

# PA ENTERPRISE

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

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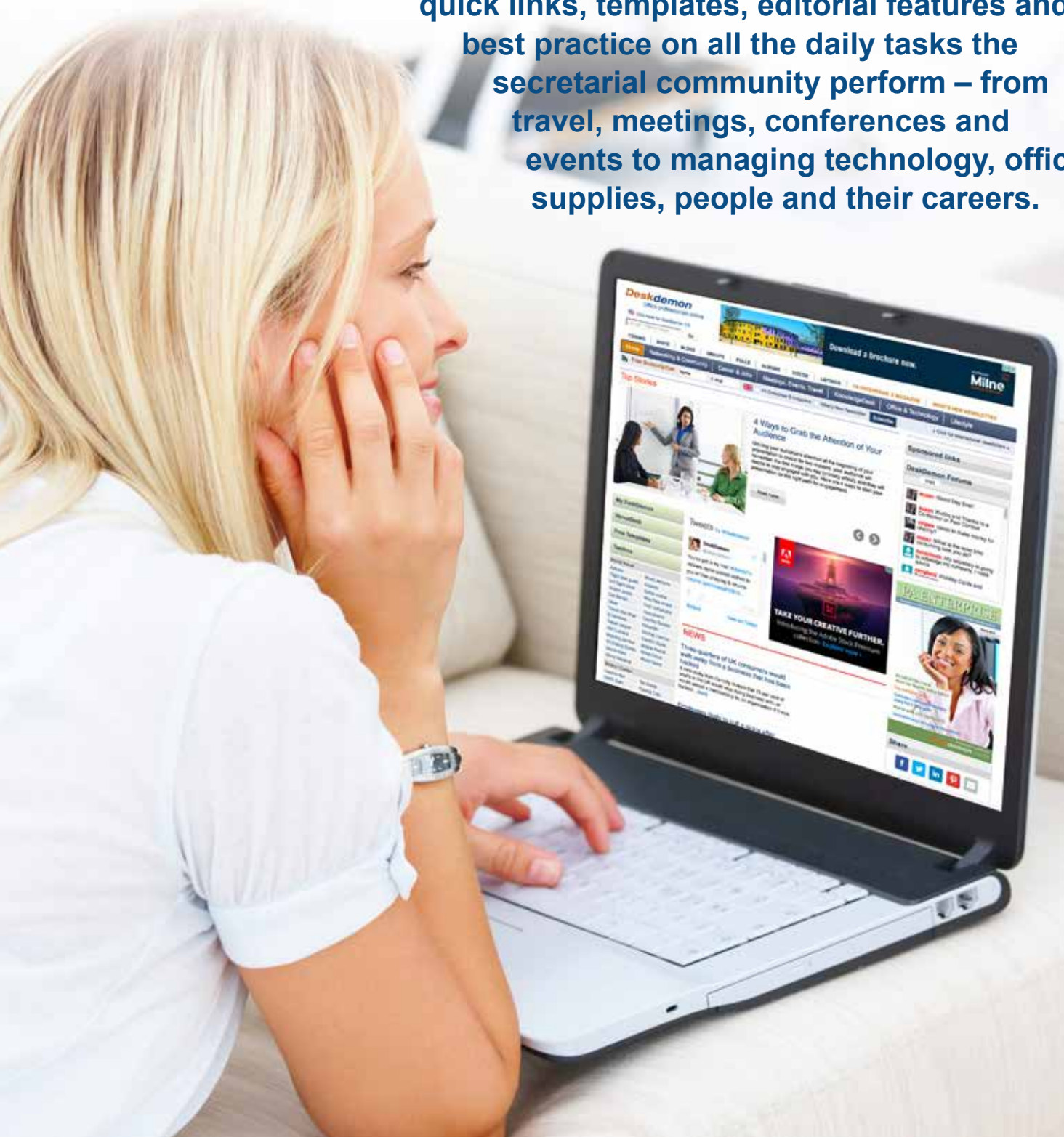
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# Seven travel mistakes that can cost you big

*Many of us try to manage travel stress with careful planning: We pack scientifically, we leverage technology, and we research every leg of our trip. But if you think your stress levels are bad when you're planning your trip, just wait until a small, seemingly unimportant mistake ruins your trip and costs you a lot of money. Tiny travel mistakes are easy to make and to overlook – and can result in missed connections, lost money, or worse.*



## Damaged passports

You might not think too hard about the condition of your passport when you toss it into your bag and head for the airport, but a “damaged” passport can – and frequently will be – refused at various stops along your itinerary. Your passport could be considered to be damaged or showing signs of wear and tear if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- **your personal details are difficult or impossible to read**
- **the laminate portion on your name page has lifted so that it has the potential for a substitute photo to be inserted**
- **there are signs of fading or discolouration on the passport’s name page**
- **your passport is stained on any of its pages (e.g.. it has ink, makeup or chemical spills)**
- **there are missing, torn, defaced or detached pages**
- **the chip on the passport can be seen on the back cover**
- **the passport chip shows signs of damage, and**
- **any other damage that may prevent the passport from being a legible form of identification**

While “normal wear and tear” isn’t considered a “damaged” passport, if you notice any defects in your passport it’s best to get it replaced pronto – and before your next trip.

