



# ROSS News ROSS News ROSS News

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*Current economic unpredictability is presenting many of our clients with both challenges and opportunities. Having recently spent time in our European operations, it was notable that the impacts of financial markets volatility together with mixed signals coming out of the United States (rallying share market, the Fed starting to express inflation concerns alongside badly-falling consumer confidence) are considerably more pronounced than in some of our other operating arenas. Opportunities arise when effective management teams and organisations harness characteristics of strong customer focus, agility and productivity to widen the gap between themselves and competitors. In the present changing environment, top performing organisations in any sector can capitalise on the confusion, lack of adaptability and increasing internal-focus of less effective competitors to grow market share and demonstrate their differentiators. In a buoyant market, it is far easier to be successful and the current climate provides the truly strong performers with the opportunity to demonstrate that when the going gets tough, the tough get going. Proactive employers seek to capitalise on the opportunities offered by a slight release in the tight candidate market. A couple of years ago, Professor Boudreau, USC Marshall School of Business asked in the Harvard Business Review, "Where would a change in the availability or quality of talent (in your organisation) have the greatest impact now and in the future?" The current situation presents us with the best opportunity I have seen in the past couple of years to act on this question.*

## macro economic update

by Mark Alley, Director of Corporate Services

During May, money markets re-focused on higher inflation, causing substantial sell-offs in short term interest rate markets across the world. High inflation won't stop central banks cutting rates in slowing economies such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the USA. But, if food and energy prices remain persistently high due to strong demands out of emerging economies, it will limit the degree to which they cut.

It is difficult for inflation to fall far if food and energy prices remain high. No matter how much people may argue that the central bank should simply ignore higher food and energy prices because they are being caused by strong demand from emerging economies and these factors are beyond the central bank's control, economists at NAB Capital doubt the central banks will heed this. In effect, if demand for food and energy out of emerging economies remains strong, then the developed economies will not be able to grow as quickly as they would like to or, or as they used to.

Source: NABCapital.

## effective interviewing techniques

by Tom Stretton, Manager, Ross - Banking, Legal & Professional Services

Some people outside the recruitment profession are skilful in interviewing candidates, at building rapport, making people feel at ease, and getting the required information without appearing to try. A whole lot more people think they are.

There are many instances where a potential employer interviews a candidate and the interview doesn't flow as well as it might; or where a candidate looked great on paper but was underwhelming face to face. Just sometimes, this might not be the candidate's fault - sometimes the explanation can be in the asking of the questions.

It is important that we encourage interviewees to give us their best, and that we give them the chance to excel. Think about the structure of the questions you ask interviewees. Are the questions open or closed? Closed questions are likely to elicit a definitive response, a yes or no answer. Open questions will elicit a descriptive answer and be far more revealing. Open questions will start with: Who? What?

When? Where? Why? How? Which? An example of these two types of question in action might be:

*"Do you enjoy your current role?"*

This closed question is likely to elicit a response of "yes", as most candidates know it's unprofessional to talk down their current employer. It may or may not lead onto a detailed discussion about the role itself.

Alternatively, we could ask:

*"What aspects of your current role do you enjoy?"*

followed by...

*"What aspects of your current role would you change if you could?"*

The two open ended questions we have asked will provide far more information and we will end up with a far greater understanding of what makes a candidate tick.

# give me your constant partial attention! (part 1 of 2)

Source: Andrew May, Staying Sharp, Time Magazine, January, 2006

Have you ever had one of those days when you return home and friends or loved ones ask the obvious question. 'How was your day?'

You immediately retort 'Busy, yeah - really busy!' as this has now become the standard response to any question in relation to how your job is going. The follow up question though is the killer punch. 'So, what did you actually do?' You stop, reflect and then stare back blankly, thinking to yourself 'Well, what I really did was bounce from the pop up alert came on; jumped from a PowerPoint and then shared files on Flickr, to checking MSN walk-ins all at the same time; plus also pretending

"24/7 CPA results in a splintering of tasks and decreases productivity"

one document to the next; check emails every time presentation, to an Excel spreadsheet, to Facebook Messenger, sending text messages and handling to check in for a couple of meetings'.

