
BUILD YOUR OWN ADVISORY BOARD

Create a winning network of people who will help drive your career where you want it to go and support you along the way

Words Sarah Biddlecombe

If you entered the world of homeworking during the pandemic, then you'll already have a kitted-out desk and upgraded wifi. Now it's time to take your workplace wellbeing into your own hands. This goes beyond getting the right equipment and finessing your Zoom etiquette, to ensuring you have the emotional and professional support required for success. For that, you need people – their help, expertise and ideas. Interestingly, a survey conducted by job website Indeed found that 45% of respondents who had to transition to working from home because of Covid-19 are missing in-person meetings, and 73% miss socialising with their co-workers in person. If you have a sense of isolation from your peers and mentors and feel unsupported or demotivated as a result, build your own advisory board. The simple act of drawing it out on a piece of paper will identify who you have around you and the ways they can help you. So when you come to a crossroads and need advice or encouragement, you know where you can turn. "There's a saying that two minds are better than one," says psychotherapist and life coach Kate Megase. "Your advisory board can provide support, accountability and motivation." Opposite are four personas you'll want on your side.



Kate Megase is a counselling psychotherapist, life coach and founder of The Personal Growth and Development Centre (thepgdc.co.uk).

3 WAYS TO HARNESS PEER POWER

James Segal, CEO of coaching programme Peerspective, on how to get the most from your advisors

- 1** Think outside your usual circle. "When it comes to seeking career advice from peers, those people need to be impartial," says James. "Friends or family are often biased when it comes to your career – your partner, for example, might base advice on wanting you home more often, while other well-meaning friends might not have experience of the specific problem you're facing. Turn to people who have insight into what exactly you're doing – anyone at the pub can give feedback, but you need people who've been through it already or are experiencing the very same challenges you are right now."
- 2** Go with your gut. "Take advice from a variety of people, understand where it's coming from and then figure out which parts are relevant and applicable to you," says James. "The decisions we make are very much down to us as people – the values we hold, the way we think and the way we act. Advice from peers can certainly help us shape and make decisions, but bear in mind it's coming from their perspective and the way they think and feel – and we're all different. While it's great to hear other people's insights (they won't be emotionally involved and can help you see the wood from the trees), it's important to trust your instinct, too."
- 3** Cast your net wide. Bear in mind one person's advice might be more cautious and risk-focused and another's could be more optimistic and confident – it's always worth ensuring you get a balanced view. In life, there's never just 'one' answer or solution. When you present a question to a range of different people, you're building an insightful picture of the matter in hand. For example, if you're struggling to understand your millennial customers or audience, could speaking to a group of millennials help you to better gauge what drives them and what challenges they face?

EXPERT PANEL

Features in *Waitrose Health* are informed by experts in their field



Nahid de Belgeonne
Yoga teacher and founder of The Human Method. Explores the healing power of warmth with yoga moves on page 8.



Rachele Gilman Yoga teacher and stretchologist. Shows you how a new wave of stretching can improve mobility and flexibility on page 36.



Dr Somi Igbene
Nutritionist and biomedical scientist. Walks you through how wholegrains can benefit your digestive health on page 27.



Kate Megase Counselling psychotherapist and life coach. Reveals how to build a network for emotional and professional success on page 78.



Dr Alessandra Borsini
Neuroscientist. Presents her research on the link between nutrition, inflammation and depression on page 57.



Tim Harford OBE Author also known as the "Undercover Economist". Shares his top tips on navigating the new normal on page 76.



Dr Ronx Ikharia A&E doctor and TV presenter. Talks about why empathy and kindness are key to looking after your health on page 12.



Julia Samuel MBE
Psychotherapist and founder patron of Child Bereavement UK. Discusses dealing with grief and finding ways to grow on page 52.



Dr Rangan Chatterjee
GP, author and podcaster. Shares his top tips on dealing with stress and managing emotional eating on page 19.



Dr James Hébert Health Sciences Distinguished Professor. Details his extensive research on dietary inflammation on page 57.



Dr Sara Kayat Practising GP and TV regular. Discusses her experience of encouraging her toddler to eat well, with tips you can try, on page 11.



Anna Smith Film critic and podcaster. Explains why watching films can leave us feeling good and helps you to match a movie to your mood on page 87.



Dr Mya-Rose Craig Birder and naturalist. Explains the basics of birdwatching and the benefits it can have for your mind and body on page 82.



Adrienne Herbert Personal trainer and wellness coach. Gives you easy ways to add light and wearable weights to your workout on page 40.



Dr Emma Svanberg
Clinical psychologist. Helps you work through any discomfort you might feel about returning to the office on page 74.



Laura Jane Williams
Author who leads creative-writing workshops. Suggests activities for processing your thoughts through your pen on page 88.