## Expiring IDs

Another small mistake you can make with

your paperwork is trying to travel with a passport that’s too close to its expiration date – or an expired passport or driver’s license.

Surprisingly, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will accept an expired driver’s license as identification as long as it’s less than a year past its expiration date. But if you get used to using an expired license and let too much time go by, you’ll be out of luck once it’s older than a year. And it might not seem fair, but if your passport is still technically current but is within six months of its expiration date, you may find yourself denied entry into a long list of countries.

## Mismatched names

Got married recently? Let autofill complete some forms on an airline site? If the name on your plane tickets doesn’t match the name on your identification, you’re rolling the dice on whether you arrive at your destination or not. Security checkpoints and airlines all require that the name on your ID match the name on your ticket, so if you were in a rush and misspelled your own name, or let autofill put your last name into the middle name field, you might run into problems.

Another easy mistake to make involves dates – some overseas airlines use the “day/month/year” format on their sites, so it’s easy to enter the wrong birthday, which can then cause you delays – or worse – when someone notices that your ticketed info doesn’t match your passport.

How big those problems are likely depends on who you’re dealing with. Minor mistakes can often be ironed out pretty easily – but if you’re traveling internationally, you might have a steeper hill to climb if your documents



don't match. For example, a woman named Jacqueline was denied boarding for a flight to Greece because the ticket had been booked under the name "Jackie."

### Wrong destination

You might think it's impossible to book a flight to the wrong country. You are, unfortunately, wrong – it's surprisingly easy to find tales of woe involving people who flew somewhere completely different than their intended destination. For example, a British couple were accidentally booked for a trip to Grenada, which is in the Caribbean, instead of the Spanish town of Granada, which is, you know, in Spain. They didn't realize what had happened until after the plane took off. Or consider the couple who booked a dream vacation to Las Vegas – but booked the flight departing from Birmingham, Alabama, instead of Birmingham, England, where they actually lived.

It's easy to rush through a booking online, and if the drop-down menu shifts at the last moment and you don't notice, you might find yourself flying somewhere very far from where you've booked your hotel, or having to make some expensive changes to your plans.

### Missing visa

It's easy to overlook the fact that you need a visa to enter or transit through one of the countries on your itinerary – many countries don't require a visa for folks traveling from the U.S. But assuming that can get you into a lot of trouble, so it's best to check whether you need one and get it in hand before you leave. And don't assume that just because you're transiting – passing through a country on your way somewhere else – that you don't need a visa – often you absolutely do, especially if

your layover will be longer than 24 hours.

Another visa-related mistake? Assuming you can just get one at the airport. This is often the case, but sometimes you'll be required to pay in the local currency, which you might not have, and if your credit or debit cards don't work for any reason, you could find yourself stuck at the airport. Get it sorted ahead of time to spare yourself these problems.

### Biosecurity violations

Many countries have strict rules about bringing foreign foods, plants, or animal products in from abroad. You might think, well, I don't have any illicit fruits in my bags, I'm good. But these biosecurity rules apply to more than just exotic seeds – like a passenger traveling from Bali to Australia who was socked with a nearly \$2,000 fine for bringing McDonald's breakfast sandwiches into the country. The passenger didn't disclose the fast food, and paid the price. Don't make the same apparently tiny mistake.

### Breaking driving rules

If your travel plans include renting a car, be certain you know how everything works in your destination country. Even if there are no posted signs (that you notice) and you don't do anything too dangerous, you might find yourself receiving dozens of fines in the mail long after your trip. This happened to writer Ryan Krogh in 2019 – he and his wife rented a car and toiled around Italy for a bit. They wound up with hundreds of euros in fines for a laundry list of parking and speeding violations they didn't even know they were doing. A series of tiny mistakes in a foreign country can cost you big.

# Jobseekers are using AI for more than just CVs: what employers need to beware of

Candidates are using artificial intelligence (AI) for more than writing CVs and applications, with the sophistication of tools being used creating a growing risk for businesses. That's according to specialist background screening firm Sterling.

With an increasing number of employers and recruiters reportedly receiving AI generated CVs, the expert in employment screening has warned that job seekers are increasingly using more innovative tools to land a job, exposing firms to potentially significant legal, compliance, and fraud risks.

Sterling has warned that deepfake technology is being used to create realistic videos and audio of candidates, while synthetic identities – or fabricated personas – are also being utilised, often with malicious intentions.

