

Office Energy Boosters

Is there a dead spot in your day? It's probably a good time to look at boosting your energy. Lack of energy is a motivation crusher for you and those around you.

It's unhealthy too - it leads to bad posture which in turn can cause workplace injuries. And of course lack of energy shows up in your office output or, rather, lack of output.

Everyone's different but sometimes it can help to run interference on your daily routine. Here are some simple ways to go from blah to aha!

- **Workout**

Some people swear by a dawn session at the gym followed by a sustaining breakfast. Others prefer to dash out at lunch for a quick run or power walk. It's your call but get that blood pumping somehow

- **Sleep**

Banish that lagging feeling by topping up with the full eight hours a night. Or else find a comfy private corner in the office for a 10 minute power nap. You don't want to be spotted curled up snoozing but an afternoon nap can really make you more alert and boost your mood and motor skills

- **Laugh**

Go on. It's good for you. Releasing those endorphins will raise your energy levels. 2.30 in the afternoon is a good time to share a giggle with a colleague. You'll both feel better

- **Shine a light**

Emotional baggage weighs you down and saps your energy especially if carried day after day. Anger or any other negativity is distracting and exhausting. By contrast, positive energy is a buzz that transmits to others. Do something nice for a colleague. If you're having difficulty with someone, be open with them and work it out tactfully. Catch up with a friend at lunch

It is important to encourage breaks from the desk, especially ones that will fuel energy levels. Higher levels of energy will drive greater productivity from employees.



Holiday Closing Period

Our office will be closed from:

2pm Friday 19th of December 2014
until 8:30am Monday 12th of January 2015.

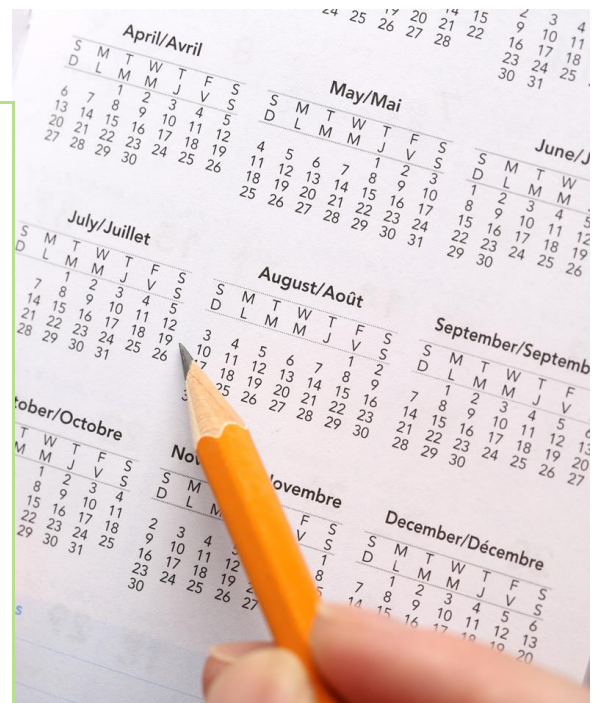
To all of our clients, business associates and supporters, we wish you a wonderful Christmas and an exciting and successful 2015

Tax Talk

Don't forget

IRD have changed their policy on when payments will be considered to have been received on time. Payments made by post are now treated as made on the day Inland Revenue receives them; the date of posting is irrelevant. It's therefore up to you to make sure you post your cheques in good time to reach IRD on time. There's no guarantee that a payment posted on the 18th will reach Inland Revenue by the 20th.

If you're sending a post-dated cheque, Inland Revenue will not bank it until the date specified. So even though it's physically received before the due date, it will still be treated as received late if the specified date is after the due date. You can also make payments in person, either at an Inland Revenue office or at a Westpac branch (note Westpac no longer accept cheques for tax payments) as long as you do so before close of business on the due date. Now might be a good time to think about making your payments online, if you don't already.



