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### Managing pressure at work: Looking forward in the new decade

Logically, there is nothing significant about a new digit in the date. Surely the clock just keeps moving round in the normal way, doesn't it?

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In an economic downturn like this, you may be too busy to note that we are now in an exciting, new decade, although in your present mood, you may be inclined to dismiss it as irrelevant anyway.

Logically, there is nothing significant about a new digit in the date. Surely the clock just keeps moving round in the normal way, doesn't it?

Well, not quite. Numbers affect us more than we think. Carl Gustav Jung, a widely-respected person, declared that numbers were full of hidden meaning and power. The study of numerology continues to intrigue large groups, whether or not you and I may find it credible.

Notice how we look back on recent history, decade-by-decade. There is something about a ten-year period that makes for a neat and tidy chapter.

The '60s... The '90s... these labels manage to define an era with great vividness — not only as a code for particular fashions and styles, but for economic cycles too. They also provide a trigger for nostalgia, though usually when they coincide with our own youth and self-discovery.

This time round, of course, we may be stuck for a label. We've just had (rather dubiously) 'The Noughties', and it will be harder still to dramatise 'The Tens' or possibly 'The Teens'.

#### Perspective

But are we straying from the theme of this column 'Managing Pressure at Work'? What do we actually tell our impatient customer with his urgent phone-calls? How can the start of a new decade impact on his stressful agenda?

We could start by telling him to take a step back to view his situation in perspective. We can remind him that this is a major milestone asking to be exploited.

Even at the very least, it represents some kind of fixed point — as when the sports-team coach calls out "From here to the bridge... sprint!"

It could form the theme for an incentive programme, even inviting your staff to invent a name for the decade or, perhaps, to write a futuristic short history of it.

But that issue of perspective is really the key. Take the older team-members who remember the excitement of Dubai's boom days, and view every succeeding year in a negative light.

**Looking forward**

Encourage them to look forward instead of back, to feel that at the turn of a decade they're at the beginning of something, not just the end of something, to try to focus on the new possibilities and how they might help to make them happen.

For junior team-members, it is even more vital to foster this spirit of re-launch, and not let their morale get bogged down in recessionary gloom.

Remind even the youngest of them that any revival will be powered by them in person, and that their current actions and attitudes could be the foundation for the next boom.

**The right attitude**

Managers should be in the mood to celebrate the birth of a new decade.  
Team-members should realise that this new decade will be what they make it.  
A new decade should remind us of the need for good time management.

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