

A collection of
management articles for
the aspiring managers

e-Management Digest

June 2007

INTERNET COMPLIANCE

Checking Your Whereabouts

If you visit the Absolut Vodka website, you will be asked to verify that you are of legal drinking age for the country in which you log on. For web-surfers in Australia, Absolut will assume you are from Australia. How does it know this? It uses Geo-Identification technology.

Geo-ID technology collects from different sources of information to identify who has logged on and make an educated guess about their location, and provide country specific contents based on a user's location. The technique uses different kinds of information that identifies the user – such as the domain name, IP address of the Internet link, the user's credit card, etc.

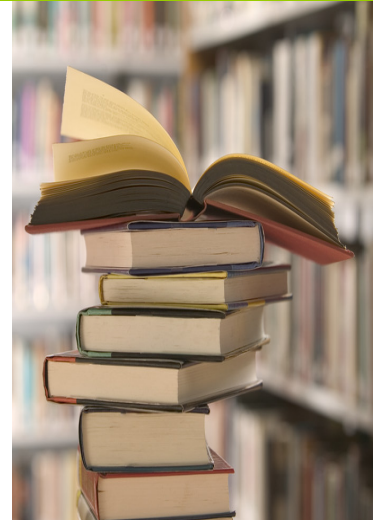
There are services for hiding the user's real IP address, to make it difficult to trace the whereabouts of logger. The Geo-ID can counter this. It matches the users' location against the IP address location. If the two do not match, the cyber transaction involved would probably be removed.

Geo-IDs are generally accurate down to the country and, to a lesser extent, the major city level, but not much beyond that. The technology is becoming an important risk management tool for companies doing business on the Internet. It allows companies to improve compliance of foreign laws, and by identifying the location of people with whom they are doing business, minimises their own exposure to civil liability claims.

Compliance

Absolut vodka is one example of using Geo-ID to improve legal compliance in a foreign country. Laws vary between countries, so Geo-ID, which can be designed to be country specific, can ensure compliance with laws of the country where logging in took place.

In some countries, local laws and regulations may restrict a company from dealing with people in another country. The US trade embargo against Cuba is one example. Geo-ID therefore can ensure the appropriate laws are followed.



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Intellectual property

Another area where Geo-ID is being used is to limit the availability of information. This might be done to segment markets, to maintain regional pricing levels, or to comply with a license which may restrict distribution of data or product to a market segment. This application of Geo-ID is being used by online music providers, where access to content may be limited or different, or the sound quality varied (e.g. Yahoo! Music) based on the user's location.



Geo-ID a panacea?

Geo-ID technologies have yet to be perfected and while there are rooms for improvement, it is still a useful tool for a robust risk management strategy. But the use of Geo-ID to manage legal risks is likely to increase as technology improves.

(Adapted from Keeping Good Companies, May 2007 journal of Chartered Secretaries Australia)

MANAGEMENT

Gender Issues – Management Styles

Why men and women are fundamentally different in their management styles?

A recent report by *The Business* found that a mere 6% of public company directors in Britain were women. This figure has hardly changed in a decade (except in 1997 when the figure went up 4.6%). Why is that?

One way of getting into the basics is to look at what male and female managers do differently, and whether they have gender-defined development requirements. Kaisen, a management and HR research consultancy, explored the issue and looked at a sample of 250 cases across 21 organisations. 77% of the sample was managers in the ratio of 70:30 male to female.

The survey revealed how managers' performance and attitude were perceived by their peers. While both men and women managers needed to improve their communication and commercial skills, the research showed that female managers were worse than men at delegation (57% to 44%), and crucially, were much more likely to be considered to lack confidence in their abilities. Three times as many female managers as men needed to be more assertive.



On the other hand, women were found to be much better at displaying emotional intelligence, specifically listening and empathising, but were neglectful of their own interests. Men were better at building reputation by self-promotion, and the results indicated that women needed to be more proactive in growing their image in organisations through more effective networking – particularly important when in

most companies reputation is a key criterion for promotion and fast-tracking.