Timely Reminders

7 Jan	Terminal Tax FBT	Taxpayers (where we prepare tax returns) on a December balance date Close companies paying FBT on an income year basis (where we prepare tax returns) with a December balance date
15 Jan	Provisional tax GST return and payment for period ended 30 November	Standard provisional taxpayers on March, November and July balance dates GST ratio method taxpayers on January, March, May, July, September, and November balance dates 6 monthly GST taxpayers on May and November balance dates Taxpayers filing GST on a monthly basis AND taxpayers (with March, May, July, September, November and January balance dates) filing on a 2 monthly basis
20 Jan	FBT	Third quarter return (for the three month period ended December)
28 Jan	Provisional tax GST return and payment for period ended 31 December	GST ratio method taxpayers on February, April, June, August, October, and December balance dates 6 monthly GST taxpayers on June and December balance dates Taxpayers filing GST on a monthly basis AND taxpayers (with February, April, June, August, October and December balance dates) filing on a two monthly basis
9 Feb (7th falls on a weekend)	Terminal Tax FBT Terminal Student Loan Repayment	Taxpayers (where we prepare tax returns) with a January balance date Close companies paying FBT on an income year basis (where we prepare tax returns) with a January balance date. For those (where we prepare tax returns) with a January balance date

Note: these dates apply to those clients for whom we prepare tax returns. Different dates will apply for those clients for whom we don't prepare returns. Please ask us if you'd like more information.

Party Party Party

Are you planning a Christmas function for special clients and/or suppliers and business contacts? Be aware that this will come under the entertainment regime for purposes of tax deductibility. Any expenditure on food and drink that your business provides off your business premises will be 50% deductible. This extends to any incidental expenditure on things like hireage of crockery, glassware or utensils, waiting staff, and music or other entertainment provided for the function you're planning.

If you're thinking of a more public event to promote the business during the festive season, expenditure on food, drink and all the necessary incidentals could be fully deductible. However, be aware that the event can't cater for your VIPs alone. It must be open to the public on the same footing as clients or business contacts. Its primary purpose must be as a marketing event for the business.

If you're planning an event and you're not sure which tax regime it will fall under, please contact us for information.



'Tis the season to be... on call

Do you have situations where some employees will be on call during a public holiday? If so, they are usually entitled to a contractual on call payment as well as at least time and a half rates if they are called out. Whether or not they are also entitled to an alternative holiday depends on whether the public holiday falls on what would normally be a working day:

If the public holiday falls on a day the employee would normally work	
<i>If the employee is on call...</i>	<i>He or she is entitled to...</i>
... and is called out	at least time and a half for the actual hours worked, (your employment agreement may provide for more) plus an alternative holiday as well as any contractual on call payment
... and is not called out but the restrictions of being on call mean the employee has not enjoyed a full holiday (for example, if the employee is required to stay at home all day)	an alternative holiday as well as any contractual on call payment
... and is not called out but the employee's freedom is NOT restricted - for example, he or she can choose not to accept the call-out	any contractual on call payment but he or she would only be entitled to an alternative holiday if he or she accepts a call-out
If the public holiday does NOT fall on a day the employee would normally work	
<i>If the employee is on call</i>	<i>He or she is entitled to</i>
... and is called out	at least time and a half for the actual hours worked (your employment agreement may provide for more), plus any contractual on call payment
... and is not called out	any contractual on call payment

Health and Safety heads up

It's expected that the Health and Safety Reform Bill will be passed before the end of the year and that the resulting Health and Safety at Work Act will be implemented in stages, the first stage taking effect from 1 April 2015. The legislation itself is part of a major reform of health and safety practice in New Zealand.



The new Act imposes a primary duty on employers, with a wide range of duties to ensure health and safety in the workplace. The definition of a 'workplace' includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. The definition of a 'worker' is a person - for example, an employee, contractor, person on a work trial or volunteer - who carries out work in any capacity for 'a person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU). The concept of the PCBU is central to the new reforms, placing responsibility on anyone who owns or controls a workplace and therefore on all links in the contracting chain from principal to all levels of contractor and sub-contractor. Persons who are not necessarily visible at the workplace such as those who design, manufacture, import or supply plant, substances or structures can be PCBUs with responsibilities under the legislation for the health and safety of workers and others who use them in the workplace. Company directors and those in governance roles will have an explicit due diligence duty to ensure that workplace health and safety is managed proactively.

