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**Last week, we launched the first of a series of training workshops.**

**For Amica HR, it has been a labour of love to see our plans for these sessions come to fruition and we were truly grateful to receive such positive feedback from attendees.**

**A large part of our brand is defined by our relationship with clients and customers and, in that spirit, we would like to use the newsletter this month to share some of the survey responses we received after the workshop.**

*"A very professional, enjoyable workshop"*

*"Excellent, really enjoyed!"*

*"Common sense and simple approaches, no complex models"*

*"Very well presented, I found the information on performance managing really useful"*

*"Improved my understanding, I already recommend Amica HR training to others!"*

*"A beneficial workshop"*

*"I feel more confident and understand the importance of planning"*

*"The workshop gave me a good insight into what/why appraisal I've had previously worked or didn't. Some good food for thought on developing a process"*

*"A thoughtful and comprehensive approach"*

*"I now have a much better understanding of what needs to be achieved both by myself and the staff being appraised"*

*"It's given us some valuable ways to improve our process, in particular ways to 'open' the meeting"*

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## PRIMARK LOSES TRANSGENDER DISCRIMINATION CASE

This month an employment tribunal awarded a former Primark retail assistant over £47,000 in damages when she was constructively dismissed from their Oxford store after suffering harassment for being transgender.

Their HR staff used Alexandra De Souza E Souza's birth name on the IT system and changed her title from Miss to Mr. The error was then printed on her name badge and time sheets, leading to her supervisor repeatedly calling her

guideline on how both management and employees should act towards transgender staff.

Part of the severity of this case stems from Primark's refusal to take Miss De Souza E Souza's complaint seriously. Beyond simply implementing a policy, companies need to handle any allegations of gender identity discrimination as seriously as any other violation of the Equality Act (2010) and raise awareness amongst higher ups that it is

*"An estimated 88% of transgender employees experience discrimination in the workplace."*

### TRANSGENDER DISCRIMINATION STATISTICS

- 96% of Fortune 500 companies with a gender identity policy have reported an increase in morale.
- 1 out of 25 workplace complaints concern LGBTQI discrimination.
- More than 3/4 of transgender employees feel they need to take steps to avoid mistreatment in the workplace.
- 27% of transgender employees reported being fired, not hired or denied a promotion due to their gender identity.
- Nearly 1 in 10 LGBTQI employees have left a job because the environment was unwelcoming.

(Out and Equal, 2017)

By the wrong name, despite being corrected.

Complaints were also made about the treatment Miss De Souza E Souza received from other employees, including derogatory comments and an allegation of being sprayed repeatedly with men's deodorant.

Sadly, this case is not unusual, with an estimated 88% of transgender employees experiencing discrimination or harassment in their workplace (Gov.co.uk), so what are companies doing to tackle the problem?

Fortune 500 companies have begun to introduce a specific gender identity non-discrimination policy, which advises and educates employees about the acceptance behaviour surrounding transgenderism, in an attempt to reduce the chances of discrimination within the workplace.

During the trial, Judge Lewis advised creating such a policy to provide a

Just as much a protected characteristic as race or disability status.

Primark are just one of many examples of the consequences of failing to educate employees about acceptance behaviour, but with a continually rising percentage of business giants providing the example, this is hopefully the beginning of the end for cases like Primark V. De Souza E Souza.

After all, we live in a world that constantly challenges inequality and that same challenge needs to be applied to transgender discrimination in the workplace.

If you require any assistance producing a gender identity non-discrimination policy, or feel you would benefit from knowledge surrounding gender legislation, please contact us as info@amicahr.co.uk or call on 01522 370190.



## UNDERSTANDING THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

When we leave school, we all eventually realise that while it might have been mentioned in passing, we were never actually taught about adult stuff. I didn't learn how to do my taxes, or improve my credit score, or get a mortgage (but thank God I know the mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell, right?).

When we look at the recent news on the Apprenticeship Levy, it seems we're being put in the same boat as we were in school. We've certainly heard about the levy, maybe even talked about it ourselves, but has it really been explained to us how it works?

Not if the recent statistics from HR News are anything to go by. Over half the respondents to their survey explained they had never heard of the levy, let alone knew how it worked, and a further 27% didn't understand the benefit of using it, making the Government's target of creating a further 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 seem further away than ever.

"There has been a lot of debate around the success or failure of the Apprenticeship Levy and these results how the jury is still very much out," explained Gareth Jones, Managing Director of In-Comm Training.

At its core, the levy is set up as a tax on large UK employers with a pay bill of over £3 million per annum. These employers will be required to pay 0.5% of their annual payroll into the levy and will be then able to access the funds online to pay for apprenticeship training.

Since its introduction in April 2017, the levy has been met with continuous mixed reviews, with the Department of Education going as far as to attribute the recent drop in apprenticeships to its introduction. The most common complaint is that the difficulty of accessing the funds has led to the general impression that the levy is just another tax.

