

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

September 2022

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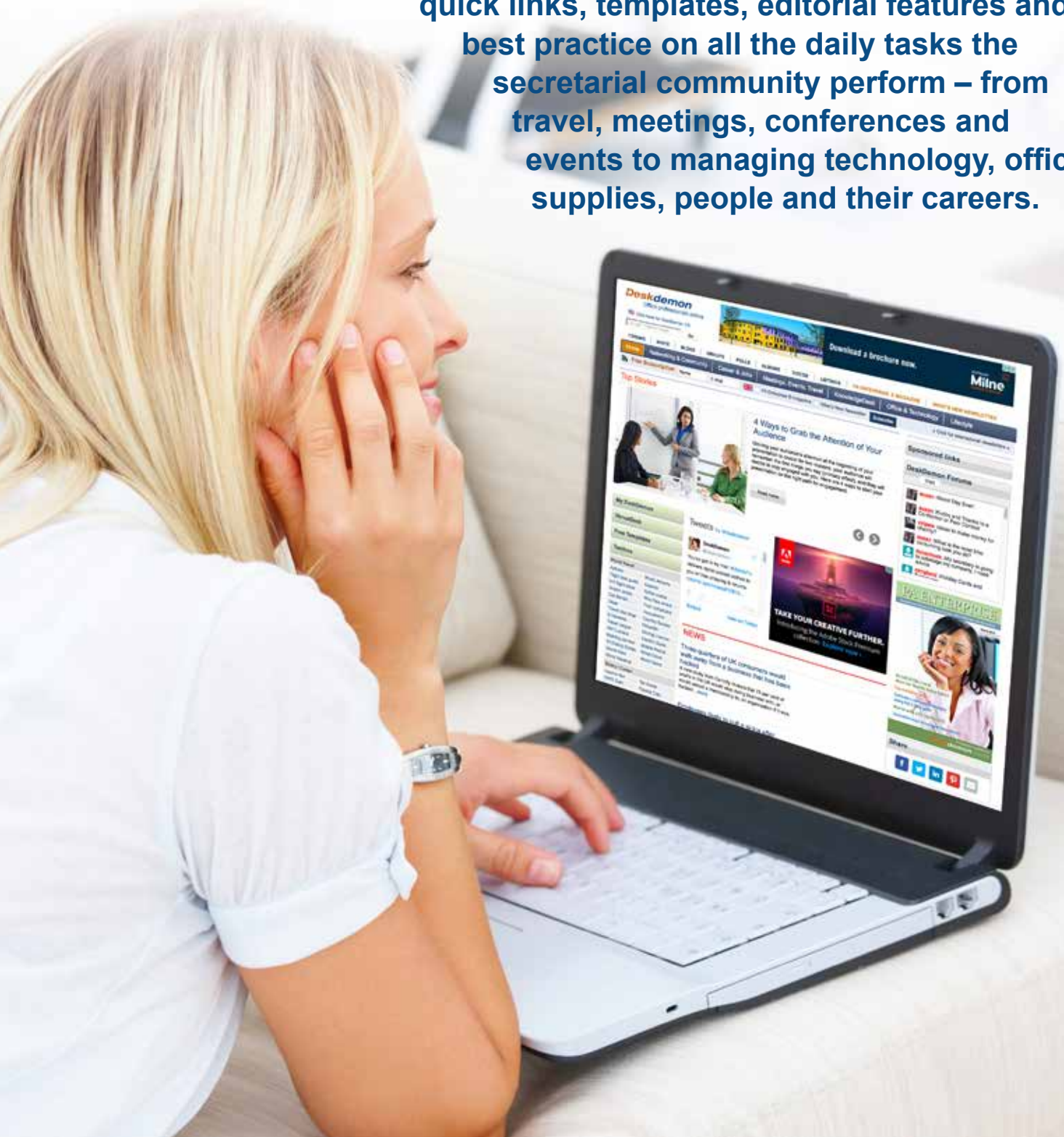
PA Enterprise is published by

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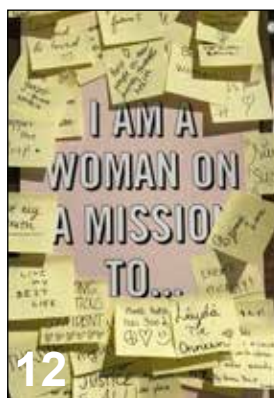
As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.



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PA ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

www.deskdemon.com

Terminal House, Station
Approach, Shepperton,
Middlesex TW17 8AS

Editorial

editoruk@deskdemon.com

Advertising

Tel: 0870 410 4038

mek@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos

Graphic Design

janebigos@deskdemon.com

Kulasekaram Vimalarasa
(Raj)

Web Developer

raj@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani

Founder, CEO

mek@deskdemon.com

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Future Workplace Trends

From flexible working hours to employee safety, here are some of the employment trends shaping the future of work.



1. Remote and hybrid work

Globalization and advances in technology led to a rise in remote work within the past decades. Pandemic shutdowns in 2020 sped up this growth.

