

CRAIGIE PARTNERSHIP

NEWS & VIEWS

www.craigiepartnership.co.uk

Winter 2010/2011

CRAIGIE PARTNERSHIP - PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

SMART resolutions

Happy New Year! Did you make a resolution? Many of us struggle with keeping our new year resolutions, but by applying some occupational psychology know-how, we can greatly increase our chances of success. A well known goal setting tool is to make our goals SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-framed. For example, a goal that is "to lose weight" is not SMART because it is not specific and it is not time-framed. Likewise, a goal that is "to be happier" is not SMART. Happiness is hard to define and hard to measure and again, there is no time-frame.

But rather than throw away these ambitions, which might be very important to us, we can

tweak them slightly to make them more SMART.

For example, on the weight issue, we could have something more specific, such as "I would like to lose 2lbs a fortnight until I am down to 11 stone". Notice that we didn't make that a weekly goal, which might not have been realistic. We also put a time structure around it, so that we would be able to review our progress. We also set a target of 11 stone. If we hadn't done this, then we'd never reach our goal if our goal is only "to lose weight", as it would be never ending.

On the topic of happiness, we can modify this to be something like "I would like to set aside one weekend a month to do



something that I enjoy". This is much more likely to meet with success and sustainability than the abstract concept of "being happy".

Why not practice a re-write of some common resolutions or set yourself SMART targets, in life or business?

And next year, when you think of New Year resolutions, think SMART!

Keeping healthy - it's snow joke!

It's common to put on weight over Christmas. Mince pies, the endless supplies of chocolate and a strong urge to hibernate. The recent bad weather has added to this by limiting people's ability to exercise. Many of us were unable to get

out of our own driveways, let alone get to the gym. The term "snowbesity" was even coined. This can all have an effect on our mental well being as well. Fresh air and exercise can do wonders for us and we easily forget this when staying indoors

or working from home. Why not make it part of your daily routine to walk round the block or get off the bus one stop too early? Your productivity and well being will soon show signs of a spring thaw...

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What the Statistics Say

⇒ The volume of medicines indicated for depression rose between 2008/09 and 2009/10 from 4.01 to 4.31 million items; an increase of 7.6%.

• Source: <http://www.isdscotland.org>

Email warnings!

Those readers old enough to remember the arrival of emails will recall how it was heralded as a new era in communications. Instant messages, any time of day or night, straight to your computer. We would be able to work more efficiently and effectively and, pause for ironic effect, we might have to work less hard as a result.

Sadly, many of us are too aware of the darker

side of emails - friends falling out, hurtful words typed, confidential information copied to the wrong people, stress and yet more demands on our time, replying to all instead of one person, misinterpretations, and the list goes on.

The problem with text based methods such as email or texting is that it lacks all the normal cues of communication - tone, eye contact and body language, and perhaps

most importantly, timing. We have no control over when the recipient reads it and we cannot gauge their response during the conversation, and so modify our choice of words.

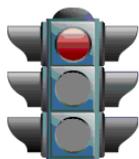
The sender has no control over how we receive the message and what was intended as a constructive comment can be read as rude and unwanted criticism.

Read on for our top tips.



Email misunderstandings probably account for many wasted hours and broken relationships.

The Craigie Partnership traffic light approach



STOP!
Don't use email for this!

- ◆ Resolving a conflict
- ◆ Criticising something or someone
- ◆ Confidential information
- ◆ Things you wouldn't want your mother to hear about...



WARNING!
Take care!

- ◆ Minutes of meetings
- ◆ Suggesting a plan of action
- ◆ Financial or statistical information
- ◆ Asking for opinions
- ◆ Project updates



Should be okay...

- ◆ Dates of next meeting
- ◆ Request for information
- ◆ Forwarding links or references
- ◆ Thanking people for attendance (but try to be personal)

Before sending an email, think about what could be misinterpreted and if there is a better way of communicating

And now for something different...

A study by a team of researchers at the University of Bristol looked at the effects of caffeine on men and women in stressful situations, according to the BPS Research Digest ([click here](#) for the full article).

Same sex pairs of men and women were given decaffeinated coffee or

secretly caffeinated coffee.

Initial findings are quite surprising - men who were under stress were more impaired by caffeine than women in the same situation, and their performance at a task was significantly lowered.

On a stressful team-working exercise, men

took an average of 20 seconds longer if they had taken caffeine, whereas women were on average 100 seconds quicker under the same conditions if they had taken caffeine.

It's early days in the research, but perhaps bear this in mind at your next board meeting!



Cup of coffee madam? And would sir like his decaffeinated?

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The Craigie Partnership is an Edinburgh based consultancy that offers psychological services to individuals and organisations.

Services include:

- ⇒ Anxiety, Anger and Stress Management
- ⇒ Career Counselling
- ⇒ Coaching
- ⇒ Organisational Stress Audits
- ⇒ Psychometric Testing

If you have any other topics you would like to see included in this newsletter, why not drop us an email on news@craigiepartnership.co.uk

We'd love to hear from you. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone you think might be interested.

If you would like to join our emailing list, we promise not to bombard you with useless information and you can remove your details at any time.

Craigie Partnership News



Established in 2004, the Craigie Partnership has been able to help hundreds of people across a variety of situations.

One of the inspirations behind setting up in private practice came from an experience of NHS working. While this was an incredibly rewarding place to work, with good colleagues and support, there was a very real problem - waiting times.

Sometimes an individual would

start off with stress at work. They would soldier on as best they could. In some cases, stress would lead to sleep difficulties or anxiety or depression. This often led to a visit to a GP, whose first port of call is often medication. After several visits to determine the right dose or type of medication, the GP might refer them to an NHS psychologist waiting list. Depending on where you lived, this could be anything up to 9 months.

When eventually a patient was able to see a psychologist, there might have been years of the problem getting worse. Often the NHS psychologist would be helping someone with chronic or severe symptoms, with an awareness that their

appointments were sought after and time was limited.

And so the thought entered our minds - what if we could have seen that person at the start of their journey, when they were struggling with stress? Could an early work-place intervention have saved months of waiting and the distress this can cause? What if we had been able to work with their managers to help mitigate the effects of stress at work? What if we could have provided a safe and supportive environment to talk about stress, rather than try to fix anxiety or depression?

What if we treated someone as a client as opposed to a patient? And so the Craigie Partnership was born...