The findings suggest that women in management need to display more belief in

- Some development needs are shared, not gender-specific
- Female managers are found to suffer from a lack of self-confidence in comparison to male managers
- Females were far stronger on emotional intelligence
- While men may network better, in the long term, boards must recognize the need for a mix of skills and therefore, genders.

their own competence, and be willing to challenge prevailing opinions and working methods. Female managers appear to need to get better at accepting feedback and not dwelling on criticism. It is possible that this finding relates to self-confidence, i.e., a lack of confidence that leads to over-defensiveness in response to negative feedback.

The still male-dominated boardroom might mean that the qualities valued by the board are valued throughout the organisation. Strengths of board members will be seen as essential skills, and it is these male-defined strengths that become the currency of promotion. This means the British boardrooms are missing out on the qualities that women would bring to the table. Things are slowly changing in today's world of high employee expectation – the days of the testosterone-driven 'Gordon Gekko' types are fading. Businesses are realising that getting the best out of people is the key, and that emotional intelligence is a critical capability.

(Adapted from People Management, April 2007, journal of Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development)

INNOVATION

Managing Innovation

Organisations need to be more creative in their approach to recognising, nurturing and turning innovative ideas into business reality – and managers are the key to the process.

Creating a perfect environment for nurturing innovation is not an easy task. Research has shown that the single most important factor in the success of innovation initiatives is having a leader and a team with the ability and passion to turn ideas into business reality. The team leader needs to make sure his/ her team members have a clear understanding of exactly what kind of innovation the business needs going forward – and to be able to translate this into specific goals.

Moreover, the ability to generate the energy to make changes happen is equally important – this is to make sure passion of the leader can effectively transformed into sustainable actions.

If managers are to be successful at fostering innovation, they sometimes need to get a handle in their own attitudes and make sure they are not unwittingly stifling their team or cursing new ideas. Those managers who are likely to be comfortable with innovation are typically flexible in their approach and good at coping with ambiguity and uncertainty. If they are to make ideas happen, they also need good facilitation, decision-making, problem solving and risk management skills.



Communication

Networking is important, for generating new ideas and to put forward the innovation process. People who often work in silos have limited views and they should be encouraged to mingle with people of different backgrounds, or, staff from different departments.

Often people from different departments talking about something and they will come up with an idea, see the benefit of it and move it into action. Managers could create an encouraging atmosphere and facilitate new ways for people to talk to each other in both formal and informal ways.

External Expertise

Having the confidence to bring in external expertise is also important, particularly if you are looking at moving into an area that is beyond an organisation's traditional specialism. In this case, the network broker – the person who sits between networks and links people and different external agencies together – is essential to this process. Line managers can act as 'nodes' in the network, regardless of their position in the hierarchy.

Generating Ideas

The above shows how the management could encourage and creating the perfect environment for generating new and innovative ideas, but how about putting these processes into solid actions?

The consensus among the experts seems to be that an organisation has to have some kind of clear process through which ideas can be assessed and prioritised. If the right

organisational processes are in place, there is plenty the individual manager can do to keep pushing their team's ideas through to a successful conclusion.

Good project management, for example, will keep the ball rolling – although it needs to be done with a light touch – too much 'process' can bring things to a grinding halt. Sharing news about a project's progress is also helpful. There are now software packages on the market that can help organisations manage and share this knowledge – as well as the traditional corporate communication channels.

Line managers also need to make sure they have a senior 'champion' for their projects, who will speak up and support them when things go pear-shaped – as they inevitably will. They are the front line staff that actually makes things happen, after all.

*(Adapted from Professional Manager May 2007
Journal of the Chartered Management Institute)*

ENGLISH

Words Worth

WRONG	RIGHT
X It's a dark blue coat with a black inside.	✓ It's a dark blue coat with a black lining.
X I remember leaving a blue handkerchief inside of the right-hand pocket.	✓ I remember leaving a blue handkerchief inside the right-hand pocket.
▪ <i>Inside something without of.</i>	
X In that moment the door opened.	✓ At that moment the door opened.
▪ <i>At that moment = at that particular time. In a moment = very soon.</i>	
X I'd like to see him in my office the moment he will arrive.	✓ I'd like to see him in my office the moment he arrives.
▪ <i>After the moment: use the present simple tense for 'future reference', not shall/will + verb.</i>	