Remote work offers employees benefits like flexible working hours and no commutes. Employers often see higher rates of productivity from staff, and can also cut overhead expenses via office rental costs. Plus, remote work allows recruiters to pull from a wider and more diverse candidate pool.

Organizations initially hesitant to allow employees to work from home now have evidence that virtual offices are practical and sustainable. Also, as more companies offer remote work options, professionals who want to work from home have more choices. Inflexible employers are likely to see higher turnover rates from aspiring telecommuters.

An analysis from McKinsey predicts that in the coming years, three to four times as many professionals will work remotely at least part of the week. The hybrid work model has gained significant popularity, and experts expect that many companies will shift to hybrid offices where employees work on-site at least once or twice a week.

Smart organizations will spend energy designing guidelines for telecommuting rather than wasting effort trying to force staff to revert to more traditional work structures.

2. Virtual team building

During the pandemic, many managers used Zoom for team building when coworkers could not meet in person. However, with more offices going fully or partially remote, there is a growing need for online team building.

Virtual team building is one of the most quickly growing remote work trends. Companies increasingly turn to activities like online murder mysteries, Zoom happy hours, and virtual trivia to engage remote employees.

Remote team building also has utility beyond virtual offices. Even in more traditional workplaces, many professionals travel or have busy schedules. Coordinating team outings can be tricky, and often several team members miss the gatherings. Virtual team events accommodate wider audiences. Zoom events do not need travel time or parking hassles, participants can wear comfortable clothes and call from the couch, and there is a likely chance of spotting a pet or two. Plus, these gatherings are ideal for introverts with easily-drained social batteries, or parents who are wary of leaving kids for too long.

Online team building activities can supplement in-person outings. The team can still gather for restaurant outings or retreats when possible, and Zoom game nights, remote dinners, and team Slack threads can fill in the gaps between physical gatherings.

3. Employee wellness

The hectic pace of modern life has contributed to a rise in anxiety and depression. Calls for self-care and employee health have increased as awareness of mental illness and work stress has grown. The global pandemic crisis magnified the need for employee wellness initiatives. Many folks struggle to set boundaries and avoid burnout, especially when working from home, juggling multiple responsibilities, and facing down outside adversity.

Workplace wellness trends are more essential

than ever. In the coming years, employees are more likely to prioritize self-care, and employers are more likely to invest in programs that spotlight health and wellness. For example, massages, meditation classes, and stress management life-coaching sessions. Also, services like therapy, and financial literacy workshops.

As work shifts towards hybrid and remote models, the nature of these wellness programs will also change. In lieu of office workout rooms and catered healthy lunches, companies may instead provide more credits towards gym memberships and home equipment or healthy food prep services. There will also be more telehealth visits and online consultations with specialists. Also, staff may spend more time taking care of social needs to fight off the isolation of remote work. For example, forming clubs with coworkers and planning more outside-of-work team outings.

4. Flexible Working Hours

A sudden mass shift to remote work permitted many employees the freedom to choose a working schedule. Since workers were not limited to regular office hours, they could carve out routines that better suited work styles. Night owls or early-morning risers could work during hours they could focus most, with fewer distractions. This liberty permitted professionals to tend to other responsibilities, such as doctors appointments, childcare, online schooling, or errands.

Variable working hours is one of the most obvious workplace flexibility trends. While some jobs ask for overlap in schedules, there is often little reason for the entire staff to work identical hours. This fact seems obvious when you consider that global teams spread across

different continents and timezones have worked together for years.

The 9 to 5 is quickly becoming a relic of the past. A better solution is to make certain blocks of time mandatory to be on-site or on-line, and allow staff to structure the other hours as they please.

This perk costs the organization next to nothing. In fact, the company will likely save money in the form of long term productivity.

5. Multi-functional workspaces

Industry standards may seem like age-old institutions, however the current workplace is a fairly modern invention. White-collar office work only rose to prominence in the past 150 years or so. Even within that time, workplaces shifted from private offices and cubicles to open floor plans. As the workforce moves towards more hybrid and remote work, office design will evolve again.

Within the next few years, companies will minimize office space and make the remaining places of work more flexible and multi-functional. For example, introducing hot-desking, where employees do not have an assigned seat but rather claim a different open workspace every day. Also, a rise in rearrangeable work furniture, such as easily-movable tables and chairs. Not to mention, offices are likely to adopt technology like projectors, screens, and electronic whiteboards, and possibly even VR to better accommodate hybrid workforces.

Smaller and more-spread out companies may also turn to coworking, and choose to rent office space a few times a month instead of paying rent on a building that sits empty most of the time.



6. Diversity and Inclusion

As awareness of injustices spread, so does society's call for fair and safe workplaces and practices. The public increasingly holds companies accountable for building diverse, inclusive organizations.

In recent years, society has increased demands for companies to appoint more women and people of color to positions of leadership, greater awareness of mental health in the workplace, a growing number of brands and organizations outwardly supporting the LGBTQ+ rights movement, and more accommodations for professionals with disabilities. Despite considerable progress, further improvements are necessary.

