact, some are so concerned with how they are interacted with in the workplace that a quarter (25%) actively avoid awkward colleagues or clients.

Psychologist and leading body language expert, Jo Hemmings shares advice on embarrassing encounters at work: "Interactions in the workplace

38% of workers find greetings awkward in the workplace

A quarter (25%) have avoided a colleague or client due to their choice of greeting

Over a quarter (27%) want an end to a cheek or air kiss greeting in the workplace

33% of workers 'well-being' has been impacted after an awkward greeting

68% of UK workers call for clear workplace guidance on appropriate greetings

have become a confusing and difficult terrain in recent years. Navigating what ostensibly seems like a simple 'hello,' is now a minefield for both initiator and recipient so no wonder two thirds of us want clear guidelines on interactions at work from awkward hugs to accident nose bumps".

"The recent #MeToo movement has encouraged people to start speaking out – including in the workplace – and has led to a plethora of changes in how we engage with colleagues. It has empowered people – both male and female – to speak out about abuse or discomfort with less fear of repercussions".

"It's clearly a highly complex, embarrassing, even humiliating subject and we all have an opinion on what is right and what is wrong. So, in an age where workers worry they may be called

out by HR following a consensual hug with a colleague or a supportive hand on the shoulder, it is important for companies to step up and offer much-needed guidance for staff around the rules of engagement in the workplace."

Rules of engagement

The nations' preferred choice of workplace greeting is a firm handshake – with two seconds or less of direct eye contact to leave us truly in our comfort zone. Interestingly, whilst nearly half (45%) of workers in their 40s and 50s prefer handshakes, only 35% of those in their 20s favour them with two-fifths (41%) preferring no physical contact when greeting colleagues or clients.

Whilst hugs are universally unpopular across

calling for clearer guidelines on the amount of contact, and greetings used in the workplace. Having guidelines which facilitate open, honest conversations between workers about physical contact offers employers the chance to have their team focused on the job at hand – rather than whether they're shaking hands at their next meeting."

Preferred greetings

Two-fifths (41%) of men who greet people differently based on gender do so for fear of making the other person feel uncomfortable. An uncomfortable quarter (28%) who consciously change their greeting with women do so for fear of their interaction being perceived as sexual harassment.

ages, 18% of workers in their 20s claim to prefer a hug as their workplace greeting of choice, in contrast to only 5% of workers in their 40s and 50s. Kisses are also deemed a total no-no with over a quarter (27%) of those surveyed wanting them banned.

Alexandra Sydney, Marketing Director at Totaljobs, said: "Whether it's an unwanted hug, or a mistimed kiss on the cheek, our research suggests that workplace greetings have the potential to stray beyond awkward and could have a real impact on job satisfaction and productivity.

"With one in four people telling us that they avoid meeting a peer or a client due to the greeting alone, it's clear that boundaries need to be set in the workplace which promote a comfortable working environment and doesn't impede on the working day. It stands to reason that feeling comfortable at work is closely aligned to feeling happy.

"This is why more than two thirds of workers are

Half of women prefer no physical interaction when it comes to greeting colleagues of either sex – male (51%) and female (53%).

UK workers call for clear workplace guidelines

Despite having concerns over workplace behaviours, workers are unsure what is expected of them when interacting with clients and colleagues. Two-thirds (68%) think workplaces should have clear guidelines on what is considered an appropriate greeting at work to avoid causing offence. Shockingly, only one in seven (15%) have received any sort of guidance from their employer in the last year.

These situations shouldn't be taken lightly, with a third (33%) claiming that their well-being has been affected following an awkward greeting. 15% said that replaying awkward or uncomfortable interactions in their head has negatively impacted their productivity, losing up to as much as a valuable hour of the working day.

