

### New Office Address - Apex HR Ltd, Falcon House, Eagle Road, Langage, Plymouth, PL7 5JY

A warm welcome to Kelly Miller

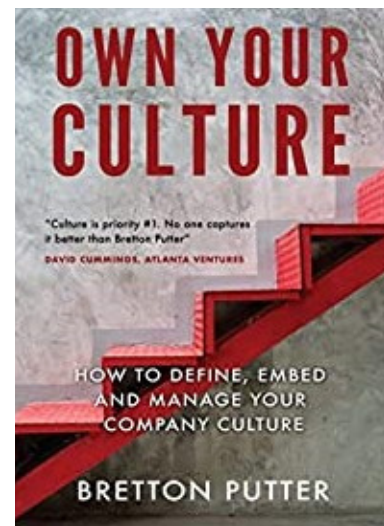
Exciting news – the team at Apex HR has grown. Kelly joins us as the Business Data Protection Officer.

Kelly has worked with many organisations in different sectors over her career. In her most recent role of 6 years she worked with a local council within its information governance team. Kelly has strong sense of fairness and always believes in doing the right thing which compliments her role at Apex. Although through Kelly's knowledge and experience she will be leading on Apex's Data Protection service, her innovative and creative nature lends itself to wider Apex projects.

Kelly has a love for music and all things Disney which is especially evident to her husband and children when she is screeching along to, I mean singing along to, Disney songs.



A couple of us recently joined a great conversational webinar where Bretton Putter was presenting The 9 Rules of Hybrid Working. During the webinar Brett's passion for sharing his learning and knowledge around cultures and how to build and keep developing them was inspiring. Here's a link to a recording of the webinar if you fancy watching it through <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfLfMmKxtts&feature=youtu.be> Brett has a business called Culture Genie and wrote the book Culture Decks Decoded. Here's a link to his website where you can get a free PDF copy of Culture Decks Decoded. <https://www.culturegene.ai/books/culture-decks-decoded> He has a new book out this month called Own Your Culture that we are looking forward to getting our hands on.



#### Diary Date -

Things to keep your eye out for  
Saturday, October 24 - Sunday, November 1  
The Plymouth Halloween Trail will run throughout the October half-term.  
It's aimed at families who are struggling for things to do during the school holiday, which may be evermore on parents' minds this year, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Those embarking on the Halloween trail will need to find the 15 Halloween characters displayed in 15 different shop windows, to be in with a chance of winning £100 to spend in Footloose and Fancy Dress. You can enter by using the QR codes on each shop window poster.

### Do you know you can find us on social media ?



Apex HR



Apex HR Ltd



Also, you can find our website at <https://www.apexhr.co.uk/>

## Treat people like they make a difference.....

Feedback is one of the most important things we need to give our teams and something that doesn't always come naturally. I think we've all heard other people say or found some of the below to be true ourselves :

- I never get thanked for my work
- If I'm not getting told off I guess I know I'm doing a good job
- There's no point saying anything no-one listens I just get on with it
- No-one would notice if I wasn't there

A simple check in with your managers/teams to give a genuine thank can will go a long way. If we want a healthy positive work culture we have to model these basics ourselves. If we don't lead with some level of compassion and empathy our teams will be thinking or saying some of the negative statements above.

It has been a tough year for so many businesses, families and individuals. Pulling together can only make getting through the coming months more manageable. Across the board it's fair to say that the vast majority of people want to go to work do a good job and feel part of something bigger. People want to be contributing and they are definitely seeking security and re-assurance. That simple thank you could make all the difference making someone feeling valued and more secure helping build loyalty and ultimately improving productivity.

A simple direct thank you with a light touch check in is free, doesn't take up much time and can have a serious impact on our cultures and organisations. At Apex we love the strong challenge strong support model because it really works. Strong support and regular thanks where it is due can pave the way to help the challenging conversations have better outcomes. If you are interested in talking about how the strong challenge strong support approach could impact on you and your team get in touch, we love to talk and share.

### Seasonal flu, coughs, colds and Covid

In our last newsletter we talked about people starting to return to work after being on furlough. Most people are now back at work, children are back at school and the economy is moving. With the increased number of us out and about interacting it has led to a significant rise in positive cases of coronavirus. To add to the challenge as we leave the warm summer months and enter the cooler temperatures of Autumn and Winter we will also be expecting an increase in seasonal illnesses.