As society grows more connected through technology, it is becoming harder to hide professional injustices. The internet gives people the power to share experience and like minded peers. The more stories come out, the greater the calls for tolerance and inclusion.

Younger generations tend to be more empathetic towards the struggles of minority groups, young leaders included. Gen Z and millennials tend to be driving these changes, however other generations also play a part. The public is pushing to see more equitable practices across all facets of life, including work.

Diversity and inclusion are a rising trend, and should not be a passing trend. Every employee deserves a safe and supportive work environment. The movement has been growing steadily over the past decades and has recently received significant boosts and breakthroughs. Whether these leaps in progress lead to paradigm shifts, or are just part of the current zeitgeist depends on actions moving forward.

With the rise of employee resource groups, experimentation with fairer hiring practices, and appointment of diversity officers in organizations, the work world seems to be

making progress on making industry more inclusive.

7. Ongoing learning

Experts predict that within coming decades, the higher education system may shift towards long-term learning models. Instead of obtaining terminal degrees, future professionals may revisit college years after graduation to learn the latest skills and information. Workplace learning trends are bound to follow suit.

Professional development is already experiencing a similar transformation. Gone are the days when folks spent their whole life in a single company, or even a single industry. A competitive job market means that professionals need to stay informed to stay employed and advance their careers. Workers are calling for their employers to provide that education. A 2019 LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report found that 94% of employees would stay at a job longer if employers provided training and development opportunities.

According to the 2021 LinkedIn Learning Report, learning and development professionals have taken on a more prominent role in organizations by helping employees adapt to the seismic changes in the work world. Re-skilling and up-skilling have been some of the top priorities in workforce development.

As remote work increases, so does virtual learning. Remote learning is convenient for employers and employees alike. Online modules and training videos ensure a consistent level of training for employees, and these self-guided courses allow staff to learn on their own schedules and paces. Digital

courses are an easy way to bring continual education to the workforce.

8. Worker safety

Workplace safety standards have long been a hot topic in industry. The work world has come a long way from widespread child labor and dangerous factory conditions, however there is still a long way to go.

After the mass-health scare that was COVID-19, there is likely to be more emphasis on safety in many workplaces, including white-collar jobs. There is likely to be a change of attitude in using sick days. In a post-pandemic world, coming to work while sick is more likely to be seen as a liability than a mark of commitment. Workspaces would do well to keep some of the increased safety precautions in place, such as better air filtration systems, plastic dividers, and easy-access sanitizing stations.

After the pandemic caught so many organizations off-guard, more companies are likely to invest in disaster-preparedness, and prepare plans to protect workers and the company in case of large-scale emergencies.

Final Thoughts

The work world changes constantly, and savvy employers keep an eye on the trends. Embracing workplace trends gives companies the opportunity to build more innovative and progressive organizations, and attract talent and media attention in the process. Some trends turn into business standards, while others merely provide a break in routine. Either way, new concepts are worth checking out and trying, because novel ideas just may revolutionize your operation.

Which benefits and perks do employees want most post-pandemic?

Just as the world of work continues to shift and change, so too do the benefits and perks employees most want from their employers. This is particularly true since COVID-19 and after a huge shift towards working remotely. So, what are the most desired employee perks post-pandemic?



Let's take a look at the workplace perks and benefits employees want most post-pandemic, given the rapidly changing nature of the modern workplace, and what employers should consider when it comes to benefits and what to prioritise.

COVID-19 and the drive towards remote working has inevitably changed the landscape of employee benefits and what employees are looking for when it comes to staff perks and support.



According to a Metlife study on employee benefit trends in 2020, 74% of employees are concerned about at least one aspect of their wellbeing (such as financial wellbeing and psychological safety) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; furthermore, 4 in 10 say their employer is not currently offering benefits or programs that help them.

However, Gartner have recently reported that one of the top future of work trends post-pandemic is that employers have an expanded role as a social safety net for employees in offering benefits such as financial assistance, enhanced sick leave, flexible working, and childcare provisions. Many employers are recognising that employee wellbeing is the

priority during this crisis to ensure resilience long term.

The best job perks for employees

According to a Perkbox survey of 1,532 employees for the perks they most want in 2021, half said employee discounts were the perk that would make them happier and improve their wellbeing the most. Other prominent perks included flexibility and remote working.

The best workplace benefits for wellbeing

In order, these were the workplace perks those surveyed found most important for their wellbeing:

- Employee discounts (50%)
- Flexible working hours (40%)
- Ability to work remotely (37%)
- Time off for mental health (35%)
- Free COVID-19 tests/vaccination (25%)
- Subsidised gym membership (22%)
- Free counselling sessions (21%)
- Professional financial advice (21%)
- Professional food/nutrition advice (12%)
- Mindfulness/meditation apps (9%)

The best benefits for employee happiness

The Perkbox survey also looked at which perks would make employees feel happier in their jobs, with employee discounts again coming out on top (52%). Other benefits that scored highly for employee happiness included:

- Greater recognition for their work (42%)
- Unlimited/greater amount of holiday (41%)
- At-home entertainment (40%)
- Always being allowed to work from home (38%)

Employees are also looking for a diversity of benefits – Metlife found that 69% of employees said having a wider array of benefits would increase loyalty to their employer. This makes sense as different employees will have different priorities, such as childcare, flexibility, and personal health.