As Steve Smith, President International at Sterling, explained, it is going to become critical for employers and recruiters to identify where AI is being used by candidates:

“The innovation we’ve seen in artificial intelligence recently is truly astounding and while the benefits of these tools are immense, there will always be groups of individuals that use this innovation for their own unscrupulous purpose. Candidates using AI to help with CV writing and job applications is a bit of a grey



area that HR, hiring managers, and business leaders are currently trying to navigate. However, the more critical component is the rise of very clear applicant fraud that exposes firms to significant risks.

“Video and audio has historically been deemed as trustworthy methods of verifying that you are speaking to a person and that they are who they say they are. But that’s no longer the case. Beyond deepfakes and synthetic identifies, AI is also being used to generate fraudulent credentials, alter images in official certificates, and mimic official language in documents. This makes it increasingly difficult for employers to identify what is genuine and what is fake. Screening programmes are going to need to become equally as sophisticated to tackle this issue, but it should be noted that the problem – namely AI – can equally be used as the solution.”

# Bad workplace habits and how to break them

*Any professional can fall into bad habits that diminish or actively impede their drive and productivity, and when these habits catch on broadly in the workplace, morale can suffer across the board. Whether the negative culture then leads others to hoard information or hold too many meetings, such practices can have a deleterious effect on a team's overall performance.*

## 1. Gossiping And Complaining

Gossiping and complaining about individuals or teams is a common bad habit in organizations that yields only negative returns. Gossip arises from incomplete information, puts responsibility for challenges on others and removes the incentive to initiate proactive efforts ourselves. A helpful mantra is “speak to the person(s) rather than about the person(s) and seek to find wisdom that we cannot yet see.”

## 2. Ending Meetings On The Hour Or Half-Hour

Functionally, planning meetings that end on the hour or half-hour almost ensures that your attendees are going to leave your meeting feeling frazzled. Since most meetings begin on the hour or half-hour, plan instead for well-structured meetings that span either 20 or 50 minutes. This leaves ample time for follow-up tasks and quick self-care without making your team late for their next commitment.

## 3. Checking Emails And Texts After Hours

Managers should establish after-hours quiet times when work emails and texts are not allowed. For truly urgent matters, a phone call should be required. This sets boundaries during the week and over weekends, enabling employees to focus on personal activities. This practice helps prevent burnout and fosters a stronger, more functional team.

## 4. Assuming Others Know How To Execute A Task

One bad habit in the workplace is assuming that those to whom you have delegated work have a clear understanding of the task that has been assigned to them. It is important to have frequent check-ins to make sure they are aligned with the request and have been able to identify the appropriate resources or key stakeholders needed to finish the task. The most aligned leaders and team members are the most successful.







### **5. Filling In Gaps With Bias**

The habit of judging and having prejudice toward (or for) other people, with little or no evidence or data to support your assumptions, is common. We are quick to fill in the gaps with our own bias versus getting to know each other at the core basic human level. A top tip is to live with the mindset of giving people the benefit of the doubt and always being curious and wanting to learn more about people.

### **6. Multitasking Excessively**

One common bad habit in the workplace is excessive multitasking, which can reduce productivity and increase errors. To stop it, focus on completing one task at a time by prioritizing tasks and using time management techniques such as timeboxing. Additionally, set clear goals for each work session and minimize distractions to maintain concentration on the task at hand.

### **7. Hoarding Information**

One bad habit is hoarding information out of greed, where employees withhold critical information to maintain control or gain an advantage. To break this habit, foster a culture of transparency and collaboration. Encourage regular knowledge-sharing sessions and implement team-based incentives or recognition programs for sharing information. This enhances team productivity and trust.

### **8. Rewarding Bad Behavior**

A bad habit is when leadership rewards bad behavior. Too many organizations promote people who get great results but don't show the same level of intentionality in how they treat people within the organization. Leaders must promote people who do both. Therefore, put metrics into your performance reviews

around "how" people do the work and live out your organization's values. It makes a big difference!

### **9. Holding Meetings With No Objective**

You are not reaching closure in meetings. There are too many meetings and too many poorly run meetings. For leaders of meetings, be clear about the objective of the meeting. Make sure you confirm progress toward the objective during the meeting. Schedule a follow-up expressly for closure if it cannot be done in the original meeting. Time is precious, and most people hate meetings. Make them better.

### **10. Disregarding Others' Calendars**

A common bad habit is disregarding people's calendars, which often leads to triple bookings and unnecessary meetings. This neglects asynchronous work. To break this habit, employees need to set clear boundaries and decline meeting invites that don't respect their schedule. Encouraging proper calendar synchronization and prioritizing non-simultaneous communication for efficiency is the way to go.