Planning for business growth? 3 Reasons to get cyber savvy

Cyber-attacks are surging and small and medium sized enterprises are easy prey for hackers. Joe Collinwood, CEO at CySure outlines why being cyber aware is a business necessity for all organisations

Small businesses in the UK are the target of an estimated 65,000 attempted cyber-attacks every day, according to new figures(i) from specialist global insurer Hiscox. According to the insurer, cyber security incidents cost the average small business £25,700 in direct costs such as ransoms paid and hardware replaced. However, indirect costs such as damage to reputation, the impact of losing customers and difficulty attracting future customers can be devastating. Complacency can cost SMEs dearly; the US National Cyber Security

Alliance (ii) found that 60 percent of small firms go out of business within six months of a data breach.

In a rapidly evolving landscape of cyber threats it is vital that SMEs understand the risks and act fast or risk business failure due to a lack of a robust cyber security strategy. Here are three reasons why SMEs need to get cyber savvy:
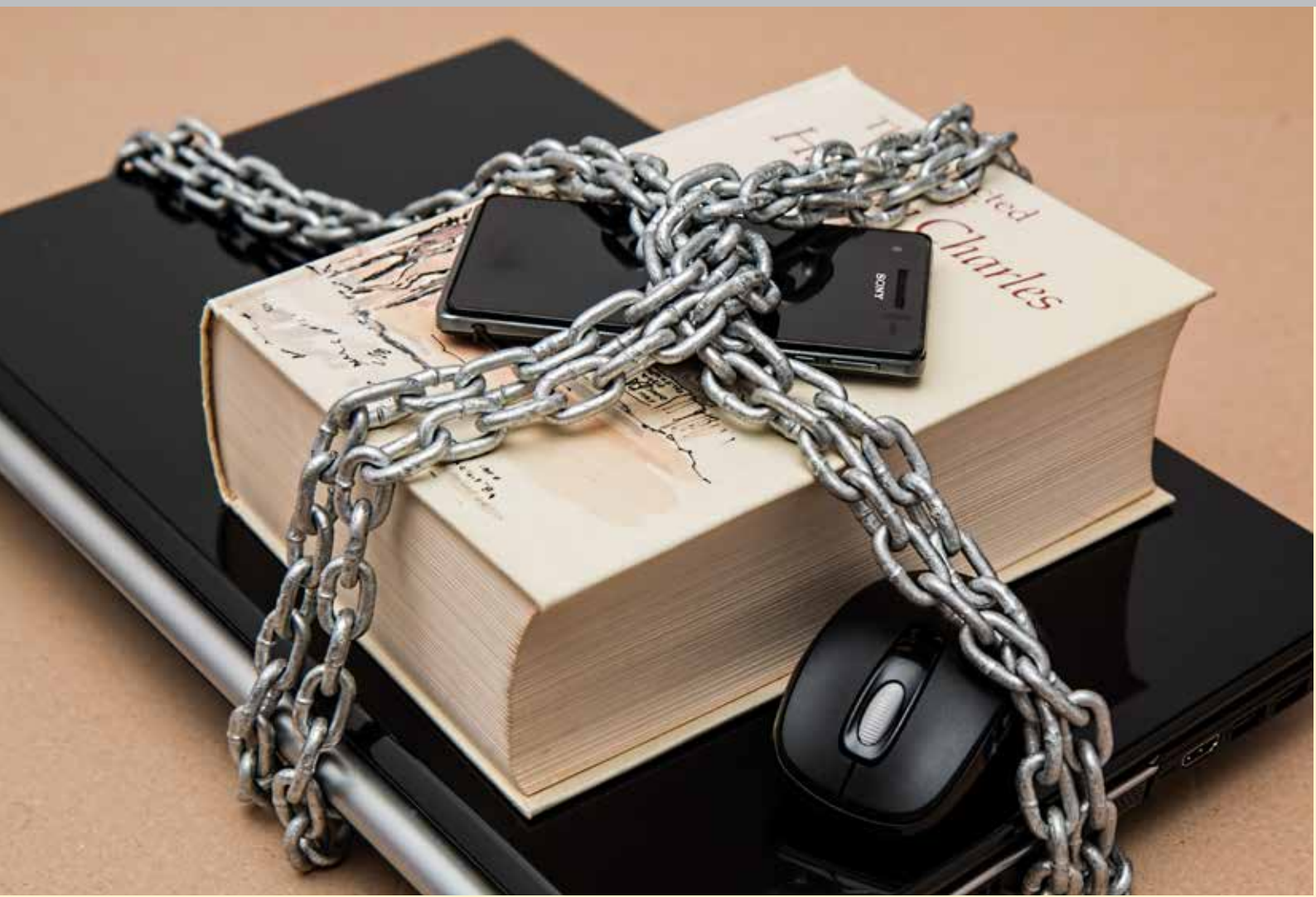
1. Supply chain cyber security