Seamus Nevin, Head of Policy Research at IoD, asserts "the levy is the right idea, but the system is ripe for reform"



### ASK HR:

**Q:** "An employee has raised a grievance during the middle of their disciplinary procedure, are they trying to delay the process?"

**A:** As an employer, it's only natural to have doubts about the validity of a grievance claim put in during a disciplinary, but the circumstances are not always so open and close. There are many reasons for a delay in reporting a grievance, such as feeling uncomfortable, being unaware of the reporting process, or even not understanding what a grievance is.

There isn't a legal requirement to suspend the disciplinary to investigate a grievance, but you should consider each case individually and contemplate the potential impact of running the two concurrently.





## MEET OUR TEAM

Liz is an experienced and enthusiastic HR professional. After working in HR and L&D in the public sector for several years, she moved into providing HR advice to a variety of SME's in both the construction and third sector industries. Her experience has included attending disciplinary's, grievances and redundancy consultations and implementing HR Information Systems.

Liz completed her degree as a mature student with the Open University and is an associate member of the CIPD. She enjoys the variety and challenges of HR and is keen to continue with her professional development.

Liz enjoys assisting clients in managing their employees' expectations and responsibilities.

## "TIDY DESK, TIDY MIND?"

### NEW STUDY REVEALS 45% OF UK WORKERS THINK HAVING A TIDY DESK COULD LEAD TO A PROMOTION

It's common knowledge that most employees need to feel like they can progress at work to stay motivated, but some research indicates the path to promotion could be changing. According to the CEO of EchoSign, "You'll be paid well if you work hard and do a good job, but you probably won't get promoted all that far on those efforts alone".

Managers are increasingly looking at leadership skills, initiative and creative problem solving when considering promotions, and yet a recent study conducted by office supply specialists, Fellowes, revealed that almost half of UK office workers think a tidy desk is all that's needed to rise through the ranks.

But does it really play a part in deciding promotions?

It seems so, with 1 in 10 managers admitting a cluttered desk would be reason enough not to promote a staff member. As Sir Cary Cooper, Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health at Manchester Business School, explains 'our colleagues and bosses are making judgements about us every minute of the day, often without even knowing. The old adage "a tidy desk makes a tidy mind' might not always be true, but, as the research shows, if you're looking for

promotion it's important that you give colleagues the impression that you are in control of your workload".

Beyond thinking it increases the chance of getting a promotion, the survey showed a tidy work space also affects how workers feel about going into work each day. Participants claimed it made them feel more productive, in control and generally happier, as well as keeping them from worrying they were being judged by colleagues.

As well as the positive psychological impact, the GDPR is soon coming into effect, further increasing the importance of keeping personal data well organised. Everything from how data is stored to the length of time you keep it will need to be in line with the new regulations, meaning that a tidy desk free of documents is certainly a good practice to get in to.

So, it seems spring cleaning might be worth more than we think.



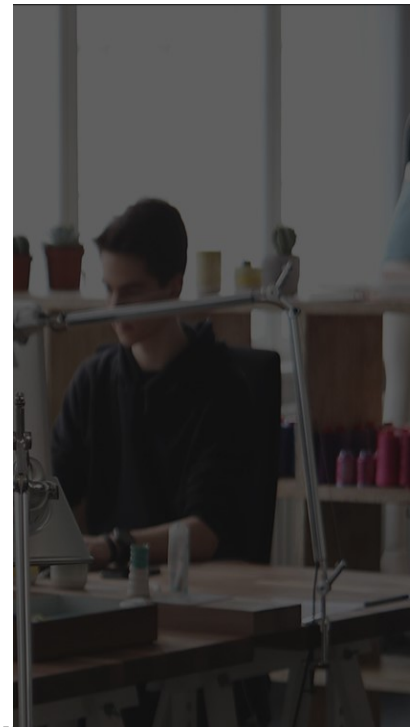
## BOARDROOM BOREDOM: IS YOUR WORKDAY ROUTINE REDUCING YOUR CHANCE AT SUCCESS?

It's 6 o'clock. The alarm blares in your ear. Zombified, you crawl out of bed and switch the kettle on, scrolling through unanswered emails as you go. You pull on your usual clothes and off you go to work.

It's a standard routine and one you could probably do with your eyes closed, in fact I bet some of you do, but is it hampering your success at work?

Even though routines may seem like you have less decisions to make, they can also stop you from thinking outside the box. Something as simple as playing your favourite songs during your commute can dramatically boost your mood for the day ahead, making you more likely to be motivated and think creatively.

