



Lethargy

Being relaxed, at ease with the world, and in a reflective mood during this holiday season, Oceanus has been considering the words of wisdom emanating from this column over the past 10 months. More important is how readers perceive those pearls and react to them, or don't react to them, as seems more appropriate.

Oceanus has covered a variety of topics, summarised as follows:

- 'reputations' – the first ever Oceanus – enhance your image as a treasurer but guard against spoiling it by going to the wrong recruiter;
- 'enterprise at risk' – the dangers of a control culture overwhelming the risk-taking culture on which a booming economy depends;
- '21st century treasurer' – reflections on the development of the treasury role and what the future holds (the words 'profit centre' loom large);
- 'no.bank.com' – how the internet could mean treasurers don't need banks;
- 'a dip into the past' – reviewing firsts from the last century and firsts for the next;
- 'e-mbrace the future of communication' – is the bell tolling for traditional conferences?;
- 'pass the abacus' – is web enablement a myth or reality? Treasurers should take care with their planning;
- 'paying the price' – a perceived lack of appetite among treasurers means there is a dearth of new payment mechanisms; and
- 'spread the word' – why the treasury profession should be at the forefront of persuading small and medium sized companies to have good financial management.

The highlight, missing from the list above, was surely when Oceanus underwent the torment of

trying some continuing professional development in May – 'can't play dumb'.

Oceanus' brief is to provide informed comment, occasionally with a slightly jaundiced eye, and to make readers take stock and think around the topic rather than accept the regular party line. The aim is not to be unnecessarily provocative or quarrelsome, but Oceanus thinks it is important to encourage readers to respond in some way to the views expressed.

Judging from anecdotal evidence, Oceanus has stimulated some discussion among readers and, in some cases, managed to raise a few hackles, but the big disappointment is the lack of direct feedback. Oceanus is not the only one to notice the deafening silence – Oceanus' editor looks with envy at the letters columns of other magazines and regularly berates readers about the paltry response levels.

It is hard to work out why this is so. Is it the fear of raising one's head above the parapet? A desire not to rock the boat and embarrass the company? Maybe there is a concern about releasing sensitive information? Could it be simple lethargy or laziness? Maybe the content of Oceanus' column or the magazine as a whole does not warrant a response?

Certainly, if it is the quality of the column or the magazine, Oceanus needs to know (some informed criticism might just sneak past the editor's blue pen). If it is the fear of overt or covert reprisals or revealing sensibilities, readers should be assured that anonymity can be guaranteed if required.

Oceanus has now joined the information technology age and can be contacted by e-mail on oceanus@treasurers.co.uk or by the traditional method at Ocean House, 10-12 Little Trinity Lane, London EC4V 2DJ. ■

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