Many organisations often rely on a vast network of agile SME suppliers and partners. However, with so many prolific data breaches occurring due to flaws in third-party partners, SMEs are coming under increasing pressure to prove their security credentials – or risk missing out on lucrative business opportunities.

Small companies make easier targets for attackers as they often don't see themselves as a target and fail to sufficiently invest in having robust cyber security measures in place. However, for supply chains to work effectively they require every organisation involved to communicate within a central system to avoid issues such as inaccurate inventory reporting, unexpected shortages and supply chain fraud. With information and security arrangements shared across the open supply chain, the cyber-security of any one organisation within the chain is potentially only as strong as that of the weakest member.

A determined attacker will stress test the security of a supply chain, seeking to identify the weakest link and use any vulnerabilities present to gain access to other members of the chain. Whilst not

it is vital that SMEs understand the risks and act fast or risk business failure due to a lack of a robust cyber security strategy

always the case, it is often SMEs with their limited IT expertise and resources, that have the weakest cyber-security arrangements. Once an attack has been successful against an SME supplier, attackers can then leverage their access as an entry vector into the larger network.

2. GDPR – it's not been and gone!

The headlines that accompanied the launch of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 may have subsided but the legal obligation hasn't. Although termed regulation, GDPR is enshrined in law and all organisations, regardless of size, need to ensure they meet their obligations.

However, some SMEs are continuing to bury their heads in the sand and who can blame them given the constant negative focus on GDPR. There is a lot of misinformation out there but what hasn't been fairly represented are the business benefits. The real driver for adopting new GDPR compliance principles should be to make business more efficient, secure and competitive.

To become compliant organisations must have a comprehensive understanding of their data, which provides SMEs with the opportunity to better understand their customer. With data cleaned up employees can be more productive and efficient through working with accurate, easily searchable and accessible data. Customers are the lifeblood of a modern digital business, by improving data management organisations can unlock the value within their data and improve performance.

3. Demonstrate commitment to effective cyber security

SME's can protect themselves against cyber-attacks and mitigate the risk of being excluded from supply chains by undertaking a certification process. Cyber Essentials Plus is a UK government and industry backed scheme to help all organisations protect themselves against common attacks. In collaboration with Information Assurance for Small and Medium

Enterprises (IAMSE) they set out basic technical controls for organisations to use which is annually assessed. The aim is to ensure that companies can understand their cyber risks, implement appropriate cyber defences, meet minimum cyber security standards without hindering business and share best practice.

By displaying the Cyber Essentials badge on its website, an SME can demonstrate to customers, partners and investors their commitment to cyber security. This is particularly beneficial for organisations that are storing personal information on customers and employees, or hosting commercially sensitive data. Through certification, SMEs can proactively provide sufficient guarantees that regulatory requirements will be met and the rights of data subjects protected.

Staying safe in a connected world

SMEs have an inherent advantage over larger companies, their agility enables them to be flexible and adjust to changes quickly. The lack of red tape and corporate complexity means they can act and adapt fast. By giving cyber security the same priority as other business goals, SMEs can maintain their advantage and thrive in the new digital age. Yet, according to the 2018 Cyber Security Breaches Survey(iii),25% of SMEs have no cyber security governance or risk management measures in place.

