

WORK & CAREERS

If you cannot manage up, you will be unable to manage at all



Andrew Hill On management

When boats carrying thousands of seask soldiers were sent back to port on June 5, 1944, many troops had good reason to curse the Allied generals who had delayed the D-Day landings by 24 hours because of bad weather. Those who survived the first assault must have grieved about the decisions of their superiors, as they fought their way bloodily down the Normandy peninsula in the weeks that followed. At least their purpose was clear. As 94-year-old veteran Frank Mouque told The Guardian last week ahead of the 75th anniversary celebrations: "I was a little cog in a big wheel. When you add all those little cogs together - then we became important. We all worked together towards peace." But the likelihood that any complaining cog could have significantly affected the strategy was close to zero. In the workplace, the dangers are rarely life-threatening. Yet the stress caused by ill-explained strategic decisions is no less real for being hidden behind a suit rather than army fatigues. Too often, senior executives expect managers to drive staff towards impossible targets. One such hard-pressed team leader expressed her frustration this way to a panel I chaired for the Financial Times 125 Women's Forum: "My team is under intense

pressure and suffering an increased workload due to decisions being made by senior managers, over whom I have no influence." How could she keep her people motivated? One easy response is to bind the team together in adversity. The leader can show she shares her team's pain and join in the grumble-fest. But this is at best a short-term fix. At worst, it is an abnegation of responsibility. "Your job is to manage up as well as down. You can influence the work your job is to negotiate how it's done, how it's sequenced, how it's resourced," according to one panellist, Johanna Waterous, a non-executive director and former McKinsey consultant. Another - Margaret Heffernan, entrepreneur and author - says the feeble excuse "I'd like to do the right thing but my hands are tied" is heard all the way up the pyramid of corporate power. Staff complain about their inability to change the minds of managers; managers complain about the executive committee; the expo complains about the board; and the board complains about shareholders. In the second world war, even the lowest officers could send their concerns up the line of command. When this mechanism proved unreliable, Field Marshal Bernard

Montgomery set up a special reconnaissance unit to report on morale and troop movements. It is not enough, though, for managers to assume their bosses will somehow intuit what is wrong. They must communicate constantly. It helps if team leaders manage up in good times, as well as bad. Middle managers are the vital connecting tissue in organisations. They convey and build trust between the business leaders and the other ranks. When I ran a newsdesk, I mediated between the editor's (sometimes harsh) daily judgments and my team. Good feedback, I transmitted straight away. But I felt I knew best how my colleagues would react to criticism - and how and when to convey it. Passing information in the other direction also requires tact. Managers can insist their boss provides clarity about priorities, by laying out the opportunity cost of pursuing the boss's path. They can point out that reaching a particularly stretching goal is possible, but may need more resources. They can suggest feasible alternatives. Most organisations are no longer rigidly hierarchical. As one forum participant pointed out, "I might hit a wall, but I can go round it", by cultivating and calling for support from

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more sympathetic managers in the network of command. If the pressure cannot be alleviated, managers must start to become more creative. After one company Ms Heffernan worked with hit hard times, managers said to themselves: "We don't have time or money, but we do have imagination and we have each other." Instead of slugging on away-days to boost morale, for instance, they hosted team meetings in their own homes. Research by Teresa Amabile, of Harvard Business School, and psychologist Steven Kramer has shown that managers who take the trouble to recognise and celebrate even small steps towards a difficult goal can generate self-motivating bursts of joy. One final response to an unworkable order was unavailable to the cogs in the D-Day machine: just say no. Sometimes, Ms Heffernan says, managers must ask themselves: "Do I have the opportunity to be effective here?" She was once trying to implement an unfeasible strategy imposed from above when she realised her team was sticking with the plan only for her sake. To free them to move on, she resigned. andrew.hill@ft.com Twitter: @andrewthill

Working lives

Personal campaigning can become a career, using social media and smart negotiation, writes Antonia Cundy

Gina Martin, 27, has been campaigning in the UK against upskirting - taking a sexually intrusive photo up someone's skirt without their permission - since she was targeted at a festival two years ago. On April 12, thanks to her work, a law came into effect making upskirting illegal. Like much contemporary activism, Ms Martin's campaign began on, and was enabled by, social media. She has more than 50,000 followers across Instagram and Twitter. As a result of the high-profile campaign, she has been on several UK parliament discussion panels, has been interviewed many times by the BBC, and won a stylist magazine Remarkable Women award. As more people turn to social media as a platform for activism, Ms Martin's experience highlights one of the big questions around the movement: how can you make it pay?