The remote/non-remote perk divide

It's important for employers to note that non-remote employees responded very differently to remote employees in what workplace perks they prioritise. If not working remotely for the majority of 2021, employees responded that their top perks were:

- Free breakfast/lunch (39%)
- Greater recognition for work (36%)
- Flexible working hours (35%)
- Subsidised commuting costs (25%)
- Free COVID-19 tests/vaccination (25%)
- Free tea/coffee/snacks (22%)

This really shows that what employees prioritise in terms of benefits depends on their unique working situation, so it's best to consider your employees and consult with them on the benefits that will work best for them.

Tracking pay and benefits

In addition to offering the best benefits for your staff, it's also important to record and track those benefits accurately to ensure everyone is aware of the benefits available to them and has fair access. Pay and benefits management software gives you full control and visibility of your staff pay and benefits data, all in one place.

Employees who practice mindfulness are more likely to find their job stimulating



Employees who practice mindfulness are less bored at work and less likely to quit, according to a new study. Researchers found that in monotonous jobs, employees who are more ‘mindful’ have greater job satisfaction, are less likely to quit and think their job is less boring. The study, entitled “It’s so boring – or is it? Examining the role of mindfulness for work performance and attitudes in monotonous jobs”, has been published in the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology and is co-authored by Andreas Wihler of the University of Exeter Business School, Ute Regina Hülshager of Maastricht University, Jochen Reb of Singapore Management University and Jochen Menges of the University of Zurich and Cambridge Judge Business School.

However, mindfulness was found to boost the quality but not the quantity of work, in what the study described as a “double-edged sword” for task performance in monotonous jobs. The research was based on a study of 174 blue-collar workers at a Mexican manufacturing plant along

the Mexico-US border whose job is to process discount coupons from US retailers, a highly repetitive task with no additional incentives for performing well.

The researchers measured the employees' mindfulness using a six-point mindfulness attention awareness scale, before assessing their boredom levels and attitudes four weeks later. Then, after four months, they collected data about the number of coupons employees had processed and number of errors they had made. The researchers found that higher levels of employee mindfulness meant they were less bored by their monotonous work and performed work tasks to a higher standard.

However, mindfulness was also linked to employees completing a reduced quantity of work. Mindfulness was also found to have a significant impact on workers' attitudes towards their job; those who were more mindful had greater job satisfaction – in part because they felt less bored by their monotonous work. Employees who were mindful were also found to be less likely to quit their jobs – though there was no evidence this was a result of their lower boredom levels.

The study notes that workplace mindfulness has been examined and implemented largely in the context of white-collar jobs that feature relatively high levels of variety and human interaction. In contrast, more monotonous working environments that are common in sectors such as manufacturing, services and agriculture, have received little attention from academic research and mindfulness literature, despite their prevalence across many industries and regions.

The study's co-author Jochen Menges, who teaches at the University of Zürich and Cambridge Judge Business School, said: "Monotonous jobs are held by millions of people around the world and more research needs to be done about those jobs. "Our research now seeks to redress the balance in favour of blue-collar workers. We find that more mindful employees perceive their monotonous job as less boring and have higher job satisfaction, and are thus less likely to leave."

The study suggests that if quality work is more important than quantity, organisations should recognise and support employee mindfulness, and that incorporating mindfulness training into the workplace could both increase work quality and increase staff retention in monotonous jobs.

However, the researchers stress that mindfulness or mindfulness training is no silver bullet for the many problems associated with monotonous work tasks and that much needs to change about these jobs – from how they are designed to how they are paid. Andreas Wihler, an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Exeter Business School, said: "Mindfulness helps employees in monotonous jobs to be more satisfied. But organisations would be ill-advised to rely on mindfulness for making boring work conditions bearable. Organisations are still responsible for resolving structural and organizational deficits through work redesign."

Password Managers For Business



Password Managers for Business are a great way to improve business security, and remove the frustrations of storing and securing complex passwords for each business account.

With the growth of SaaS and cloud applications, every employee has hundreds of different accounts to manage, with each needing a unique, secure password. A report from LastPass recently revealed that the average employee has 191 different passwords to manage.

That's a lot of passwords to keep on top of! Understandably, this causes employees to use the same password for multiple accounts, or use simple passwords that are easily remembered – and so easy for hackers to guess.

This is a big security risk, as one account

becoming compromised can then allow an attacker to break into multiple others, with each potentially containing sensitive company information.

Password Managers for business offer a solution. These products manage passwords for users by storing all of their passwords in a fully encrypted password vault. This makes life easier for users and helps admins to ensure that everyone is using unique, secure passwords, across all of their accounts.

