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NewzBreak™

The Workplace Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

How 'Passing the buck' first occurred

Back in the days of the old and wild west, poker became a popular saloon game. It also became a problem because poker players thought little of trying to cheat their tablemates.

The dealer had the greatest opportunity because he could manipulate the cards, engage in the infamous "dealing off the bottom of the deck" move, or skillfully peek at the cards he dealt other players.

To avoid fights over whose turn it was to deal, they passed an object to the next dealer. Usually it was a knife. It became known as the buck, short for buck horn, which most knife handles were made of.

Over time, the meaning of the phrase "passing the buck" changed. Instead of legitimately moving a responsibility to the right person to handle, it became known as a way to pass off a job or responsibility to someone else. That person was stuck with it whether or not he had the time or skill required.

President Harry Truman's famous statement that "the buck stops here" was viewed (and still quoted) as a way to state that, as President, he took responsibility for whatever was happening in the country. He had courage.

In his book, *Leadership Courage* (a five-star book at Amazon), David Cottrell asks, "What are you responsible for at work? You are responsible for the success or failure of all activities you are associated with ... for everything you can control or influence."

His statement was aimed at people in leadership roles, but in one situation or another each one of us has to lead.

Cottrell doesn't mean we have to do everything our self. Delegating a task, project or routine to another person, one who is qualified to do it, is a good move.

It's far different from "passing the buck." But when we're the dealer at any level, we should make sure the one we're dealing to has a chance of success.

Guard your smartphone

Cellphone thefts are on the rise. Police in New York City estimate that 11,000 were taken from users in 2010. Police call the crime "snatch and grab."

If you decide to use your iPhone on the sidewalk, subway or train, better look over your shoulder first to see who is nearby and watching you.

A favorite tactic is to grab a phone and jump off a train, bus or subway just as the doors are closing.

If they know about the theft, some carriers can shut down the phone remotely. Verizon, Sprint and many European carriers already do so. AT&T and T-Mobile will cancel your SIM card after a phone is stolen to protect personal information, but a thief can slip in a new card and resell the phone on the black market, say tech experts reporting in *Fortune*.

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We wish you a healthy, happy and prosperous 2012!

*Wally Myers
Celebrity Cleaning Inc.*

Happy New Leap Year!

One mathematically inclined wag says that, for 2012, we should wish you 12 months of happiness, 52 weeks of life, 366 days of success, 8,784 hours of good health, and 527,040 minutes of good luck.

Because 2012 is a leap year, it is as if we have an extra day, with all of its hours and minutes, to accomplish our goals.

We thank you for a great year and look forward to working with you in 2012!



Do You Know...

... someone that could use our services? Perhaps a colleague, friend, family member, or networking buddy?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation; you will receive \$100!

If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your \$100 Bonus!

Thanks in advance for your help and we look forward to sending cash your way!

Answers to 'In the Black'

- 1-a, Oprah Winfrey
- 2-d, Amy Winehouse
- 3-a, Betty Boop
- 4-a, Harry Potter
- 5-d, Friday
- 6-b, Abraham Lincoln
- 7-c, "2 Broke Girls"
- 8-d, Detroit
- 9-b, 36
- 10-c, Spencer Tracy

Doggie passengers can be a safe-driving risk

About 40 percent of Americans own at least one dog. For some dogs and their owners, riding together in the car is a happy experience. So happy, in fact, that half of car owners pet their dog while driving and 17 percent have allowed the dog to sit on their lap while they drove the car.

Additionally, according to a USA Today survey, about 18 percent have reached into the backseat to interact with their dog; 4 percent have played with their dog, and 13 percent have given the dog food or treats while they were driving.

Driving with a dog is not usually listed among the most dangerous driver distractions, but it should be.

Your pooch will be almost as happy in the car if he's in a harness, in a crate, or behind a barrier so he can't jump on you while you're trying to make a left turn.



"There will be no bonuses this year, but I will be texting 'Happy New Year' to each and every employee."

How to keep your career well, if you're not

Being diagnosed with a chronic condition makes you wonder. Should you tell your boss about it or not?

To keep your career moving in the right direction, disability advocates recommend having the talk. Before seeing the boss, ask your doctor what accommodations and reasonable changes to your work environment, may become necessary.

For example, you might need ergonomic fixes in your office or a delayed start time if meds make you drowsy in the morning. Note that by employment law, you can't be fired for a disability as long as you can perform the essential functions of your job, even if you need accommodations (visit AskJan.org for accommodation suggestions).

If you hesitate to open up to the boss right now, start by presenting to your HR department or a higher-up that you trust. Bring a doctor's letter simply saying you have a medical condition and that you'll need accommodations. Companies can ask for a detailed diagnosis from the doctor, but usually don't.

According to the Job Accommodation Network, 56 percent of accommodations cost employers nothing. The rest average about \$600.

Don't put off talking with your boss, but be prepared to focus on solutions instead of problems.

Sometimes it's possible to suggest a new job that has benefits for the company. For example, if you can't travel to meet clients, you could suggest serving local clients plus adding office duties such as training. Suggest a mutually beneficial plan.

The boss may later determine that you can't do the job in spite of accommodations. By federal law, companies with at least 15 workers must offer to move you to a position in the firm, if one is available and you can do it. If there's no job at your pay level, you may be offered one with lower pay.



Trivia Teaser – In The Black

1. What TV personality was named Miss Black Tennessee in 1972? a-Oprah Winfrey, b-Pam Oliver, c-Tyra Banks, d-Robin Roberts.

2. What singer won five Grammy Awards for her sophomore album "Back to Black" in 2008? a-Adele, b-Solange Knowles, c-Taylor Swift, d-Amy Winehouse.