In recent months Ms Martin has found it is viable for her to make a career out of advocacy. "You have to have a sort of entrepreneurial mind," she says. "You have to be able to get the money out of it so you can survive and continue to do the work." For Ms Martin, this meant realising that while her campaigning cost money, her experience put her in a unique position as a freelance writer. Her media pitches eventually turned into commissions. She now writes for many platforms - from Glamour magazine to the World Economic Forum - covering topics from feminism to making the UK parliament more accessible. She has also written a book, *#The Change: A Toolkit for the Activist in You*, which is published this month.

"Brands are really cashing in on activism," Ms Martin says, though she finds herself turning down about 70 per cent of the offers of paid partnerships. "There's a lot of 'wear this shirt' that was made in a sweatshop - absolutely not." But partnerships that do align with her activism include hosting panels, running workshops in schools or universities, or advising members' clubs on how to improve their diversity. Even after the media's interest in Ms Martin snowballed, it still took 18 months before these opportunities delivered enough income for her to be able to quit her full-time job in advertising. Part of the difficulty, she says, was her inexperience. "I don't know how much I'm worth because I've just changed the law, there's no guidebook on this," she says. Companies often do not know what to pay influencer-activists like Ms Martin, having had so little experience in dealing with them.

She has just hired a specialist management team to assist. "They'll help me decide. OK, what's my commercial value? What kind of work do I want to do? How much would that pay, in terms of the experience I have, and the kind of value I can bring to them?" Scarlett Curtis, a 25-year-old activist and editor of the bestselling essay collection *Feminists Don't Wear Pink*, agrees the payments are "totally unregulated, it's absolutely mad". Ms Curtis co-founded The Pink Protest, an insta-



Gina Martin's drive against upskirting has resulted in a change to UK law - Antonia Cundy/FT

Young activists work hard to make a living

gram-based group with more than 35,000 followers. Its campaigns against female genital mutilation and period poverty (lack of access to sanitary products) has helped change two UK laws. Yet she once spoke at a Google event for free, when another speaker was paid thousands of pounds - simply because they asked. "You'll sometimes get an email from a brand, and they'll say, 'We can't pay this'. So I'll say, 'OK, well, I can't do it at that pay', and then they'll suddenly be like, 'Here you go, £5,000'." Ms Curtis initially part-funded Pink Protest using the "ridiculous" money she earns from Instagram posts about fashion, beauty and lifestyle products on her personal account, where she has more than 60,000 followers. Pay for this work is erratic. "I got paid about £1,000-£2,000 per post when I had 10,000 followers, but that's still kind of what I'd be paid now," she says. Brands sometimes approach activists with a lower profile than standard influencers because it is good for their image. It is important to "build something that's its own thing before you get brands involved," Ms Curtis says. She and Ms Martin also recognise that their personal presence on accounts

increases the appeal. Becky Young, the founder of Anti Diet Riot Club, which promotes body positivity, says: "I definitely don't get as many brands approaching me as I could because the feed's not about me and not about fashion. I'm on 40,000 followers and have only worked with one or two brands." Ms Young prefers to use the platform as a "sort of community page", she works in marketing four days a week to fund ADRC; she calculated that last year she paid herself about £1 per hour for the effort. Ms Young is trying to make activism financially viable by registering ADRC as a limited company and is crowdfunding. She has raised £15,000, with the backing of NatWest, towards buying a bus as a mobile events space. "Where all these approaches overlap is in the conscious 'branding' of activism. As Ms Curtis, who studied online activ-

ism at New York University while working as social media manager for UN Global Goals, says: "So much of activism is about PR and getting the message out there. Ultimately what you're trying to do is to get a huge amount of people on board with a complicated issue, and to simplify that issue down." When The Pink Protest collaborated with the #FreePeriods campaign to give free sanitary products in schools, Ms Curtis hired a graphic designer, an illustrator, and a PR team. It paid off: Philip Hammond, UK chancellor, has promised free sanitary products in schools and colleges from next year. "It's often really looked down upon, this idea that you put so much energy into the aesthetics of your movement," Ms Curtis says. "But look at the Black Panther movement, the Free Love movement - it's been there throughout history." When you are your own business, Ms Martin says, your product is important. "People are expecting to go to the page and get a certain thing, it's just that can't overtake the activism's original purpose."

That's not to say activism will not succeed without a coherent aesthetic. Amika George, 19, founded the #FreePeriods campaign when she was at school, and says branding "is not something I've really thought about much". Ms George is now at university and more concerned with balancing her academic work and activism than turning it into a viable career. She keeps her personal life out of it. "I found the conflation of the campaign and my personal Instagram account kind of strange," she says. "Journalists would comment on photos of me and my friends, asking to interview me." Her own account is now separate and private. "To just post pictures that I want to post as a teenage girl at university."

