



NEWS DIGEST MARCH 2008

By Annie Panton

I've been digging into my usual selection of reading material to extract a few interesting items for you to indulge in – and follow up if you feel so inclined!

There was a major article in Computer Weekly at the end of last month commenting on globalisation with respect to IT. I quote from this as it fits neatly into our own industry and *its* concerns:

Elizabeth Sparrow, Vice-president of external relations at the British Computer Society says 'globalisation is a major business trend and not something that you can halt. The UK has a tremendous amount to offer but we need to identify our competitive strengths and develop the skills for business.'

She reckons that demand for technical skills will fall but with it will come an increased need for people that are both technically knowledgeable and experienced in managing relationships. There are requirements for managing relationships between different suppliers, identifying services most appropriate for outsourcing and knowledge of different types of contract or commercial arrangements. She feels that these skills are not well understood and she also includes in her thinking, the softer skills such as the ability to question and listen – and presentation skills.

This does relate beautifully to our industry and probably a number of others too – we shouldn't forget our strengths – our ability to communicate and to find solutions to problems that are as random as they could possibly be!

Do look at the Hay Group website as it contains from free downloads on various business issues, e.g. 'Too Good for Management', their latest report which discusses alternative strategies for retaining talented professionals and asks the question 'if you can't avoid making good professionals line managers, how can you make it work?' There are other reports to read on www.haygroup.co.uk.

Management Today magazine (February 2008) has one or two key pieces to read under their 'Brain Food' section including:

Ten Ways to Chair a Meeting

- Do your homework
- Write a bullet-proof agenda
- Stick to it
- Know who your friends are
- Pre-empt awkward questions
- Give everyone a fair shout
- Keep it moving
- Having someone take minutes
- Be clear about the next steps
- Remember – you're in charge

Crash Course in... How to Tender Successfully

Buy the magazine to read the whole article but the headers include:

- Look in the Right Places
- Get Approved
- Prepare your Ethical Credentials
- Pick the Right Bids
- What do they really want?
- Dare to be different
- Follow the instructions
- Do say...
- Don't say...



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I thought this was a commonsense approach to an area of activity that we are involved with constantly and might be helpful. You might be able to gain access to the article via their website at www.managementtoday.com

Business Ethics

A guy called Roger Steare has just published a book called '**ethicability**' (n) **how to decide what's right and find the courage to do it.**' Yes, this is the title!

It's been endorsed by any number of well-known business professionals including Philippa Foster Back, OBE, Director, Institute of Business Ethics who says "Ethics is a word that people find they should understand but mostly shy away from. Reading 'ethicability' will bring this difficult word alive. The book is down to earth, readable yet comprehensive and widely sourced."

The book says that Ethicability is about being good, doing right and leaving the world a better place. I think we could all do with a copy don't you?

HIPs

The regular updates available from CLG Home Information Packs are continuing. I hope that you've registered accordingly if you need to be kept up to date.

An interesting final paragraph in an article in Bricks & Mortar on 8th February by Mark Loveday is about the avoidance of a HIP if an agent hasn't officially marketed the property but a private buyer appears (via the agent). His conclusion about the rights and wrongs of this is that once a seller employs an estate agent, Section 153 of the Housing Act makes the agent, rather than the seller, legally liable if there is no HIP. The seller could therefore save himself the cost of a pack and let the agent worry about it!

UK Property

We still face the prospect of major adjustments to the value of housing in the UK – and 2008 is likely to be a difficult year in terms of pricing and disposal within reasonable time scales.

In terms of our corporate market place, my opinion, for what it's worth, is that rents are relatively stable and our clients bringing employees into the UK on assignment should find that their rental budgets will remain more or less the same as last year's.

If you want to keep pace with data and quality information to pass on to your clients, read the FT, The Times etc., and you could also browse through www.timesonline.co.uk/property where they've just introduced a thing called Vital Statistics with the Bricks Chicks – a piece of video with a few very simple but interesting property stats.