Workers and other people in workplaces will also have obligations to ensure care is taken for the health and safety of themselves and others.

The changes will help everyone involved in the business to be clear on what they need to do to maintain sound health and safety practices in the workplace and ensure workers have the knowledge and ability to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. The regulator and the courts will have a wider range of enforcement tools, including increased penalties for breaches of duties.

It is envisaged that there will be an initial round of new regulations covering general risk and workplace management; worker participation, engagement and representation; major hazard facilities; asbestos; and work involving major hazards. More industry-specific regulations are intended to be developed over the following two years.

We'll keep you posted as to what these new measures will mean for your business.

Overheads - under control

Cost management is not the most glamorous aspect of the business by any means. We know you'd much rather be laying plans to grow the business and secure more leads and opportunities. But keeping an eye on costs and tweaking as needed can help you free up your cash flow to do more of the exciting stuff.

Understand better how your costs affect your business by breaking down your expenses and analysing them critically. Some costs are constant essentials but others can just creep up over time till they're dragging back overall performance.

The last issue of Business Forward looked at distinguishing between what a sale costs and what it costs just to keep your doors open. You can break it down further and segment overheads in different ways, depending on what kind of business you have. When you know what your overheads are, and if your business is divided into different departments, you can allocate overheads more accurately to the different departments.

For instance, a manufacturing business might look at overheads in terms of manufacturing and administrative overheads. The manufacturing overheads are general costs associated with keeping the factory in production. They're costs associated with production but which can't be tracked to a specific product line. They include depreciation of factory equipment, quality control, rent, general repairs and maintenance, and utilities specifically associated with factory operation. Administrative costs are those costs not linked to the development or production of goods or services, and include front office administration and sales, office supplies, power.

Once you have systems in place for tracking and analysing costs, you're better placed to forecast your budget, spot and fix blowouts earlier and decide whether you need to adjust pricing to maintain or grow your profit margin.



Make your team part of the solution in your cost control programme. Let them know keeping costs under control is a priority and how costs affect the business. Involve them in ongoing review and development of your systems for reducing waste and managing costs without compromising on quality. Their commitment to trimming business expenses will make all the difference. If the numbers are large enough, it might even be economical to introduce an incentive scheme based around identified savings. Here are some ideas you might use to start the conversation.

Systems: part of the problem or part of the solution?

When you have analysed where the costs are for your business, look at the systems around them to see if they are driving up costs unnecessarily. For instance, if your business ships baked goods to supermarkets and cafes, what's the cost of wastage in spoiled or broken goods? Are your freight and handling systems letting you down? Could different choices result in lower wastage and better product delivery?

Costs and the customer

Look at your inventory and balance against customer response to what you do. For instance, if a manufacturing business expands their product lines, they now have a complex (and costly) inventory of parts and tools. If customers love the expanded product lines and revenue is going up because of it, management will probably tolerate the cost. But if customer response is lukewarm (despite marketing's best efforts), then perhaps inventory is dragging the business down. Maybe simplifying product offerings might work better for you and your customers.

Times change

Sometimes costs are in the system because you've 'always' outlaid for this or that item. It's always worth asking whether an item is still necessary to core business.

What's in a name... really?

Ask whether you need to buy a 'name brand' item or service. Can a cheaper brand do the job or is it worth the extra expense to obtain the quality essential for the business?

Are you being scammed?

It's unfortunate, but there are operators out there that try to run dodgy invoices past the business, for example, for advertising in directories and trade journals that the business hasn't in fact asked for (or received). They rely on being able to pressure accounts staff into processing the invoices and everyone being too busy (or too disorganised) to query the invoice and refuse payment. Like those infamous email scams, they only have to succeed with 1% of their targets to be ahead of the game.

Cost control is an ongoing process of evaluating whether expenses are reasonable and affordable. Good cost control practices involving the whole team will help your business stay competitive, nimble and ready for growth.

Disclaimer

This publication has been carefully prepared, but it has been written in general terms only. The publication should not be relied upon to provide specific information without also obtaining appropriate professional advice after detailed examination of your particular situation.