Tip Tailor your message for each platform. Use Instagram to reach out to its social-media savvy, younger users who like to see the personal behind-the-scenes aspects of your campaign. Twitter has an older, discussion-based audience, which is great for interaction with high-profile figures, collaborators and journalists. Facebook works well for rallying people in your immediate sphere of influence. Don't say yes to everything. Pick commercial opportunities that align with your activism. Don't forget the brands are getting something from you. Ask yourself: "what do I, and this page, stand for?" Don't be embarrassed to use hashtags. Ask others to share your posts. Share other people's posts too - it's a great way to increase your initial exposure. Avoid "clickbait". Organise real-life events and use posts to ask for action or engagement from your audience. Be patient. You may not generate significant income for a while. You need to know exactly what you're doing before you can bring brands on board.

Work Tribes

'Batten down the hatches as we bake up some batches'

ENNA JACOBS AND ANDREW HILL



Shawn, the management warrior

It's Friday afternoon. I know your thoughts are turning to the weekend. But I am keen to rally the troops, talk you through our future campaign to bring the enemy down.

As Sun Tzu said, "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory." Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat! To launch a successful broadside, we must combine tactics and strategy. There is no such thing as failure, not on my watch - and never mind the collateral damage. So, over the past year we've built up a war chest. That gives us ammunition with which to napalm the competition. We'll take no prisoners and bayonet the wounded.

In the words of one of your country's great leaders, Sergej, "history has shown there are no invincible armies". Except for us! We are the exception! No offence intended, Sergej, I have always held Uncle Joe Stalin in high regard. Here's another quote from the great Sun Tzu: "Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories." Let's just pause to reflect on his wisdom.

In sum, I want you to join with me going over the top. Batten down the hatches as we bake up some batches! Sorry to quote yet another great military strategist, but I think it is relevant.

Well, sports-related: I was filming my five-year-old girl on to the climbing frame and felt a spasm. I haven't been in that much pain since I was in the force and took a fall in the line of duty. Since you ask, I served for two years with the Sainsbury's elite security team. I was patrolling outside the Sydenham superstore in February 2007 when I slipped on a semi-frozen chicken sandwich that was past its sell-by. I had to ask for an honourable discharge. That's why you do, I think, mate. If get some muscle over here to shift the pallets inside. Me? Melanie? Can you give this gentleman a hand?

Joel, the over-zealous security guard

Right hand down a bit. All right, straight back now! More, more, more. Stop! OK, mate. Morning. Stay in your cab. STAY IN THE CAB! I won't warn you again. I'm just going to run the inspection mirror under your vehicle. We'll be doing this with drones from next year, but I always say the old ways are the best, and you can't beat these British-made security tools. I buy my own online from englisharmysurplus.co.uk. You just don't know what's in the foreign-built options: completeness this baby and Beijing would have your chassis number before you could say Vauxhall Vivaro.

Now, step out. Gently does it. Just a pat down today, if you don't mind. I know, I know - it seems too much, but it's standard procedure since we upped the security status from Vermillion to Sangria for Trump's visit last week. You can't be too careful. I had to Taser an Uber Eats courier after I heard him accuse the president of fibbing. What's happened to the special relationship, for flip's sake? That's why we need Boris in No 10, where are you from by the way? No, I mean, where are you from originally?

All right sign here. What have we got in the back? Two pallets of midl jumbo two-ply toilet paper. Sorry, no, I'm not authorised to help you. Tell the truth I'm carrying an injury. Extreme sports. Well, sports-related: I was filming my five-year-old girl on to the climbing frame and felt a spasm. I haven't been in that much pain since I was in the force and took a fall in the line of duty. Since you ask, I served for two years with the Sainsbury's elite security team. I was patrolling outside the Sydenham superstore in February 2007 when I slipped on a semi-frozen chicken sandwich that was past its sell-by. I had to ask for an honourable discharge. That's why you do, I think, mate. If get some muscle over here to shift the pallets inside. Me? Melanie? Can you give this gentleman a hand?

In fact, if you have time over the weekend read Carl von Clausewitz, to get into my head. Nope, Sam, I'm pretty sure it's Clausewitz not Andy McNab. Sam, I didn't know you were ex-military. Tours of Afghanistan? Iraq, too. Gosh, scary. You're here at Frost-eze icing. Adding some of that fighting spirit to the nations cupcakes. No, quite right. War is no trivial matter. But if I may say, neither is butter icing. Bombs away!