### So, how can you manage this in your workplace?

It's normal as we head into this time of year that there are illnesses like the common cold, flu, heightened allergies and other viruses. However, this has not been a normal year and this year we have an added virus which is likely to cause employers all types of challenges in the working environment. There are likely to be team members off self-isolating for blocks of days at a time, this will be in addition to the expected seasonal illnesses. With the challenge of added complexities it is important to keep a sense of consistency in managing sickness absences. We are all human and most people will fall ill from time to time and this is to be expected, managing absences well to ensure that the needs of the business are also met and that activities can continue.

We would always say manage individual illnesses on a case by case basis and avoid a blanket approach. If a team member has come into work and it is suspected they have covid symptoms, they should be sent home and should contact their GP or call NHS 111 for professional medical advice to identify the illness. If it is suspected that they have covid they are likely to be told to self-isolate in which case they will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay from day one. Employers can claim back up to 2 weeks of this statutory sick from the government. If the illness is not considered to be or suspected to be covid and they are still not well enough to return to work, they should receive sickness absence leave and pay the way you would normally do it in your business.

Being ill and off work is an inconvenience to most people and they will be eager to get back to work, however, it's important not to rush the return. Good leadership means we need to support the individuals and encourage them to do the right thing and think about the health and wellbeing of their colleagues alongside and the needs of the business.

Managing sickness absence in this way will enable those who do not have coronavirus to return to work earlier than if they were to self isolate. Alternatively, the employer is able to plan appropriate cover for those who are likely to be absent from work for long periods of time due to self isolation or Covid illness.

We are always here and happy to help with your specific questions so just get in touch. There is also an information guide on our website which might be useful to share with your teams



We are here to support you with all your people and HR needs so don't hesitate to get in touch if you have a question.

So, the challenging and confusing times continue. With many people reverting back to working from home again following the latest Government update on Monday 21st September, emotions are running high. For some it feels like a frustrating step backwards, for others it is a welcome relief. Whilst there are some perks to working from home (such as no daily commute and the lowered risk to our health) it is also normal to feel boredom, anxiety, uncertainty and frustration. It really is a rollercoaster of thoughts and feelings.

The NHS promotes 7 top tips to looking after our mental health whilst working from home. We thought we'd tell you about them here:

### 1 . Set and stick to a routine

When working from home, it's easy for the lines between work and personal time to blur. Try to follow your normal sleep and work patterns if you can and remember to eat and drink regularly. Most importantly, when your workday stops, stop working. Shut down, stop checking emails and focus on your home life.

### 2 . Make a dedicated work space

Find a pace away from distractions and ensure everything you need to work is within that space, make sure you are sitting comfortably - we know its tempting to sit on the sofa but its best if you can sit at a table and on a chair

### 3 . Give yourself a break

Working at home can make us feel like we have to be available all the time. But just being "present" is no use to anyone if your mental health is suffering. Making time for breaks is important to manage feelings of stress and overwhelm

– try to take lunch and regular screen breaks. Give yourself time to concentrate on something else so you feel more focused when you return. Even just 5 to 10 minutes of short breaks each hour can really help your productivity too.

If possible, set a time to go for a walk, run or bike ride for some fresh air, or a coffee!

### 4 . Stay connected

While working from home has its benefits, you may also feel more isolated. But here are lots of ways to stay in touch with those who matter – boosting their mental wellbeing as well as our own. In and out of work, human interaction matters so schedule video calls and pick up the phone instead of emailing. If you're struggling with working at home, speak to your colleagues or manager about your concerns and remember, your colleagues probably feel the same as you! Ask how they're doing and whether there are ways you can support each other. Make time to socialise virtually – schedule in a digital coffee break or Friday online get-together. Or meet in person for a coffee or lunch if you can do so, following the latest social distancing guidelines.

### 5 . Set boundaries

Setting boundaries with other members of your household is key to mental wellbeing while working at home.

You can be more flexible when working from home, so enjoy it. But it can also be difficult if there are other distractions to deal with, like children at home, who may think you are on holiday and want to spend time with you. Have a discussion about your needs, especially with family. Remind them that you still have work to do and need quiet time to do it, and share your schedule. Similarly, set boundaries with work. It's easier to stay logged on when your Home is your office, but try to switch off when the work day is over, and enjoy time with family at home.

### 6 . Think longer term

You may be continuing to work from home for a while, so think about ways you could improve how you work while at home. If you have a garden, could you work there if the weather's warm?

Try to explore how you work with others. Are there different ways to talk online or new software you could use?

### 7 . Be kind to yourself

Remember, this is an unusual situation and things will not feel normal! Be kind to yourself and acknowledge that you might not be as productive as you usually would be. Be realistic about what you can achieve given the circumstances and relax when your work is done.