

Miriona's Message – no. 21

In this edition

Introduction: Have you got a goal?

Hot Topic: Tracking cookies need consent

Working Smarter: Do you procrastinate too much?

Hints & Tips: MS Excel - filling in repetitive data; MS Word - Find the right word

The Lighter Side of IT: to brighten your day!

Introduction

Have you got a goal?

If you made a New Year resolution, have you kept to it so far? Apparently most New Year resolutions are broken by the end of the first week...

Although everyone jokes about New Year resolutions, knowing what goals you want to aim for is crucial if you want to move forward – at least in the direction you wish to go! A lovely quote from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' is:

'Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

Food for thought?

Hot Topic

Tracking Cookies Need Consent

The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation 2011, restricting certain cookies from websites, comes into force in May this year. From this date UK websites will have to obtain users' consent before using these types of cookies.

There are two different types of cookies:

1. Session-based: often used to create login and shopping features on websites, and
2. Persistent: used for tracking information across many visits to a website over an extended period

The first type are not generally affected by the legislation as they are destroyed by the browser after use, but the persistent ones are. Your website may use these if you have any sort of 'remember me' feature. If your website is affected, you have until May to make sure you comply.

There is a free seminar at CHASE 2012 on this topic on 16th February; see <http://www.conferencehouse.co.uk/t11-dma.aspx> for more details.

Working Smarter

Do you procrastinate too much?

Procrastination is a common problem; we all put off unpleasant tasks, especially if they involve people. Have a look at the following questions and try to honestly answer how much they apply to you:

- I always clean and tidy my desk whenever I have to start a difficult job
- I am very fond of chatting or gossiping or wandering around when I have no reason to do so
- I am often guilty of putting unimportant jobs in front of important jobs even when I know it is risky to do so
- I often leave difficult jobs until the last minute or the end of the day
- Even when a job is going well I often doubt whether I will be able to complete it satisfactorily

Did any of these questions sound like you? Procrastination can take a number of forms: excessive socialising, daydreaming, self-doubt, aiming for perfection, the need for control (this is when things are delayed right up to the deadline), and inversion of priorities.

So, what can you do about it? Here are some hints and tips:

- Don't just have a deadline for the finish of work – have a deadline for the start.
- Accept that procrastination due to fear of failure is common; there is generally no real foundation for these feelings. Remind yourself that you can solve your problems!
- Spot any themes for your procrastination – is it mostly for certain activities or in certain situations? By understanding the trigger, you can avoid the issue.
- Always be positive in the face of procrastination. Reward yourself when you succeed!
- Never put low priority work ahead of high priority work.
- Keep socialising down to the level of good working relationships, but no more.

I hope this sparks some thoughts – it may be a good topic for a team meeting? If you decide it is, then don't put it off!

(This article uses ideas from the book "'A' Time – the busy manager's action plan for effective self management" by James Noon.)

Want to discuss this in more detail? Contact Miriona on 07766 948470 or email newsletter@miriona.co.uk.

Hints & Tips

MS Excel - filling in repetitive data

If you need to type repetitive data such as some numbers or dates into a worksheet, you can use the AutoFill feature in Excel to help you. Here's an example on how to quickly fill a group of cells with the names of the calendar months:

1. In Excel, go to the cell you want to start from, type **January** and then press ENTER.
2. Click back into the cell, and rest the mouse pointer on the square at the lower right-hand corner of the cell. The mouse pointer changes into a plus sign (+).
3. Drag the mouse across or down (you'll see the months appearing as notes) then release the mouse button when you get to the end cell needed.

4. The names of the months February, March, and so on appear in the cells.

(If you use the right mouse button instead of the left, you'll get a menu with some other choices.)

MS Word - Find the right word

Click on a word and hit Shift-F7 to automatically look up a synonym, antonym, or alternative choice, using a thesaurus or other available tools.

The Lighter Side of IT!

The real meaning of sales literature.

NEW	Different colour from previous design
ALL NEW	Parts not interchangeable with previous design
UNMATCHED	Almost as good as the competition
DESIGNED SIMPLICITY	Manufacturer's cost cut to the bone
FOOLPROOF OPERATION	No provision for adjustments
ADVANCED DESIGN	The advertising agency doesn't understand it
FIELD-TESTED	Manufacturer lacks test equipment
DIRECT SALES ONLY	Factory had big argument with distributor
YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT	We finally got one that works
REVOLUTIONARY	It's different from our competitors
BREAKTHROUGH	We finally figured out a way to sell it
FUTURISTIC	No other reason why it looks the way it does
DISTINCTIVE	A different shape and colour than the others
MAINTENANCE-FREE	Impossible to fix
RE-DESIGNED	Previous faults corrected, we hope...
PERFORMANCE PROVEN	Will operate through the warranty period
HIGH RELIABILITY	We made it work long enough to ship it
NEW GENERATION	Old design failed, maybe this one will work
CUSTOMER SERVICE ACROSS THE COUNTRY	You can return it from most airports
UNPRECEDENTED PERFORMANCE	Nothing we ever had before worked THIS way
BUILT TO PRECISION TOLERANCES	We finally got it to fit together
AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY	One of our techs was laid off by Boeing

Thank you for reading!

Any comments or ideas for future newsletters are welcomed – please send to newsletter@miriona.co.uk.

More information on Miriona and our services can be found on our website www.miriona.co.uk.

To contact Miriona, please call 07766 948470 or email newsletter@miriona.co.uk.

To unsubscribe:

If you want to be removed from the newsletter mailing list please send an email with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line to newsletter@miriona.co.uk