



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.

economic update

by Mark Alley, Director of Corporate Services

The 2008 Budget makes little difference for the RBA, though it does make a useful contribution to restraining demand without representing a quantum change to the outlook for the economy. It might, at the margin, help the RBA's task of restraining domestic demand over the next couple of years. However, anxiety about the inflation outlook will probably still be rampant at the bank. As long as demand keeps moderating out to August, the RBA should be able to 'see through' what they have flagged as 'likely' to be a high CPI for Q1.

The RBA's forecasts in its Statement of Monetary Policy in May stated that they expect the economy to slow to 2.25% by December 2009, assuming that growth in the Resource States slows to a still-strong 4.5%. By implication, if the Resources states grow 4.5% and the economy needs to slow to 2.25%, then the Non-Resources states must slow to 1.2%. It's likely to be a tougher time ahead for businesses and households in Australia's biggest cities over the coming year.

Source: NABCapital.

winds of change for industrial relations

by Michele Jones, Employee Relations Manager

The legislative changes announced by the federal government in March this year and the release of draft National Employment Standards (NES) signify the start of a significant shift in direction for the industrial relations framework. The policy shift, as outlined in the "Forward with Fairness" document can be broadly summarised as:

- Moving away from individual contracts towards collective agreements, with a new "no-disadvantage test".
- Reasserting the importance of awards.
- Increasing the national safety net standards for all employees (including non-award).
- Greater emphasis on family friendly work arrangements.
- Strengthening of the protections against unfair dismissal.

While most of the policy changes will be in the substantive legislation, which is expected to be released later in the year, the transitional legislation was implemented in March. The effect was to abolish new Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) and allow existing AWAs to remain in force and their "replacement" individual transitional employment agreements (ITEAs) to operate only until 31 December 2009. The comparator safety net for agreements has been strengthened considerably. The changes have caused some

headaches for businesses, which had implemented a variety of workplace changes in their AWAs under the previous Fairness Test arrangements.

The NES and other proposals will be implemented from 1 January 2010, although it is possible some of the unfair dismissal changes will come into force earlier than that date.

Notably six of the ten proposed NES relate to leave arrangements. This combined with the requirement that the award modernisation process have regard to family friendly arrangements means that it is advisable for businesses to start to review their work arrangements to ensure there is sufficient flexibility for those with family responsibilities.

We are being promised a simpler IR system under Forward with Fairness, but one must remember similar promises were made prior to the implementation of WorkChoices!

If you require any further information regarding the proposed IR changes, please email the RossJuliaRoss Employee Relations Manager at michele.jones@rossjuliaross.com

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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