### **11. Not Appreciating Diversity Of Thought**

Not appreciating the diversity of thought and experience on the team is a bad habit. All too often, we connect with individuals who are similar to our own personality type, and if team members react differently in areas, they can be looked at as either disengaged or not knowledgeable. Instead, spend time understanding each teammates' strengths, needs and fears so that you can unlock the full potential of the team.



### 12. Correlating Busyness With Success

We've gotten into a bad habit of thinking that being "busy" equals success. Busyness is a measure of activity and time management, or perhaps the lack thereof. Whenever someone tells me they are "so busy," I can't help but wonder why their time is managing them. Why are they saying "yes" to everything? What should they be saying "no" to instead? Ask: "What is my busyness really serving? And why am I allowing it to overwhelm me?"

### 13. Avoiding Face-To-Face Communication

Avoiding in-person, face-to-face time is a very bad habit that we have fallen into in the workplace. While working remotely is not all bad, the pendulum has swung too far. It's so easy to stay home rather than go into the office. But the lack of effective communication,

suffering relationships and less creativity and productivity are starting to motivate employers and employees to right the ship.

### 14. Being Distracted By Your Phone

With our phones always in hand, they tend to dictate our attention. While unintentional, conversations are being broken up moment by moment. Put the phone down and step away. Leave it on your desk, put it on silent and set your notifications so that very few get through. As a professional, you want to leave others around you feeling connected in conversations with you; being distracted is being detached.

### 15. Not Delegating Tasks

A lack of delegation is a common bad habit in most leaders. It is due to a lack of confidence in their employees or a fear of giving up too much control. All leaders must understand that delegation is critical for their team to mature—it is like a gym for good decision-making. Supporting them through good and/or bad decisions builds their confidence and transforms everyone into better leaders.

### 16. Omitting Reflection From Team Meetings

Omitting reflection from team meetings is a bad habit for many well-meaning managers. Today, reflection has only become more important as the pace of business continues to increase. Reflection captures shared learning and often saves future time and money. Add a reflection question to your individual and team meeting agendas: Where should we be proud? What was our learning? How can we be even better?

# Research reveals 95% of UK woman want better menopause education – what’s going wrong?

*Negativity surrounding the subject of menopause is increasing, according to research by digital women’s wellness magazine Living360. The research reveals UK women would like to be better informed about menopause, are unsure of what to expect with the onset of menopause and are still unclear on what healthcare is available.*

Interestingly, women’s negative perceptions about the topic tend to increase from the start of perimenopause through to post-menopause. Even with increased media coverage and celebrities discussing menopause more, many women in the UK still feel unprepared and uninformed.

## KEY FACTS

- 90% of pre-menopausal women report wanting to know more about menopause before it starts and, overall, 95% of women believe education and awareness of menopause needs to be improved for those yet to go through it.
- 70% of pre-menopausal women feel uninformed about the changes and symptoms to expect.
- Over 60% of women feel uninformed about the healthcare choices available during and after perimenopause, with women

in perimenopause and post-menopause continuing to not know (63.1% and 64.2% respectively).

- Feelings of negativity towards menopause increase while going through it, with research revealing negativity rises from 28% to 61% in perimenopausal women and 22% to 37.9% in postmenopausal women.
- Young women today feel more negatively about menopause than those before them, as 54.1% of pre-menopausal women reported feeling negatively about this stage of life, in comparison to 22% and 28%, as detailed above.

Living360 editor Mattie Lacey-Davidson says: “The fact that women can go through perimenopause, which often lasts years, and still come away feeling uninformed about the healthcare choices available to them is shocking. The government and the NHS need to be doing more to help women.”



**WHAT'S NOT WORKING: MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

Mattie says: “It’s a missed opportunity that the NHS Health Checks available every five years to anyone aged 40 to 74 (without certain pre-existing conditions) fail to mention menopause.”

The NHS Health Checks consist of a few basic measurements: height, weight, blood pressure and cholesterol; and lifestyle questions that can contribute to poor health such as smoking, drinking and exercise.

Mattie concludes: “Menopause is often compared to puberty but, in fact, it’s much more of a drastic change than that. There’s no other time a person in the UK would be

expected to deal with such a variety of serious physical and mental health symptoms without regular medical support.”

Living360 surveyed 627 women over the age of 18 who were pre-, peri- and postmenopausal — 5.5% were unsure if perimenopause had started.