Cyber security need not be prohibitively expensive, SMEs need to seek solutions matching their size and needs, and not necessarily the same solutions used by a big organisation. By utilising an online information security management system (ISMS) that incorporates Cyber Essentials Plus, SMEs can undertake certification guided by a virtual online security officer (VOSO) as part of its wider cyber security measures. By navigating their way to compliance SMEs can look forward to the benefits of legislation through competitive differentiation and a new business culture that cherishes customer privacy and third-party relationships.

How to be a Sustainable Shopper

The average text message is replied to in 90 seconds, over half of retailers now offer a same-day delivery service and our transport is at its fastest, with two high-speed train services set to be operational by 2026, we have become accustomed to living in an impatient world. Everything is on our doorstep and at the tap of a finger making the temptation to divulge into a disposable lifestyle unavoidable but are we really aware of the environmental implications of this flippant and disposable way of life?

In 2018, a survey uncovered that shoppers in the UK hoard over 10 billion pounds worth of unworn clothes. Women were also found to be the largest culprits in unworn clothes, splurging the most money on garments (£1042 per year) while only wearing a measly 55% of their wardrobe. The main reason for excessive shopping sprees is confidence, with 79% of women saying that they are happier when they are wearing something new[6].

While excessive shopping sprees have negative repercussions for the environment, the maintenance of clothes such as washing, drying and dry cleaning have similar consequences. It is estimated that the annual footprint of a households total newly bought clothing and clothing maintenance equates to the same amount of carbon emissions required to drive the average car 6,000 miles, almost the same distance as driving from the UK to Peru.

Unbeknown to most, the implications of the fast fashion industry are extremely detrimental to the environment. Polyester, nylon, acrylic and other synthetic plastic fibres are very popular within the fashion industry, especially in the manufacturing of fast-fashion garments due to their inexpensive cost and versatility. As of 2019, around 60% of the material used to manufacture garments are comprised of synthetic fibres.

For every single clothing item washed, tiny microfibers no longer than 5mm are leached into waterways inevitably residing in oceans and contributing to the pressing problem of micro plastic pollution. These tiny harmful fibres are then easily ingested by marine wildlife inflicting painful physical damage such as inflammation of the intestines.

60% of women's clothing contains cotton fibres but despite it being a naturally derived material, cotton growth requires an abundance of water and the largest quantity of chemical pesticides compared with any other crop in the world.

Astoundingly, the manufacturing of one single pair of denim jeans requires 35,000 litres of water.

● ***Every 10 kilos of cotton manufactured requires 10,000 liters of water***

● ***Microfibres released into oceans by washing synthetic materials are contributing to ocean plastic pollution***

● ***Luxury brands destroying £28.6 billion of product; contributing to more CO2 emissions than maritime shipping***

In countries such as Uzbekistan whose main revenue comes from cotton production, the excessive farming and water consumption has caused the whole Aral Sea to shrivel and dry up.

Disgusted by the extreme efforts, brands such as Nike, Urban Outfitters, Michael Kors and Victoria Secret have taken to preserve their brands prestige and disappointed in luxury fashion brand Burberry for scandalously destroying £28.6 million worth of stock last year.

Fashion expert Cyrine Allani Joaristi who has worked for the likes of Christian Dior Couture, Jacques Fath and has founded clothing rental service Nothing-to-Wear gives her top tips on how we can shop sustainably while being ecologically conscious.

Avoid One Hit Wonders

It can be tempting when attending a special occasion to indulge on a new outfit, which is often only worn once for that special occasion and afterwards thrown to the back of the cupboard never to see daylight again.

the item. All too often we are blinded by clothing sales and discounts, persuaded to buy just because of the significant price reduction.

48 hours is the perfect time to deliberate the 30 Wears Test created by Livia Firth, founder of Eco Age, a company that certifies a clothing brands sustainability. If you cannot pledge to wear a pending item at least 30 times then you should leave the item hanging on the rack - Giving yourself time to think allows you to evaluate if the pending item is a valuable and durable edition to your wardrobe.

