



King Associates

Human Resources - Excellence and Beyond

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Christmas Greetings - December 2005

Dear Friends and Associates

Where do the years go? - 2005 seems to have gone faster than ever, it doesn't seem that long since we were anticipating the millennium bug and now we are waiting for bird flu to hit. With all the doom and gloom in the world today, thought I would just take the opportunity to keep in touch and to wish you good health, happiness and every success for 2006.

Gill King

The Year in General

For me, 2005 has been a year dealing with a lot of negative activity - redundancy calculations and documentation for two clients and dealing with disputes between employers and employees. Sometimes I act for employers and sometimes for individuals who have found themselves in uncomfortable employment situations, often due to circumstances outside their control.

Probably the most bizarre was representing an Employment Agency in an Employment Tribunal when a claim was brought against them by a disaffected temporary job applicant - i.e. not even an employee. It took three visits to the Tribunal before I managed to get the case thrown out. He was convinced that I amongst others worked for MI5 and that Special Branch and MI6 were also trying to prevent him from getting employment.

Mid year, I was appointed HR Consultant for a mental health charity. In this short time, I have already been involved in a disciplinary hearing and drafting the subsequent warning letter; a grievance brought by a 71 year old following non-renewal of his fixed term contract; trying to sort out excessive sickness absence; revising recruitment documentation and some interviewing; updating Personnel systems and rewriting policies as required. The burden of employment law on small businesses is getting ever heavier and for small charities which are also being subjected to grant cutbacks or falling donations, the cost in management time and drain on the organisation in complying with legislation is enormous.

Another problem was losing the hard drive on my computer and then finding the automatic back-up was not working. I tried two data recovery companies but to no avail. Luckily, I had done a full manual back up a month before but it certainly caused all sorts of disruption getting a new computer, recreating files and getting up to speed again.

The silver lining is that I now have remote back-up performed nightly by an organisation called **Smart BackUp**. Not only do they back up the files you have selected, but they keep the data in bombproof bunkers, so if your premises burn down, you don't need to rely on manual back-up media which is likely to have gone up in flames at the same time. The recent oil fire explosion in Hemel Hempstead illustrates the point. They give you a two month free trial before signing up and I can recommend the 24/7 staff who are very helpful. Their website address is www.smartbackup.co.uk and they operate for all sizes of companies.

Another useful site donates to charity when you use it as a search engine. Each year, The Dogs Trust provides re-homing services for thousands of stray and abandoned dogs. They are also grateful for old ink cartridges for recycling and supply plastic envelopes for mailing them.

<http://www.charityclicknow.com/partners/index.php?partnercode=dogstrust> (PTO)

Professional Assistance of an In-House Expert When Needed - without the overheads

Some Highlights

To balance the negatives, it is really nice to be able to report on a success story. **'still waters run deep'** - a long time client - celebrated their 15th anniversary in November. They are a design and communication strategy Consultancy with clients like Sony Ericsson - check them out at www.stillwaters-rundeeep.com they are a great team. In February 2005, **King Associates** also achieved its 15 year anniversary. Although very different in their product offerings, the driving force for both consultancies is personal service and professionalism.

This year has produced some interesting venues to visit. One organisation for which I did some HR training is based in Holborn Police station. It felt a bit weird going behind the scenes to meet their manager and I wondered if I would find my way out - it is an enormous place. There are cells below ground and a firing range for marksmen to practise. An evening talk I gave on Networking, for the Federation of Small Businesses, was held in the Islington Job Centre.

A more prestigious venue was London City Airport where I did an informational briefing for staff from an urban regeneration organisation which is about to undergo the TUPE process (Transfer of Undertakings). It was on the day when there was a two minute silence held across the country for the victims of the July 7th tube bombings. The whole airport was at a standstill and even children and babies in the terminal were totally quiet - it was very moving.

The night before the bombing I had been to a reception at the new Institute of Directors' premises in the City not far from Liverpool Street. It was an upbeat evening as we had won the Olympic bid for London that day and the Lord Mayor was there. I then travelled home from Kings Cross station only a few hours before hearing the devastating news on the radio the next morning. I was particularly sad to hear that someone I worked with at the Guide Association had been killed at Aldgate and someone else was one carriage away from the Kings Cross bomb but not badly hurt.

I continue to serve as a board member for Pathmeads Housing Association which is part of the Genesis Group, one of the largest Housing Association Groups in the country. Housing Associations are dealing with huge amounts of money nowadays, so it is interesting to be part of that and involved in reviewing capital expenditure proposals to purchase properties as well as the social and compliance implications. Inspections are taken very seriously and mystery shopping to assess customer feedback is undertaken both by the inspectors and by us to gauge where we need to improve. In June we celebrated our 40th anniversary with an event at the Museum of London which was another interesting venue.

The Past and the Future

With professional help, a good deal of time has been spent this year in updating and developing my websites. Hopefully, these will all go live in the New Year due to my webmaster Jessica's cheerful patience and attention to detail. My main site will contain a number of links from which to download **'Tip Sheets'** on subjects ranging from **'How to Avoid Employment Tribunals'** to **'Tips for a Happier Workforce'** and **'Tips for Dealing Successfully with People at Work'** more tipsheets are on the way on **Recruitment** and **Appraisals**. Similarly, a guide to **Networking** will be on the Networking Seminars page.

In addition to already being a **Retirement Coach**, this year I have also become accredited with an organisation in the States called **DASH** to deliver coaching by telephone. They are fielding a massive infomercial (advertisement video - www.dashlive.com) on US TV and radio and we hope it will really take off in the in the New Year. The name DASH was taken from the following comment - when you are dead, there will be two dates on your headstone, one when you were born and one when you died - in between is a dash and **that is your life** - it also stands for Determination, Attitude, Success and Happiness. We are all living our dash and need to make it meaningful. I try to help others live their dashes and have continued to help individuals with **Career Coaching**. It is very satisfying to see people grow and take on new challenges.

Sometimes companies benefit from offering coaching to employees who may be seen as problems. It can sometimes avoid tribunals and can often salvage deteriorating relationships.

I leave you with that thought - if you ever have any difficult people to deal with, you know where to find me. Similarly referrals for any of my services are always gratefully received.

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