To help you find the right platform, [expertinsights.com](https://www.expertinsights.com) have identified their top ten best password management solutions.



Keeper Security

Keeper is a market-leading business password management solution that provides enterprise password security to help promote better password practices among employees, prevent account compromises, and meet business compliance standards. Keeper helps improve password security by allowing users to generate random, high-strength passwords for all of their company accounts and applications. These are stored in a secure, encrypted vault unique to each user and can be easily managed and accessed when needed from any device. Keeper helps to improve employee productivity, reduce the risk of data breaches from weak or reused passwords, and ensure compliance standards are met.



Dashlane

Dashlane is a user-friendly, easy-to-implement password manager that protects users from credential-based breaches. Popular amongst both technical and non-technical customers for its intuitive user experience and wide range of security features, Dashlane protects valuable corporate data while freeing up help-desk resources and increasing productivity.



1Password

1Password offers secure, scalable and easy-to-use password management for teams. Their solution makes it easy for employees to stay safe online by storing passwords in secure vaults and enforcing two-factor authentication. Passwords are synced

seamlessly across browsers and devices, meaning employees always have access to their passwords.

1Password offers a range of features for businesses. Admins have access to advanced permissions and can deploy account recovery options in the event passwords are lost. A travel mode is available to ensure admins can help employees with password issues while away from their desks.

Hitachi ID

Hitachi ID

Hitachi ID Systems is a provider of user-friendly entitlement, identity and credential governance solutions that are easy to deploy and manage, while offering improved network security. Bravura Safe is Hitachi ID's enterprise password management solution, designed to mitigate the risk of credential-related breaches such as brute force and phishing attacks by enabling organizations to manage and secure their employees' decentralized passwords, secrets and files, so that they can safely send sensitive data to individuals outside the corporate IT environment.

LastPass

LastPass

LastPass is one of the most popular password managers for business. Lastpass provides multiple levels of identity management, starting with simple and secure password management for teams, going right up to an enterprise identity management solution that combines password management with integrated multi-factor authentication and single sign-on for users.

Customers highly rate Lastpass for its user experience. Lastpass is easy to use; it seamlessly stores passwords across accounts and makes it intuitive for users to log into multiple systems with unique, secure passwords. The platform is easy to access, with a browser extension, desktop app and mobile application that allows users to access their passwords from anywhere. These applications will also auto-fill your passwords when you are prompted to login, so you don't need to remember or copy and paste secure passwords.

ManageEngine

ManageEngine

Password Manager Pro is a secure vault for storing and managing sensitive information such as passwords, documents and digital identities for enterprise. Password Manager Pro helps organizations to manage passwords more effectively, improve IT productivity, improve admin security controls and meet regulatory compliance.

This platform is available as both an on-cloud and on-premise solution. ManageEngine automatically creates a secure password for users and employees can access their passwords both on desktop and on mobile. The admin console is accessible off network, so you can set policies when you're away from your desk.

NordPass

NordPass

NordPass Business is an advanced business password management solution that helps

organizations to better manage password security and improve user productivity, and enables admins a comprehensive overview of the password state across the organization.

NordPass offers an XChaCha20-encrypted vault, in which users can generate strong passwords, store an unlimited number of passwords, easily auto-fill their credentials with just one click, and safely share passwords with others. Users can also securely store notes, credit cards details, and personal information.



Bitwarden

Bitwarden is a trusted open-source password manager that allows users to manage their passwords and private data securely, from any location or device. The solution works for individuals, teams, and business organizations, with a range of options to choose from at different prices and with different capabilities, including a free option. Bitwarden allows their users to generate, manage and store passwords, and to easily share encrypted data with other members of your organization.



N-able

N-able Passport is a cloud-based password management service, targeting MSP customers. It's fully encrypted, with efficient and easy-to-use password and credential management. It provides businesses with a full range of features including credential

injection, reporting, auditing and automatic password changes.

Passportal is ideal for MSP and internal IT services teams that need easy-to-use and simple cloud based password security. It provides MSPs with privileged client documentation capabilities, which make it easy for technicians to provide essential information quickly and efficiently. Passportal also offers a fully white labelled password management as-a-service solution which can be distributed to your clients.



Delinea Secret Server

Delinea Secret Server lets organizations protect their privileged accounts with enterprise grade access management. It can be deployed as a cloud service or on-premise. This solution was formerly known as Thycotic Secret Server, and has rebranded after a recent merger with Centrify.

Secret Server allows users to store privileged account details and passwords in an encrypted, centralized vault. It then allows admins to identify all accounts and manage access to company credentials, so that companies have full visibility and control over corporate account access and security.

Secret Server is aimed primarily toward larger teams, who have lots of users that need to be able to securely manage their own passwords, as well as following admin security policies. There is a freemium option available however, which makes Delinea Secret Server attractive to smaller businesses as well.

Imposter Syndrome in the Workplace



The psychological phenomenon, Imposter Syndrome, is a feeling that you don't deserve your job despite all of your accomplishments in the workplace and hold back from taking risks for fear of failure.