Steer to Sustainable

Steer your shopping trips towards brands that promote sustainability. Outlets such as H&M have an exclusive collection called Conscious, which boasts clothing materials such as ECONYL, 100% regenerated nylon and accessories made from discarded candle sticks. Or browse in vintage shops or online sites such as EBAY offering used clothing to reduce your fashion carbon footprint.

Stitch, Switch and Surrender

Avoid sending clothes to the landfill and increase the longevity of your wardrobe by mending broken zips, sewing on buttons or re- heeling shoes. Donate unwanted clothes to charity shops or host a clothes swap party, catch up with friends and shop for an entirely free new wardrobe by switching your unwanted clothing items with your friends.

Cyrine added that shoppers should: "Invest in a good quality timeless capsule wardrobe and rent the trendy and exceptional items. After all, we all suffer from the same Fashion paradigm: no matter the size of our closet, we always have Nothing-to-Wear."

Save money and preserve the environment by opting to use a clothing rental service such as Nothing-to-Wear allowing shoppers to rent designer handbags, dresses and accessories at a fraction of the cost of buying an outfit from new.

Think 30

If you see a garment that catches your eye, the invitation to make a spontaneous purchase is almost obligatory. By giving yourself 48 hours to think about whether you really like the item will help you to decide if you really want/need

Potential impact of poor leadership in SMEs on productivity and staff retention

45% of SME employees have quit because of their boss, while four in ten do not feel valued or trusted

The extent of poor SME leadership in the UK has been revealed in new research with 45% of SME employees having quit a job because of a boss, while four in ten do not feel trusted or valued by their current boss.

The research from process management firm Process Bliss also revealed that 60% of UK SME employees believe the business would work better if they were left to get on with their job, while 40% of respondents believe the

boss interfering in their role adversely affects company productivity. 42% of SME employees surveyed felt they could do a better job than their current boss.

"Being a strong and effective SME leader is one of the toughest challenges someone can face," said Alister Esam, CEO, Process Bliss. "People always assume that because someone is 'the boss' they know exactly what they are doing, but the

truth is that many bosses are simply making it up as they go along. A good leader will support the business and make sure it has what it needs to be successful, ensuring that employees are empowered to make their own decisions and are motivated and happy in their role."

Some of the main criticisms of SME leaders involve bosses unable to delegate properly or avoid overly interfering in people's work. The principal faults as identified by survey respondents were:

- **Demonstrating obvious favouritism towards certain colleagues in the workplace**
- **Taking credit for your work**
- **Micromanaging you and your work**
- **Not being clear when asking for a job to be done**
- **Not acknowledging or giving thanks when you do a good job**

There were also some marked differences between male and female bosses. Male bosses were rated worse for micromanaging, delegating too much, taking credit for others' work and not being clear when asking for a job to be done, while female bosses were worse for demonstrating obvious favouritism towards certain colleagues and for trying too hard to be a friend.

"I would encourage any SME leader to take the role of 'boss' as seriously as possible – speak to peers, network and take professional advice wherever possible," said Alister Esam, CEO, Process Bliss. "There are many leadership styles and each boss must find what works best for them, but clearly issues such as micromanaging and being unclear when instructing about a task are causing employees at UK SMEs to leave their role and impacting on company productivity. Working with functioning processes can be a great asset here – people know what they are doing and accordingly, bosses shouldn't feel the need to interfere."

There was some positive news for SME bosses that emerged from the research. Half of respondents said that they found their boss inspiring, while 58% said that their boss is open to being challenged. When asked to give their boss an overall rating out of ten, the average figure for UK SME bosses emerged as 6.7.

"A rating of almost seven isn't too bad and shows that many UK SME bosses are broadly on the right track," concluded Alister Esam. "But that's not to say there aren't things to work on. The research demonstrates some key areas to start on and also that leadership as an overall concept needs to be given the training and focus such an important position requires."

Top Office Hacks for a more efficient workplace

Some of the biggest killers of office productivity include noisy colleagues, crowded workspaces and even sitting near their manager. Here are a few suggestions on things you can do to help make your office more efficient.