**AT A GLANCE**

**Pre-menopausal women:**

- 54% feel negatively about perimenopause, 35% feel indifferent
- 69% feel uninformed about what to expect
- 81% feel uninformed about healthcare available for perimenopause
- 91% wish they knew more

**Perimenopausal women:**

- Prior to perimenopause, 28% felt negatively (61% felt indifferent), changing to 61% feeling negative after it started (118% increase)
- 65% didn’t know what to expect
- 63% don’t feel informed about available healthcare options

**Postmenopausal women:**

- 22% felt negative prior, rising to 37.9% afterwards (72% increase)
- 64% still don’t feel informed about healthcare options
- 95% of all women surveyed think education needs to be improved for young women prior to entering perimenopause

# Want hybrid working? Then kiss goodbye to that promotion

*Employees that want to work on a hybrid basis could be putting their chance of a promotion at risk as increasing numbers of employers call for in office returns. That's according to new research from specialist recruiter, Robert Half.*

The data – gathered as part of the firm's 2025 Salary Guide – revealed that more than two thirds (68%) of employers in the UK felt that an individual's physical presence in the office significantly impacts their chance of a promotion. And this sentiment is not just being felt in the UK, similar trends are being noted across Europe, including Germany (69%), the Netherlands (68%), and France (62%).

However, with the research also showing that the majority (73%) of employees believe they are more productive when operating in a hybrid set up, there could be a productivity challenge facing those firms pushing ahead with in-office strategies. Business leaders also indicated that they are currently finding it difficult to give staff a better work-life balance while also boosting employee productivity, signalling a mismatch between worker and employer sentiment.

As Chris Lawton, Vice President of Permanent Placements UK & Ireland at Robert Half explains, a potential miscommunication could put productivity, retention and recruitment at risk:

“Employers are clearly placing growing value on staff being physically present in the office and our data suggests that career progression could be hindered for those who wish to continue with hybrid set ups. However, we can't overlook the fact that the power is still very much in the hands of the workforce. Skills shortages are rife, and firms are struggling to fill highly skilled roles in core STEM remits. If workers are made to feel that they are unable to progress because they aren't in the office every day, they will simply move on. And more often than not, it will be the best performers or most in-demand professionals who will jump ship first – something that employers today simply can't afford. We also can't overlook

- *68% of employers will base promotions on physical presence in the office*
- *But 73% of workers feel more productive at home*



the fact that the nature of an individual's job will impact productivity both at home and in the office. Some tasks are far more effective in a different environment and this needs to be factored in when choosing where staff should work from. And such working arrangements should be purposeful when it comes to building company culture, managing multi-generational workforces and bringing early-in-career talent who might need more touchpoints with experienced colleagues than others, for example. All in all it undoubtedly is a balancing act, yet when done well it can yield great results.

“Nonetheless, aside from the retention and recruitment issues that could be created by sticking to the corporate sentiment of remote working being at the expense of career progression, the productivity conundrum is also set to be exacerbated. The UK is facing a fundamental productivity crisis at the moment, but employers and employees are seemingly at odds around what an optimal set up looks like. If people are more productive at home, they shouldn't have limited career progression opportunities, inadvertently or not.”

# Groundbreaking new protections for victims of APP scams

*From 7 October major new protections for victims of Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams have been introduced. APP fraud happens when someone is tricked into sending money to a fraudster via bank transfer, which can lead to devastating impacts on its victims and reduce consumer confidence when making payments.*

**U**nder the PSR's new rules, people making payments from one UK account to another using the Faster Payments system (the system used for mobile and online banking) or CHAPS system (the UK's high value payment system used for some consumer payments such as house purchases) will now benefit from world leading levels of protection against APP fraud.

Payment firms are now required to follow the new reimbursement arrangements. This includes high street banks and building societies as well as smaller payment firms, and e-money firms.

**For consumers, that means significantly greater protection, including:**

- Everyone making a payment via Faster Payments or CHAPS from one UK bank account to another will be covered.
- The vast majority of consumers can expect to be reimbursed within five business days of





making their claim, with the new rules seeing over 99% of claims by volume covered.

- People will be covered up to £85,000 as standard, but banks and payment firms can still reimburse above that amount. Firms may also choose to apply an optional excess of up to £100, though this cannot be applied to vulnerable consumers.
- Anyone who suffers a loss exceeding £85,000 can still raise their case with their payment provider and if they remain unsatisfied, they can take their case to the Financial Ombudsman Service. The Ombudsman is independent and looks at each case on its own individual merits.
- The protections will apply to payments made on or after 7 October 2024.

While these new measures are now in force, consumers should still make payments with care and the PSR is keen to make sure everyone understands some of the instances where a claim for reimbursement under the new APP scams reimbursement requirements may not happen.

This includes where consumers are found to have been complicit in the fraud or grossly negligent. Gross negligence is set at a high bar and this exception does not apply to vulnerable consumers. The onus is on banks and payment firms to prove where customers have acted with gross negligence, through ignoring specific, tailored warnings or not responding to reasonable requests for information, for example.