Here are some signs of Imposter Syndrome...

- You're putting in 110% effort with everything – to the point of exhaustion. E.g you may stay late and/or go in early everyday.
- Beating yourself up for minor mistakes – you can't "let the little things go" when it comes to yourself.
- You may fear being "found out" by your co-workers or boss, or have the feeling that you're fooling people – you essentially feel like a fraud.
- You're convinced your colleagues have it all together, but you do not.

- You're unable to accept praise because you never think the work you do is good enough, even when everyone says you're doing well.
- You believe that your job or career defines you.

How Imposter Syndrome can affect your productivity, career, relationships and even health?

- Individuals can end up folding when under the pressure as they are unsure of how to handle those feelings of being an imposter, rather than trying to find possible solutions.
- It can negatively impact careers as it can lead to procrastination by perhaps putting off assignments out of fear that they won't be able to finish it to the necessary high standards. Or, instead they may over-produce or over-prepare – spending too much time on a task than is necessary – to prove that they are capable, which can lead to burnout and be counterproductive.
- Impostor syndrome can negatively impact relationships when a family member prioritizes career success over time with their families or children.

How can an individual overcome Imposter Syndrome?

- Try to embrace a 'Why not me?' or 'Well, why can't I?' attitude – If physics allows it, then there's no reason why you can't do something.
- Individuals also need to take the initiative to place themselves in supportive environments, for example – mentorships can be beneficial.
- Pay attention to your negative thoughts. E.g assuming that your co-workers think you're


clueless – when this type of thought comes about, try to to recognise it as a thought, rather than a fact. Acknowledge that what you're experiencing is just the impostor syndrome and that others experience it just like you do. Instead, make a self-affirming statement to yourself.

- Try making another list of all of the skills and accomplishments that make you uniquely qualified for your job, so it's at the top of your mind.
- If you feel overwhelmed by the emotions you are feeling – seek help from a professional. NVP can help to support you, contact us on 1300 830 687 to arrange an appointment or book online.

What organisations can do to avoid employees experiencing Imposter Syndrome...

- Employers need to encourage affirmation and recognise accomplishments in the workplace.
- Create a culture of inclusion – where people feel comfortable speaking up without fear of being attacked as incompetent.
- Show your employees what its like to work as a human being – shift away from the 'all-work-no-play' culture by modeling effective stress management, self-compassion and empathy.
- Have open discussions about how self-doubt accompanies success – this can help to normalise the fact that fears come with taking risks and innovating, creating psychological safety.

5 Different Types of Imposter Syndrome



Many high achievers share a dirty little secret: Deep down they feel like complete frauds—their accomplishments the result of serendipitous luck. This psychological phenomenon, known as imposter syndrome, reflects a belief that you're an inadequate and incompetent failure despite evidence that indicates you're skilled and quite successful.

In short, it's a hot mess of harmfulness. It can also take various forms, depending on a person's background, personality, and circumstances. If you're familiar with the feeling of waiting for those around you to "find you out," it might be helpful to consider what type of imposter you are so you can problem-solve accordingly.

1. The Perfectionist

Perfectionism and imposter syndrome often go hand-in-hand. Think about it: Perfectionists set excessively high goals for themselves, and when they fail to reach a goal, they experience major self-doubt and worry about measuring up. Whether they realize it or not, this group can also be control freaks, feeling like if they want something done right, they have to do it themselves.

Not sure if this applies to you?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you ever been accused of being a micromanager?
- Do you have great difficulty delegating? Even when you're able to do so, do you feel frustrated and disappointed in the results?
- When you miss the (insanely high) mark on something, do you accuse yourself of "not being cut out" for your job and ruminate on it for days?
- Do you feel like your work must be 100% perfect, 100% of the time?

For this type, success is rarely satisfying

because they believe they could've done even better. But that's neither productive nor healthy. Owning and celebrating achievements is essential if you want to avoid burnout, find contentment, and cultivate self-confidence.

Learn to take your mistakes in stride, viewing them as a natural part of the process. In addition, push yourself to act before you're ready. Force yourself to start the project you've been planning for months. Truth is, there will never be the "perfect time" and your work will never be 100% flawless. The sooner you're able to accept that, the better off you'll be.

2. The Superwoman/man

Since people who experience this phenomenon are convinced they're phonies amongst real-deal colleagues, they often push themselves to work harder and harder to measure up. But this is just a false cover-up for their insecurities, and the work overload may harm not only their own mental health, but also their relationships with others.

Not sure if this applies to you?

- Do you stay later at the office than the rest of your team, even past the point that you've completed that day's necessary work?
- Do you get stressed when you're not working and find downtime completely wasteful?
- Have you left your hobbies and passions fall by the wayside, sacrificed to work?
- Do you feel like you haven't truly earned

your title (despite numerous degrees and achievements), so you feel pressed to work harder and longer than those around you to prove your worth?

Imposter workaholics are actually addicted to the validation that comes from working, not to the work itself. Start training yourself to veer away from external validation. No one should have more power to make you feel good about yourself than you—even your boss when they give your project the stamp of approval. On the flip side, learn to take constructive criticism seriously, not personally.