When your workload is pressing and time is at a premium in order to fulfil today's to-do list, the last thing you need is a variety of distractions stopping you getting things done – whether that's from a chatty co-worker or just another strength-sapping team meeting.

Standing meetings

When everyone gets a bit too comfortable at the start of what's supposed to be a quick meeting, it should trigger warning signs that you're running the risk of wasting time. To ensure that you can get down to business, try holding shorter meetings with everyone on their feet – not only will this keep attendees' blood pumping but you can be sure of achieving the desired outcome in a shorter time without anyone zoning out and sinking into the furniture.

Clutter-free workspace

Everyone needs to tidy their workspace now and again, but this could be one of the ways you're losing time on a regular basis, whether it's avoidance or simply disorganisation. Investing in a desktop organiser can help you file away any unnecessary workflow blockages, while sticky notes can be a great reminder to yourself for those little jobs that seem to pile up whether you're on top of things or not..

Take regular breaks

Your stress levels won't thank you if you're spending hours on end glued to your phone or computer screen without so much as a 'blink break'. Briefly stepping away from your work station will allow you to get refreshed and refocus on the next major task at hand. The Pomodoro Technique is a proven productivity aid – 25 minutes of work followed by a five-minute break – and could help you reduce the number of items on that To Do list down.

Turn off email notifications

If your mind is beginning to wander at work, the last thing you need is an excuse to indulge it – and even reading the most innocuous email can be enough to lose your train of thought. Removing the pop-up option from your screen can help you through the course of the day. But make sure to check in on your inbox whenever you're between tasks!

Use productivity tools

There are many apps and programs available online to help you achieve your desired productivity level. Use Feedly or Evernote to save those articles for later – whether it's for business or pleasure, they can be divided up into categories accordingly – and a password manager like LastPass or Dashlane so that you don't lose time trying to remember how to access that old email account. You can even ask Google on your PC or mobile to set a timer for you if you're trying to keep track of your schedule.

By using these handy tips, you could soon be make up for a lot of previously lost time at work, leaving you free to enjoy your evenings without the stress of what's awaiting you the next morning.

www.staples.co.uk/knowledge-centre

Frustrated by technology?

Survey reveals that Brits are destroying their gadgets in frustration, falling out with their partners and losing working hours as a result of tech problems

New research, commissioned by Wiztek, a provider of online and mobile tech support, reveals that forty-seven% of the population admit they're not very knowledgeable when it comes to resolving computer and tech issues.

Unable to fix troublesome tech, 15% of adults have reached the end of their tether and attempted to destroy the frustrating device.

Almost eight million Brits have broken gadgets - in a fit of RAGE, the study found.

Those polled will typically endure 63 IT issues a year - including intermittent Wi-Fi, endless pop-up adverts and patience-testing paper jams.

And when trying to fix problems such as these it's just 12 minutes before they start to lose their cool.

In fact, the research of 2,000 adults, commissioned by Wiztek, found a third have become so fed-up by their tech woes they've purchased a replacement device rather than get it repaired.

And a fifth have fallen out with their other half as a direct result of their phone, computer or tablet not working as it should.

"Tech is an integral part of our lives – whether it be through our jobs or through our home lives," said Paul Amsellem, CEO of Wiztek.

"And as such, we'd be significantly hampered in our daily lives – unable to check emails for important messages, use sat nav to successfully get from A to B or to keep track of appointments."

"So when our devices stop working or don't operate as they should it understandably becomes extremely frustrating," Amsellem continued.

47% of the population admit they're not very knowledgeable when it comes to resolving computer and tech issues.

And of the 60 plus problems faced annually, the research found they will only successfully resolve 14 of them without help.

Instead, when attempting to fix IT and tech problems, 3 in 10 revealed they've made the problem worse.

So perhaps it's no wonder three quarters have turned to someone else to help them with a tech issue.