Studies have shown that taking time out from your day to day



*"Our brains are constantly seeking novelty within our day to day lives, which can lead to becoming distracted if these desires aren't met"*

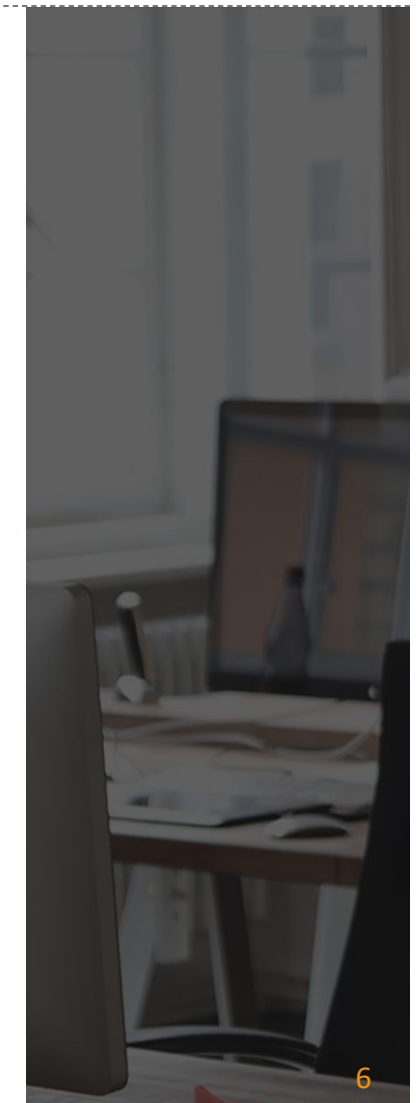
It's worth considering if your routine is leaving you stuck in the mud. Most people like to have a level of predictability to their day but, according to psychology today, going through the same daily routine can become 'so comforting that people forget the values and goals behind their actions, leading to less creative ideas and a decrease in motivation'.

Neuroscientist Brenda Patoine explains that our brains are constantly seeking novelty within our day to day life, which leads to becoming distracted if this desire isn't met. Going through the same routine every day can easily become monotonous, making a quick peak at social media or online shopping even more appealing, which is why it's important to give your day a shake up when you can.

Schedule can make you reevaluate how you approach your work. Sometimes the way we've always done something doesn't work for us anymore and it's good for everyone to take a step back to question if there's a better way. This kind of evaluative thinking can also translate to success in your career, switching up your day really could have a bigger impact than you think.

Surprisingly, it could even help with your memory! It's been proven that relying on the same schedule can dull your ability to spot mistakes and by shaking things up, you not only sharpen your senses but actually increase your capacity to retain new information.

The smallest break in your routine could make an enormous difference!



AMICA HR LTD

Do you ever wonder how you can free up more of your time to concentrate on growing / developing your business? We would like to help you drive your company forward by giving you peace of mind and ensuring your workforce is in good hands.

With over 40 years of combined experience, we can provide HR support when required, be that on a regular or intermittent basis, whatever best suits your company's needs. For a more detailed overview of the types of services we offer, please have a look at our website [www.amicahr.co.uk](http://www.amicahr.co.uk) or call us on 01522 370190 for further details.

## 5 ESSENTIAL THINGS A RESUME SHOULD CONVEY

In a job market with increasingly tough competition, the average employer only spends seven seconds looking at a CV (Forbes, 2017). That's only 11% of a minute for someone to stand out from the crowd and, while it might not seem fair, it's the way the fast-paced world of recruitment has to work. So, in a sea of resumes, what do you need to be looking for?

There are two main things any potential employer needs to ask when they read a resume—Can this person do the job? And will they fit in with the Company?

A CV needs to be crystal clear when it comes to answering these questions.

Not only does this help you to pick out the information quickly, it also tells you something about the person behind the resume. Clear, concise writing suggests a detail-orientated candidate who can produce accurate work that's fit for purpose.

Focus on the responsibilities they've mentioned in their job history. This will help you determine whether the candidate has a proven ability to fulfil the job requirements. It can also give you a clue about how well they manage pressure—if the job has a large amount of responsibilities to keep track of and the candidate has only held low responsibility positions, they might not be able to handle the change of pace.

Remember to still look for personality! Experience and qualifications are important **but** at the end of the day, you're hiring the person, not the piece of paper. Personal statements are always a good place to look to get to know a bit more about the candidate and gauge how well they would fit in with the company culture. It's not only key to ensure they mesh with the culture, but it could also give determined but less experienced candidates a chance to shine.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and the same is true of a CV layout—it's appearance can tell how much effort someone has put into crafting it and that gives a pretty good indication of their enthusiasm for the job. A haphazard layout not only gives a bad impression, but can also demonstrate a low level of computer skills which could be key to the job role.

And finally, references! Have they listed their previous employers details on their CV? If they have, the chances are they believe they were successful in their last job and are happy for you to contract them to confirm this. Most job adverts now say that hiring will be subject to satisfactory references, so including the details not only shows pride in their previous performance, but also a naturally proactive nature!

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