### **Consumers should also take steps to protect themselves:**

Criminals are experts at impersonating people and organisations. It's important that everyone

exercises caution, acts with vigilance and stays alert to warnings from their bank or payment provider. Consumers should use Confirmation of Payee (CoP) which is an account name checking service designed to make sure people are sending the payment to the right person or business. There's widespread adoption of this service, with over two billion CoP checks having already been made this year. Over 350 more firms will join CoP by the end of October following PSR action.

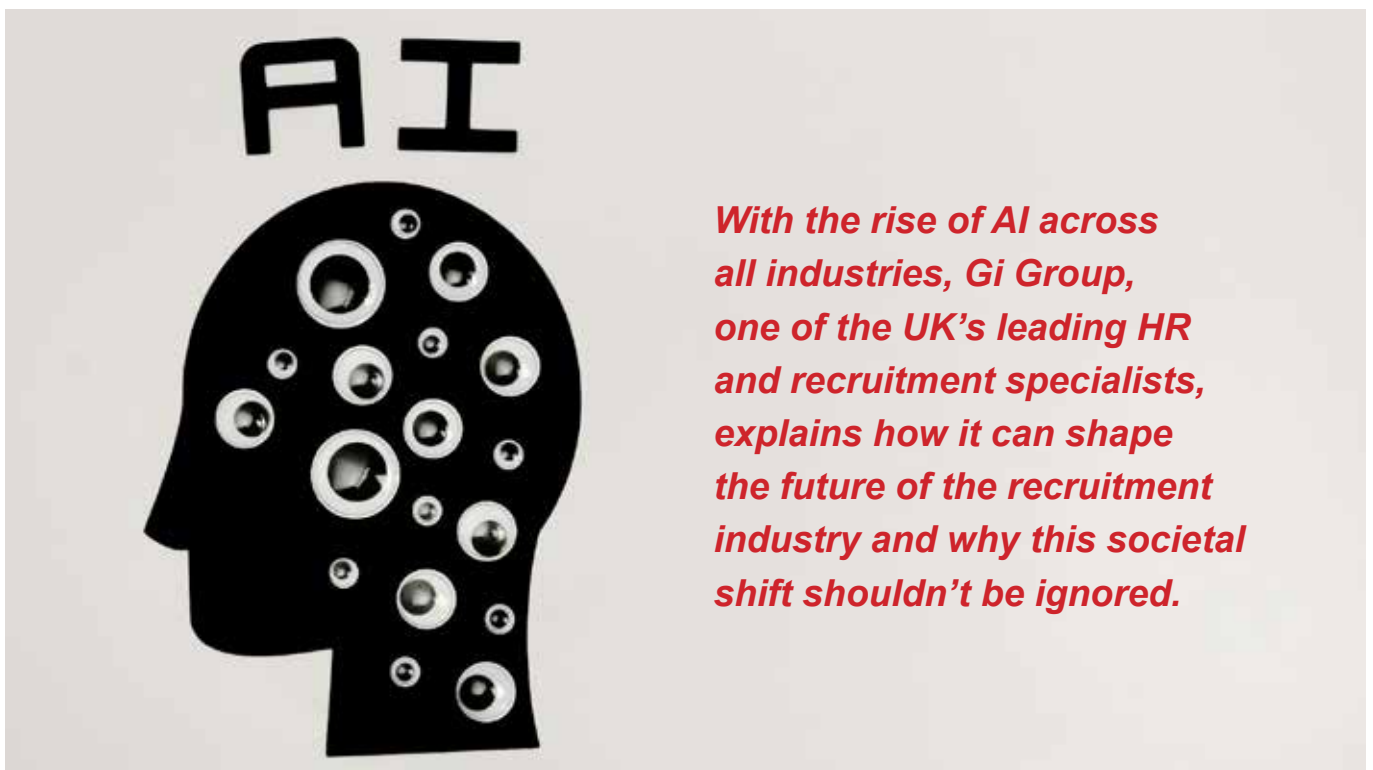
If someone thinks they have fallen victim to an APP scam, they should report it to their account provider as soon as possible, and within 13 months of making the fraudulent payment. Their payment provider will be able to advise and support them on the claim process. Throughout the process, consumers should:

- Respond to any requests for information from their bank promptly – after checking that the request is genuine.
- Report the details to the police or consent to their provider reporting to the police on their behalf.

If a victim of an APP scam is unhappy with the way their payment firm has responded to their claim, they can raise their case with the Financial Ombudsman Service for a review. The Ombudsman, which can make rulings up to £430,000, looks at each case on its own individual merits.

For more information on how to stay safe, the national Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign has useful advice and guidance.

# Leading recruiter warns on the emergence of AI in the workplace



*With the rise of AI across all industries, Gi Group, one of the UK's leading HR and recruitment specialists, explains how it can shape the future of the recruitment industry and why this societal shift shouldn't be ignored.*

AI's implementation is becoming increasingly part of big business conversations, most recently former Google chief, Eric Schmidt, telling Labour Business Summit that attracting 'incredibly smart people', would help prepare the UK for AI. New AI systems are now readily available for both HR professionals and candidates alike, but what does this all really mean?