As you become more attuned to internal validation and able to nurture your inner confidence that states you're competent and skilled, you'll be able to ease off the gas as you gauge how much work is reasonable.

3. The Natural Genius

Young says people with this competence type believe they need to be a natural “genius.”

As such, they judge their competence based on ease and speed as opposed to their efforts. In other words, if they take a long time to master something, they feel shame.

These types of imposters set their internal bar impossibly high, just like perfectionists. But natural genius types don't just judge themselves based on ridiculous expectations, they also judge themselves based on getting things right on the first try. When they're not able to do something quickly or fluently, their alarm sounds.

Not sure if this applies to you?

- Are you used to excelling without much effort?
- Do you have a track record of getting “straight A's” or “gold stars” in everything you do?
- Were you told frequently as a child that you were the “smart one” in your family or peer group?
- Do you dislike the idea of having a mentor, because you can handle things on your own?
- When you're faced with a setback, does your confidence tumble because not performing well provokes a feeling of shame?
- Do you often avoid challenges because it's so uncomfortable to try something you're not great at?

To move past this, try seeing yourself as a work in progress. Accomplishing great things involves lifelong learning and skill-building—for everyone, even the most confident people. Rather than beating yourself up when you don't reach your impossibly high standards, identify specific, changeable behaviors that you can improve over time.

For example, if you want to have more impact at the office, it's much more productive to focus on honing your presentation skills than swearing off speaking up in meetings as something you're “just not good at.”

4. The Soloist

Sufferers who feel as though asking for help reveals their phoniness are what Young calls Soloists. It's OK to be independent, but not to the extent that you refuse assistance so that you can prove your worth.

Not sure if this applies to you?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you firmly feel that you need to accomplish things on your own?
- “I don't need anyone's help.” Does that sound like you?
- Do you frame requests in terms of the requirements of the project, rather than your needs as a person?

Realize there's no shame in asking for help when you need it. If you don't know how to do something, ask a co-worker. If you can't figure out how to solve a problem, seek advice from a supportive supervisor, or even a career coach.

5. The Expert

Experts measure their competence based on “what” and “how much” they know or can do. Believing they will never know enough, they fear being exposed as inexperienced or unknowledgeable.

Not sure if this applies to you?

- Do you shy away from applying to job postings unless you meet every single educational requirement?
- Are you constantly seeking out trainings or certifications because you think you

need to improve your skills in order to succeed?

- Even if you've been in your role for some time, can you relate to feeling like you still don't know “enough?”
- Do you shudder when someone says you're an expert?

It's true that there's always more to learn. Striving to bulk up your skill set can certainly help you make strides professionally and keep you competitive in the job market. But taken too far, the tendency to endlessly seek out more information can actually be a form of procrastination.

Start practicing just-in-time learning. This means acquiring a skill when you need it—for example, if your responsibilities change—rather than hoarding knowledge for (false) comfort.

Mentoring junior colleagues or volunteering can be a great way to discover your inner expert. When you share what you know it not only benefits others, but also helps you heal your fraudulent feelings.

No matter the specific profile, if you struggle with confidence, you're far from alone. To take one example, studies suggest 70% of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their career.

If you've experienced it at any point in your career, you've at one point or another chalked up your accomplishments to chance, charm, connections, or another external factor. How unfair and unkind is that? Take today as your opportunity to start accepting and embracing your capabilities.

Interview techniques: How to answer ‘What are your weaknesses?’



It can be hard to answer this question, especially when you expected to be discussing the capabilities, skills and talents that make you the best candidate for the job. Framing your weaknesses positively can be challenging, but when you combine self-awareness with an action plan, you can quickly stand apart from other job candidates.

Why do employers ask ‘What are your weaknesses?’

Employers ask candidates about their weaknesses to assess their self-awareness, honesty and ability to improve. They also likely want to see what you have already done to improve upon your weaknesses and what you plan to do to keep getting better.

Here are a few examples of the best weaknesses to mention in an interview:

I focus too much on the details

Being ‘detail-oriented’ is typically a positive skill, but if you tend to spend too much time on the specifics of a project, it could also be considered a weakness. By mentioning that you focus too much on details, you’re showing to the hiring manager that you’re capable of helping the company avoid even minor mistakes.

Example:

‘One of my greatest weaknesses is that I sometimes focus too much on the details of a project. I have been striving to improve in this area by better monitoring how long I spend on a task and allowing myself to re-focus on the project at large. That way, I can still ensure high quality while maintaining my productivity and helping my team to meet deadlines.’

I have a hard time letting go of a project

Some people are natural perfectionists, making lots of last-minute changes to make sure everything is perfect. The problem with this weakness is that it can impact deadlines. If this is your weakness, share how you’re trying to get better at letting projects go by giving yourself a deadline for all revisions.

Example:

‘My greatest weakness is that I sometimes have a hard time letting go of a project. I’m the biggest critic of my work, and I can always find something that needs to be improved or changed. To help myself improve in this area, I give myself deadlines for revisions and try to avoid making too many last-minute changes.’

