

YOUR WEEKLY BULLETIN OF WIT AND WONDER



HOT TO TROT?

The meetings on the move we should all be having...



STEPS TO TRIBUNAL

Crystal Ball Ltd clearly didn't see this result coming...



HOWAY?! THEY'VE ALL BEEN ON THE GRUB!

Are the storm-hit Celeb's too well fed, now?

WALK THIS WAY

Top tips for motivating yourself into winter walks caught my eye on the BBC online site this week. A new series of Winter Walks has just dropped on BBC 4 and is well worth a look - but I was thinking of walks which are slightly less relaxing.

Now that we're all pandemic-proofing our lives again, the Walking Meeting has been on my mind. Made famous by Steve Jobs and the cast of *The West Wing*, this is where your meeting happens while everyone hoofs it around a local park... or maybe just up and down the stairs and corridors of a well ventilated office building.

If you want a great example of the walking meeting - check out this clip from the [West Wing](#).

Of course, cleverly shot and directed, a walking meeting with the CEO or Managing Director looks like a breeze, smartly tackling item after item in quick succession while trotting past park benches, along an avenue of oaks, passing around print-outs and getting nods of swift, sharp understanding from everyone in the pack.



I like the *idea* of it. I know it's very healthy (we should all be having a brisk walk for at least half an hour every day). It's also quite cool.

Except...

1. How do you make notes on that bit of paper with nothing to rest on and a gale blowing in your face?
2. What if your footwear isn't suitable for yomping across fallen leaves and crushed conkers without looking (because you're trying to make notes on that flailing bit of A4)?
3. How can you hear the important pronouncements of the CEO if you're at the back of the walking line (it's not polite to walk four or five abreast in a busy public place)?
4. There's no eye contact anymore. Everyone's too busy scanning the path ahead to avoid collisions. You can't even share a smirk with your buddy when the boss says 'leveraging' for the third time.
5. It's going to get competitive. The faster walkers will drive up the speed until the stragglers are jogging, wheezing and scaring pigeons. Then someone's going to suggest upscaling to bikes and hiring a local velodrome...

So. Anyone want to sit down for a bit..?

Do YOU do walking meetings? Please tell us how well they work (or don't) over on our Facebook page.

And speaking of the need to sit down for a bit brings me to the case of *Lawton v Crystal Ball Limited 2021* and an employee who was humiliated and harassed owing to his disability.

Mr Lawton suffered ongoing knee problems which made it hard for him to walk, amounting to a disability. He had requested to work from home when the lift wasn't working after being left humiliated when he reached the bottom of five flights of stairs and was told he had taken too long evacuating after a fire drill.

When Occupational Health advisors said that Mr Lawton needed reasonable adjustments to be made, the director's attitude changed towards him and he began to be ignored in the office. The director also said that the arrangement for Mr Lawton to work from home was conditional on him meeting a set of objectives.

After being hospitalised due to pain in his knee, Mr Lawton requested to work from home for at least a couple of days. This was agreed, but he was told that he must provide a detailed list of tasks that he had carried out while working from home – something that had not been asked of another employee who worked one day a week from home.

The company then took disciplinary action against Mr Lawton because of a security breach of the company's server, claiming Mr Lawton had neglected his duties and issuing him with a first written warning. It also launched a disciplinary investigation into claims that Mr Lawton had added documents to his own personnel file, which were upheld.

Mr Lawton resigned in December 2019 due to disability discrimination, harassment, bullying and humiliation, unfounded allegations of poor performance or misconduct, failure to provide reasonable adjustments for his disability, being subjected to unreasonable treatment and being forced to work in breach of health and safety law.

The Employment Tribunal (ET) found that he had been constructively and unfairly dismissed, discriminated against because of his disability, victimised and harassed.

The ET concluded that "Mr Singh had a discriminatory reason for instigating disciplinary procedures against Mr Lawton. We consider that Mr Singh had an agenda to remove Mr Lawton from the business. This was a progressive situation which intensified over time as Mr Singh became more frustrated". Judge Benson said that "in our view although he had been advised that he was required to comply with the Equality Act, he took it upon himself to remind [Mr Lawton] that this was not something which suited him or the business and was at best an inconvenience to him. This caused [Mr Lawton] to be unable to be secure in the adjustments which had been agreed with him. We find that [references] to his hours of work and working from home by Mr Singh [were] intimidatory and amounted to unfavourable treatment".

This case is a clear example of disability discrimination. Employers are reminded that they cannot dismiss an employee or treat them unfavourably because of a disability, and that these employees are entitled to some enhanced protections from dismissal. Employers are also reminded of their duty to make reasonable adjustments.

EVENTS SEASON

2021

DEC 15
HR Hangout -
Understanding
the Menopause



I'M A SATIATED CELEBRITY



Well, what a week of unprecedented drama in the castle! I'm sure you*, like me, were left bereft for three nights as Storm Arwen wrecked the ITV production site of *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*, taking the whole show off

What was going on? Where were Ant and Dec? In what manner were the celebs being housed? What were they EATING?

(Note to self: This dependency is getting worrying.)

I have to confess that I felt quite annoyed at how perky and WELL FED they all looked when they returned to our screens this Tuesday. I doubt, somehow, that the isolated Welsh holiday lets they were locked into offered only rice and beans. You can SEE they've had chips. Pies. Fishfingers. You can just SEE it in their chirpy little un-gaunt faces. They have all, I'm quite sure, been able to regain a pound or two in weight. This feels like cheating. Should their rations be halved for three days?

(Another note to self: You appear to be turning into a callous dystopian overlord. Seek help.)

* Actually, it's entirely possible you have no interest in this at all. I know. Not everyone's got a thing for frivolous reality TV and chirpy Geordies...

screen.

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