The industry has seen such a spike in the use of AI that the Department for Science,

Innovation and Technology (DSIT) recently published guidance in its Responsible AI in Recruitment: Guidance. From fake job ads and AI resumes, to recruitment bias and digital discrimination, the industry has been hit by a wave of new challenges.

Rebecca Napier, IT Business Partner at Gi Group, comments: "It was only a matter of time before AI methods were being implemented on both sides of the recruitment process, but as with every tech shift, it is

important that both candidates and HR professionals understand the pros and cons of integrating AI.

“From a candidate point of view, there has been a recent rise in individuals using AI technology to create CVs, write cover letters and in some cases complete recruitment tests. While this may at first seem like a time saving tactic for candidates, recruiters are left with a high volume of inadequate resumes making it harder for genuine applicants to be identified.”

It is reported that about half of all applicants are using tools such as ChatGPT to help with the recruitment process, without editing, which is potentially adding thousands of low-quality applications to an already saturated labour market.

Rebecca continued: “Further to this, candidates are being met with a rising number of fake job ads since AI became more prevalent in the industry. This doesn’t only cause an issue for genuine candidates; it also creates a real challenge for recruiters to ensure their integrity and authenticity continues to be trusted.”

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that 4.1 per cent of people in the UK are currently unemployed, which accounts for roughly 1.44 million people (aged 16 – 64). Furthermore, the ONS highlight that unemployed members of the UK are competing for 857,000 job vacancies (from June – August 2024). These statistics go to show the importance for recruiters to find the right candidate for every job, but with the emergence of AI this is more challenging than ever.

These new technologies also pose a number of risks, including digital exclusion,

discriminatory job advertising and targeting, plus perpetuating existing bias. Some experts report AI tools are inaccurately screening some of the most qualified job applicants as concerns grow the software is removing the best candidates. From a recruiter’s perspective, this can be a really damaging set of challenges and highlights the need for a human touch.

Rebecca added: “Aside from the discrimination risks when personal data is inputted into an AI platform, there is also a real risk to data privacy. Transparency is a key element to data protection and such collection and analysis is often invisible. Individuals can unknowingly share personal information, unaware it’ll be analysed and stored through AI technology.

“It is the role of HR professionals to provide an honest, fair and transparent recruitment process to each candidate and through the introduction of AI tech, this can’t always be guaranteed.

“I feel many people still underestimate the power and challenges of AI technology which will inevitably lead to great risks and recruitment challenges down the road. Despite the strides in the development of AI technology, there is still a long way to go.

“Though it is evident AI will play a lead role in many industries, supporting efficiency and potentially paving the way for workforce advancements, it is important people recognise its short fallings. The empathetic and personal approach of a human cannot be underestimated, on both the side of the candidate and the HR professional.”

# Gen Z: The generation that wants it all

*New data shows the emerging generation want more money, more security and more perks*



**B**usinesses are struggling to manage Gen Z as new research reveals that they demand more from employers than any previous generation. That's according to Robert Half's 2025 Salary Guide.

According to the data – which surveyed 1,000 employees and 500 hiring managers across the UK – 67% of hiring managers feel that Gen Z has become more demanding when it comes to salary expectations compared to

- ***Two thirds of hiring managers say Gen Z have become more demanding***
- ***Almost a third of younger generations value pay over job security***
- ***Nearly a quarter would move jobs if they don't get the pay rise they ask for***

last year. This is followed by millennials (64%), Gen X (37%) and baby boomers (22%).

While the data revealed that job security is valued as more important than pay by 43% of all employees, Gen Z was more likely than any other age group to prioritise remuneration. Almost a third (29%) of respondents in this demographic rated pay over job security, compared to 25% of millennials and 23% of Gen X.

The study also revealed that younger professionals are less loyal to their employers, with 20% of Gen Z revealing that they would move jobs if they didn't get the pay rise they want, while 12% would ask for more benefits instead.

Nonetheless, businesses need to be aware that Gen Z workers are particularly motivated by jobs that align with their values and give them a sense of purpose. The types of organisations that resonate with Gen Z are the ones that make a positive impact on society and the environment, promote a culture of continuous growth and development, and encourage autonomy and entrepreneurship.

As Matt Weston, Senior Managing Director UK & Ireland at Robert Half explained, this is putting further pressure on employers that are already contending with budget constraints

and skills shortages:

“Gen Z might be the most digitally-savvy demographic in the workforce, but according to our research they are also the most demanding when it comes to pay and remuneration. As businesses struggle to balance already limited budgets with the need to recruit and develop emerging generations, carefully developed talent attraction strategies that appeal to Gen Z will be a priority.