I have trouble saying no

From an employer’s perspective, someone who is always willing to help is an asset. However, this asset can become a weakness when you end up submitting your work late because you’ve spent so much time helping others. Share how you’re working to better self-manage by organising your tasks and setting boundaries in how much time you can spare to help others.

Example:

‘My greatest weakness is that I sometimes have trouble saying no to requests and end up taking on more than I can handle. I now use a project management app so I can see how much work I have at any moment and understand when I have time to help others.’

I feel stressed when projects run beyond the deadline

Whilst expressing your stress or frustration at work is a weakness, employers also value employees who strive to meet deadlines and understand how important it is to submit work on time. In your response, focus on the fact that you believe meeting deadlines is vital for everyone to be as productive as possible.

Example:

‘One of my greatest weaknesses is that I feel very stressed when projects I work on go past the deadline. I have always been punctual, and I feel strongly about submitting things on time. To help reduce the stress, I’ve started a course on mindfulness meditation to help recognise my feelings and let them pass without attaching to them too much.’

I could use more experience in...

Every person has something they could improve at or gain more experience in. Sharing that you want to gain more experience at a relevant skill or quality shows the hiring manager that you’re self-aware and like to challenge yourself. Make sure, however, that you do not answer with a weakness that is important to the role.

Example:

‘Some of my greatest weaknesses include my inability to share responsibilities and staying patient during group projects. I have discussed these weaknesses with my manager as areas I would like to improve. We have set up a timeline and goals for me to attain. I have participated in several team-building workshops. I am learning to let go and trust other people.’

I sometimes have trouble asking for help

Whilst you may want to solve problems at work on your own, it can be your weakness. Being independent is a positive quality for many jobs, but it’s best to know when to ask for help to make sure tasks are done well and on-time. If you’re using this as your weakness, explain that you understand why asking for

help is a good idea and how you’re trying to get better at it.

Example:

‘Because I am independent and enjoy figuring out solutions myself, I’ve struggled sometimes with asking for help when I need it. I understand that at any organisation, there are experts around me that have specific knowledge and skills I can learn from. Whilst I am still working on it, I have been able to produce better work in a more time-efficient way as a result of getting help from those around me.’

It has been difficult for me to work with certain personalities

Even the most flexible people can have trouble working with others that have certain characteristics or personality traits. Having good teamwork skills also means having a strong awareness of how you work with others and ways you can adjust your approach to better serve the organisation. If this is your weakness, explain the personality types you have had trouble working with and give a good reason why.

Example:

‘Whilst I understand that a range of personality types strengthen a business, I tend to keep my ideas to myself around louder, more forthright colleagues. To overcome this weakness, I now make an effort to spend more time with these colleagues who are always able to speak up freely. By learning more about them, their communication style and their motivations, I am better able to collaborate with these personality types so that we

both equally contribute our strengths and skills.'

I sometimes struggle to keep a healthy work/life balance

Finding work/life balance is important to maintain motivation in your job. Spending a lot of time and energy on your work shows your strong work ethic, but it is also necessary to find time for your family, friends and hobbies. If this is the weakness you want to talk about, explain the ways you have made it a point to find a balance between life and work and how you have seen your work improve as a result.

Example:

'Because I truly love my work and I am very ambitious, I sometimes find it difficult to set boundaries between my work and personal life. I have seen a negative impact on my motivation and focus when I ignore my personal needs. To overcome this weakness, I now try to emphasise creating time in my schedule to spend with my family. Small changes, such as putting my phone on silent, have made a huge difference. Having more balance in my life between work and leisure makes me more productive at work.'

In the past, I have been uncomfortable with ambiguity

Many jobs require employees who are thoughtful, experienced and responsible with ambiguity in the workplace. Whilst it's certainly a beneficial skill to carefully follow detailed instructions, it's also important to be able to determine what it takes to realise the desired outcome. If this is the weakness you're mentioning in an interview, discuss the success you have found following instructions

and finding comfort with ambiguity. Then, explain the steps you're taking to complete ambiguous tasks.

Example:

'Because I prefer clearer directions, I tend to be sceptical when approaching a confusing assignment or goal. That is why I have created a personal framework for times when I feel confused or overwhelmed by an ambiguous task, including performing structured research and asking experts for advice. Doing so has helped me become successful when working on ambiguous tasks or when working towards less defined or specific goals.'

I sometimes lack confidence

Lack of confidence is a common weakness that can cause inefficiencies in your work. Being humble when working with others can be helpful, but it's also important to be confident to do your job at an optimal level. If this is the weakness you're presenting in your interview, discuss the steps you have taken to improve your confidence and how your actions have resulted in success.

Example:

'My greatest weakness is that I sometimes lack confidence, which is why I have difficulty speaking up in groups. Even if I have great ideas, I have difficulty sharing them with others. For this reason, I decided that it was time to take speaking and acting classes. These classes helped me learn to separate my shy self from my professional self.'