If you find your attention is constantly divided, if you jump from one unfinished task to the next, if every day feels like you've been busy but not really productive - then you probably have Constant Partial Attention (CPA), a term coined by Linda Stone, a former executive at both Microsoft and Apple.

If you operate with 24/7 CPA this results in a splintering of tasks and has a significant impact on productivity, especially if you let it take control of the way you work. You see, the average working day is jam packed with interruptions. Consider the following:

- the average worker now gets 1 interruption every 7 minutes, 60 to 70 interruptions a day
- researchers at University of California found 11 minutes is the maximum amount of uninterrupted time during the working day
- it takes an average of 25 minutes to work your way back to the original task
- the average office worker now spends 2.5 hours a day on distractions (BASEX)
- email and interruptions pile up to almost 50% of the average workday.

Constant or Continuous Partial Attention describes how many of us use our attention today. It is different from multi-tasking. The two are differentiated by the impulse that motivates them. When we multi-task, we are motivated by a desire to try and be more productive and more efficient. We're often doing things that are automatic, that require very little cognitive processing. We give the same priority to much of what we do when we multi-task - we file and copy papers, talk on the phone, eat lunch - we attempt to get as many things done at one time as we possibly can in order to make more time for ourselves and in order to be more efficient and more productive.

To pay continuous partial attention is to pay partial attention -- CONTINUOUSLY. It is motivated by a desire to be a LIVE node on the network. Another way of saying it is that we want to connect and be connected. We want to effectively scan for opportunity and optimise for the best opportunities, activities, and contacts, in any given moment. To be busy, to be connected, is to be alive, to be recognised, and to matter.

"24/7 CPA = decreased productivity"

## Senior management update

RossJuliaRoss continues to strengthen our strategic and operational management capability to ensure we are optimally equipped for the planned growth and development of our business. In the past two months we have announced two significant senior appointments whose expertise will contribute to enhancing our delivery of solutions to our clients whilst resourcing us effectively for planned expansion further into Asia and the Middle East.

### Philip Beck - Chief Operating Officer

Working across the organisation on a global basis, Philip's international background as Chief Executive Officer in roles within the recruitment industry, advertising and consulting services brings to our organisation a wealth of knowledge and experience in all our company geographies. Philip has more than 30 years corporate experience and is renowned for being a high achiever with demonstrated strengths in business growth and organisational leadership. He is a strong strategist but believes in developing customer service by building enhanced employee engagement.

Most recently Philip has spent several years as Chief Executive Officer for a multinational marketing group managing a number of countries throughout Asia. He has experience as a Board Director on publicly listed companies and has managed organisations of up to 1,000 people strong. He has worked in highly competitive environments working with multi-disciplinary service offerings and has a reputation for building strong relationships externally and internally within these organisations, driving revenue and profit growth and in turn enhancing shareholder return.

### Sheryle Moon - Director, Australia New Zealand

Sheryle's role encompasses direction of Ross and Julia Ross operations throughout Australia and New Zealand. Prior to joining us, she was CEO of the Australian Information Industry Association, the peak body for the information and communications technology industry in Australia. Previously, Sheryle held leadership positions with Manpower and Accenture.

Sheryle is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Non-Executive Director on a number of private and public sector boards. She is the strategic IT advisor to CrimTrac, a joint initiative of state and federal policing and Attorneys General. Sheryle is the author of the "SelfScape - Success through Balance" and the "SET for Life" Report. She is included in a new book from the Australian Institute of Management called "Balance @ Work" as well as "Learning from Legends" which was published in November 2007. In July 1999 she was named Australian Business Woman of the Year. On Australia Day 2001 Sheryle was named as one of the 20 women in Australia to lead the Honouring Women program established by the Prime Minister. She holds a Masters of Management in Technology from the Australian National University, and in 2006 was admitted to the ANU Hall of Fame for her contributions to Business Prosperity and the IT Industry.

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