



December 2014 Newsletter

Written on the Road Special.

TEDx talk of the month

This is about the importance of sleep. I nicked the idea from Ady's newsletter.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7s9C_8-OoxI&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop

It's unlikely to cheer you up.



Our own app

Having decided that we could usefully buy a smart phone "Chris Duckett" App (off the shelf, but with my name at the top), I set about convincing the team that it was a good idea. This turned out to be surprisingly difficult, even with the under 40's. So, in the usual spirit of total autocracy, we're having one anyway. A possible Christmas present for all newsletter readers? And I don't care if it's not earth-shatteringly original/clever. We're accountants, after all.

To paraphrase John McEnroe, why am I surrounded by luddites?

The end of tax avoidance?

As you will have noticed, the whole tax avoidance thing is consuming an inordinate amount of attention in professional circles. They are even giving lectures on the subject. One particular lecture (at the Institute's Tax Faculty) suggested that the £14bn of tax that is in dispute because of the past use of marketed schemes could be collected now, in a slightly reduced amount – he suggested £11bn – if HMRC acted to "settle these cases at knockdown prices".

You can read the [full text of the 2014 Hardman Lecture](#) if you really, really want, maybe as a solution to the sleep deprivation problem.

As far as I can tell, the avoidance world is still alive and well, just below HMRC's radar.



An ERgent warning

On our website –

<http://www.chrisduckett.co.uk/anergentwarning.html>

Saw this and thought of you?

More planning before doing. Eat that frog, as the BD team would have it

<https://hbr.org/2014/06/how-to-spend-the-first-10-minutes-of-your-day/>

Jim Collins gets interviewed

<http://thepositiveway.org/jim-collins-on-the-questions-he-asks-to-discover-greatness-video/>

The paperless office – still?

I was persuaded to buy a document management system 3 or 4 years ago, but we've never got on with it particularly well. It always seems to be hard to find anything. A recent report from the Institute says we should try harder. Apparently, our big mistake is our insistence on keeping the paper originals. [And you need 3 screens per desk?] Other document heavy organisations that we deal with, such as insurance brokers, seem to cope. The luddites win again?



Thinking too fast?

Given that business owners are generally happier when they are actually doing something, the "bias for action" is heavily embedded in our culture. The whole point of the "Slow" movement is to make sure you are doing the right thing first. As the Sage of Bishopwood would have it, please can we be sure we're climbing the right mountain before we set off. FastCompany (no hint of irony?) has a good article re-framing the point with Einstein as the example:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3007430/einsteins-problem-solving-formula-and-why-youre-doing-it-all-wrong>

Not to be confused with procrastination?

Earnings v entitlement

A piece by the Sage in praise of working hard:

<http://www.thepositiveapproach.global/ethic-earning-things-rather-entitlement/>

Probably not a variant on "the beatings will continue until morale improves".

Differentiate or die

The old concept that you need to be different from your competitors, ideally in a way that means something to your customers, is very much received wisdom. How to do it/articulate the difference in a mature, fragmented industry is the tricky bit. The most effective place to be different must be in the way you manage and interact with those customers, particularly if they don't really understand what you do for them (as is normally the case in professional services).

Somebody suggested that you should avoid "Drifting on the sea of sameness", which I thought was a good way of capturing the point.

Disclaimer

We disclaim nothing. In fact, we're rather pleased with the (grown up) advice we give.



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