3. What black-and-white cartoon character appeared briefly in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" claiming work has "gotten slow since cartoons went to color"? a-Betty Boop, b-Olive Oyl, c-Minnie Mouse, d-Snow White.

4. What fictional character was the godson of Sirius Black? a-Harry Potter, b-Percy Jackson, c-Superman, d-Indiana Jones.

5. What day of the week was in the title of a viral Rebecca Black song sensation? a-Sunday, b-Monday, c-Saturday, d-Friday.

6. Which U.S. President enlisted as a volunteer but was voted the captain of his company during the Black Hawk War? a-Dwight Eisenhower, b-Abraham Lincoln, c-George Washington, d-James Polk.

7. Max Black and Caroline Channing are the main characters on what sitcom? a-Rules of Engagement, b-Still Standing, c-2 Broke Girls, d-Happy Endings.

8. Coleman Young was the first black mayor of which major U.S. city? a-Houston, b-San Francisco, c-Chicago, d-Detroit.

9. How many black keys are on a standard piano keyboard? a-26, b-36, c-46, d-56.

10. What actor played the one-armed stranger in the movie Bad Day at Black Rock? a-Ernest Borgnine, b-Alan Hale Jr., c-Spencer Tracy, d-Maximilian Schell.

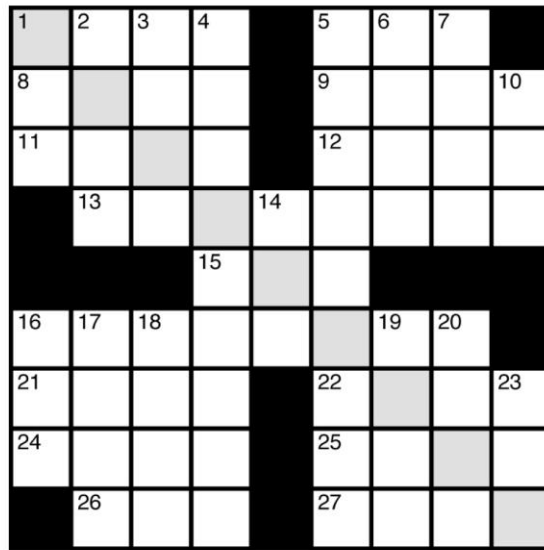
Olympic Event Crossword

Across

1. Finish line?
5. Jewel
8. Baseball stats
9. And others, for short
11. Flock member
12. Yellowfin or ahi
13. Cooking slowly
15. "Harper Valley ___"
16. Patisserie
21. One way to run
22. Building additions
24. Strike out
25. Balm ingredient
26. Aye's opposite
27. Sunrise

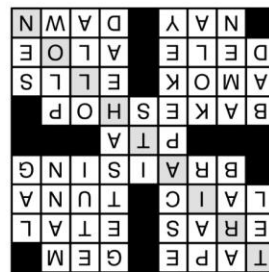
Down

1. ___ el Amarna, Egypt
2. Saudi, e.g.
3. Au __, live-in
4. Near F1
5. Advances
6. Small handbag
7. Educator Horace
10. Hang back
14. "___ show time!"
16. Not good
17. "You can say that



- again!"
18. Kind of nut
 19. Earthen pot
 20. Farm equipment
 23. D.C. bigwig

Note. The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.



Thinking of which decisions are most important

One-time questions, like whether you will handle item A or item B are easier to make than decisions that cover an entire area.

These are the types of decisions that change your lives. Well-known author Andy Andrews, author of *Mastering the Seven Decisions That Determine Personal Success*, gives these examples:

The responsible decision: You accept responsibility for your past and your future. Your history is not your destiny. Taking responsibility is also about hope and control, not about blame.

The guided decision: Seek wisdom through reading, study and hearing inspirational thinkers. If you don't have a mentor, be your own.

The active decision: Don't allow fear or doubt to immobilize you. Take action, seize the moment and move on.

The joyful decision: Dwelling on what's wrong with work or life drives away opportunities and encouragement. Choose happiness instead. It's not a matter of your present circumstances. It is a matter of choice.

The compassionate decision: Make compassion and forgiveness part of your everyday life.

The persistent decision: Hold fast to your vision and avoid second-guessing yourself. Lack of commitment has caused marriages to fail, businesses to tumble and jobs to be lost.



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Say cheese after dinner

Eating a piece of cheese after dinner is healthier for your mouth than eating a sweet dessert, says the American Society for Dental Aesthetics.

Cheese neutralizes oral acids and helps remove bacteria. It also contains calcium and phosphorus that remineralize tooth enamel.

Staff Members Making a Difference!

Joe Orta recently went above and beyond to make a difference at the facility he cleans. The facility has a white tile floor that is very difficult to keep clean in an industrial setting and Joe made it his goal to make sure it looked like new.

Our customer contacted us to express their gratitude and to let us know how pleased they are with what Joe has done with that floor!

Thank you, Joe, for making a *Celebrity* difference!

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day.

Edith Lovejoy Pierce, poet, author

January Birthdays and Company Anniversaries

Birthdays

19th – Danielle Scott
23rd – Monica Dutko
23rd – Milton Toro-Cruz
28th – Annie Rudolph

Anniversaries

8 years – Dennis Wieand
6 years – Susan Davis
5 years – Heidi Bushey
4 years – Annie Rudolph
3 years – Gerard Barksdale

We hope you have a wonderful birthday and thank you for being part of our team!

Take the Trivia Challenge and Win a \$25 Gift Card to Applebee's!

The first twenty people who call our office with the correct answer will be entered into the drawing!

What % of Americans own at least one dog?

1 – 35% 2 – 40% 3 – 55% 4 – 60%

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

December's winners: Lisa Paul, Commerce Corp. Center