“Given that this demographic is the future of the workforce, it's critical that employers find a way to strike the right balance between remuneration and retention strategies that build loyalty longer-term. The fact that our data shows that Gen Z is willing to consider additional perks and benefits where pay increases aren't feasible shows that there are alternative routes to attracting and engaging this generation. With Gen Z ultimately driven by meaning and purpose, businesses could employ alternative engagement methods, such as showing how their role contributes to the larger goals of the company and the world. Emphasising the social impact or ethical dimensions of their work and involving them in sustainability or social responsibility initiatives can go a long way.”

# Networking doesn't have to be a chore – here are some ways to make it more enjoyable and effective



*Does the thought of putting on a fake smile and making idle small talk with strangers in order to advance your career send shivers down your spine? Do you avoid networking as a result? If so, you're not alone.*

People shun networking for a variety of reasons, such as shyness, a lack of confidence, feeling uncomfortable asking for help or because they want to be authentic and avoid “putting on an act.”

However, avoiding networking can be a bad career move. Networking provides valuable

benefits, including assistance with work, social and career support, and a way to gain new ideas and business opportunities.

Because of this, it may not come as a surprise to learn that networking has been shown to be associated with career success in the form of salary growth over time, and career

satisfaction. In the end, avoiding networking may hurt your career.

Fortunately, there is no need to feel exploitative or awkward about networking – it can be as simple as making new friends. In fact, this is one of the main reasons people engage in networking in the first place.

### **Dispelling networking myths**

Research suggests there are four myths about effective networking. First, some people believe effective networkers are born, not made. This is not true; effective networkers work hard at honing their networking abilities.

Second is the belief that effective networkers exploit other people. On the contrary, the most effective networkers are co-operative and consider building relationships to be an opportunity to give to others, instead of taking.

Third, some think effective networkers shield their networks from others. This is also inaccurate. People who are effective at networking are interested in helping others build their networks too, so they share their contacts with other people. This, in turn, can extend their networks even further.

Fourth, people assume effective networkers stay in constant contact with everyone they know. That would be exhausting. Instead, most networkers prioritize staying in touch with the people who are most important to them at any given time.

### **Take advantage of opportunities**

Based on academic research, books on interpersonal skills and training that targets them, there are three tactics you can implement to get better at networking and reap the associated benefits.

The first is creating and taking advantage of networking opportunities. Join social clubs, sports teams, professional associations, and attend as many work-related events as you can manage.

Prepare yourself for networking events by developing an elevator script to introduce yourself and serve as an ice-breaker. Include something unique and interesting about yourself that will capture people's interest and remember you, and practice your script so it flows naturally.

If possible, review the participant list before events and make a note of the people you'd like to meet. Research them and their organization online and on social media sites like LinkedIn to learn more about them.

Indeed, you can use social media to your advantage. Research has shown that work-related social media sites can help people develop networks and promote career success. It is the frequency of use, not the number of contacts, that is associated with positive career outcomes.

### **Build connections**

During networking opportunities, aim to meet as many people as possible. One of the most important networking skills is making a good first impression, so, make sure to smile and speak calmly and confidently. Give people your full attention and don't look around the room like you're seeking out your next conversation target.

Based either on the research you have done or things you learn while chatting, ask open-ended questions that can stimulate rich conversation and uncover mutual interests.





When networking, it's OK to ask about personal matters like hobbies and leisure activities — as long as you don't pry and respect the signals you receive about whether or not people are comfortable discussing these things. Similarly, be willing to appropriately share your own personal interests.

Remember, being professional doesn't necessarily require being formal. Consider asking someone you know to introduce you to someone you don't. Always be thinking of how you can help others through your knowledge, skills or existing contacts, but don't force it. Try to find common ground.

When you leave a conversation, thank the person for their time, ask for their business card or contact information and express your interest in staying in touch.

**Maintain connections**

After networking opportunities, make notes to remember details about the people you've met, including important dates like birthdays and anniversaries. Also, pay attention to important events in your contacts lives such

as promotions, and contact them to stay in touch. Don't use social media for this — it's too impersonal.

On occasion, send people emails with details you think they'll find valuable or call them up and go for a coffee or lunch without the sole intention of discussing business. Be friendly, and always convey that you have time for people.

If all this sounds intimidating, take comfort in knowing that one study found that only two per cent of managers were effective at all of the networking skills the researchers identified. In other words, most people are still learning and improving.

Nobody is perfect at networking, but we can all improve with practice. With a little effort, you can network like a pro. If you do it right, it won't feel exploitative because you won't be manipulating anyone. It won't feel awkward either, because you'll simply be allowing your strengths and personality to shine. You may even find that networking is fun and enriches not only your career, but your life.