But even this comes with risk - a quarter admit they later regretted getting a helping hand when their gadgets were returned in a worse state than before.

Further frustrating tech problems include apps which keep on crashing, slow downloads and accidentally deleting something significant.

The Wiztek research carried out through OnePoll, found 40% of the population has been left unable to work following problems with IT equipment.

And 25% have lost important files such as cherished family photos and key documents as a direct result of a tech failure.

"Tech and computing issues are such a minefield - there's so many possible causes to everyday problems, even the most knowledgeable of people can get stumped from time to time. Downtime from tech problems can lead to many wasted hours and in today's society where we are all so busy, time costs money," Amsellem added.

"That's why we launched Wiztek - thankfully you no longer need to have excessive downtime or

rely on a family member, friend or colleague with your tech issues, you can simply connect to a trusted tech expert anytime, anywhere on your phone, tablet or PC to help with your problem within 30 seconds with a no subscription, 'no fix, no fee' promise," Amsellem concluded.

Don't wait for your next tech issue to arise, be ready and prepared by downloading the free Wiztek app from the iTunes or Google play.

TOP 20 - MOST ANNOYING TECH PROBLEMS:

1. **Slow internet**
2. **Slow computer**
3. **Pop-up ads**
4. **Wi-Fi keeps disconnecting**
5. **Forgotten password**
6. **Slow downloads**
7. **Software updates making things worse**
8. **Can't login**
9. **Printer won't work**
10. **Phone battery keeps dying quickly**
11. **Accidentally deleting something important**
12. **App keeps on crashing**
13. **Paper jams**
14. **'Blue screen of death'**
15. **Can't open email attachments**
16. **Keep seeing 'there is a problem with this website's security certificate'**
17. **Ink not printing properly**
18. **Hard drive failure**
19. **Remembering where you stored particular files/data**
20. **Running out of hard drive space**

How to effectively manage a heavy workload

At some point, most people will experience the stress and the pressure that comes from a heavy workload. But if not handled correctly, this can be damaging to both your physical and mental health.

It's incredibly important to recognise when a heavy workload is becoming too much. By effectively managing it, you'll avoid any damaging effects. Whether you work by yourself or have a colleague who may add to your workload, there are ways to manage the burden of a heavy workload.

No matter what field you work in and whatever role you play in your organisation, you need to be organised and have a clear mind. But this can only happen if you're keeping on top of your work. Here's how to effectively manage a heavy workload.

Get organised

Getting organised is the best way to tackle a heavy workload. Organisation skills will help you stay focused and keep your work in order, allowing you to complete tasks to the best of your abilities.

There are various ways to keep organised and these will be dependent on your personal choice. For example, you may want to keep a diary to highlight all the relevant deadlines and dates.

Additionally, it's important to have a tidy and organised workplace. If you have mounts of paper and finished cups of coffee cluttering your work space, it will have a negative impact on your mood.

Having a cluttered and untidy workspace can reflect negatively on your level of motivation. Therefore, it's highly recommended that you have a clean, tidy working space.

Say 'no'

Whether you're a business owner, work alone or work in an office with colleagues, you need to learn how and when to say no.

Of course, it's only natural to want to take on work, whether it's to help a colleague or make more money. Plus, if you have time to help others after you've completed your own tasks that's fine. It only becomes problematic when you're prioritising other people's work before yours.

For example, if you have a job at an finance firm, and your colleagues keep dumping more tasks and reports on your desk – don't be afraid to say enough is enough.

If you spend your time and energy working for others, you'll see your workload build and build, adding to your stress and pressure.

Prioritise

Tackling your workload and being able to work through it will need prioritising skills. This ties in with being organised and creating lists.

If you like working with lists, put the tasks in order of high priority to low priority. This will enable you to work to deadlines and allows you to get the tasks done in an orderly manner.

Take time out

Taking time out may seem like the opposite of working and managing a workload. However, it's actually incredibly important. You will need to take certain amounts of time out from work. This can be a week away or mini 15 minute breaks throughout the day.

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