Life with digital calendars

Level: Intermediate (B1-B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses the pros and cons of using a digital calendar at work and addresses several issues, such as employee privacy, the effects of 'over-sharing' and the feeling of not having control over one's time. It concludes with a discussion of potential solutions to some of the problems associated with digital calendars.

Business topic: The use of AI in business

Business language: Scheduling and office dynamics

Activities: Key words, Understanding the article, Business language (phrases), discussion of opinions about digital calendars, discussion of the use of AI in business in general

Groups: Whole class, pairs, small groups

1. Warmer

a. Ask students to discuss the questions as a whole class. If some do not use a digital calendar, ask what kind of calendar they use. For those who use a digital calendar, ask if there is anything they don't like about it.

2. Key words

a. Ask students to match the words with the definitions and to complete the example sentences. Remind them to use a capital letter where necessary. Explain that using the word in the context of a sentence can also help them check whether they have chosen the correct definition. When they have finished, ask them to read the whole article carefully and to look at how the key words are used in context. Point out that the paragraph numbers are listed after the words to help them locate the words quickly.

Key:
1. *phishing*
2. *tyrannical*
3. *etiquette*
4. *convener*
5. *warranted*
6. *agentic*
7. *afforded*
8. *rectify*
9. *intrusive*
10. *haggling*

3. Understanding the article

a. Ask students to choose the correct completion for each sentence according to the information in the article. Encourage them to go back and scan the article to check their answers.

Key:
1. *a*
2. *b*
3. *a*
4. *b*
5. *b*
6. *b*
7. *a*

4. Business Language – scheduling and office dynamics

a. Ask students to use the phrases in the box to complete the sentences. Encourage them to scan the article to look at how each phrase is used in context before completing the sentences. When you check the answers, make sure students understand both the phrases themselves and the sentences they are used in.

Key:
1. *juggling deadlines*
2. *time drag*
3. *deep work time*
4. *streamline scheduling*
5. *blocked out time*
6. *default calendar*

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b.   Ask students to complete the sentences from the article with phrases from task a. Encourage them again to look back at the article to check their answers. When you go over the answers, check that they understand how the phrases are used in the contexts of the sentences.

Key:
1.   *time drag / deep work time*
2.   *default calendars*
3.   *juggling … deadlines*
4.   *blocked out*
5.   *streamline … scheduling*

5. Discussion

a.   Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. Point out that for the first question, they should refer to the article for the answers. The other questions ask them to give their own opinions. If there is time remaining after their discussion, you could do a quick class survey for questions 2, 3 and 4.

6. Wider business theme – AI in business

a.   Ask students to read the pros and cons of AI in business and to take a couple of minutes to think about their answers to the questions below. Encourage them to make notes of their answers.

b.   Put students in groups and ask them to discuss their answers to the questions in activity a. Remind them to use the phrases in the Useful language list if appropriate. After a few minutes, you may want to ask them to share some of their ideas with the class to see if the groups came up with similar answers.

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