



'I've been overpromoted!'

Don't 'fess up yet! Read page 8...

Plus:

- Losing Facebook
- 'I was an irritable finance officer'
- Foot-and-mouth overtime ordeal

They'll know I'm a fraud

Is your new job more than you can chew? It's a common feeling, so relax.

Joanne Ross breaks the problem down into four, bite-sized chunks

WORKING in the public sector provides fantastic opportunities for promotion, increased responsibility, recognition and rewards. But a new role often comes with a

hidden problem – a sneaking feeling that you've been over-promoted. This is a surprisingly common issue, but in today's climate of fast-paced change, restructuring and partnership working, it's one people are rarely willing to admit to.

Whether you feel inadequate, overwhelmed or fearful in your new post, behind your feelings lies a deeper cause – and a solution!

1. I'm not good enough!

Problem: You question your ability to take on your new role, as you've never felt that good at anything, really ...

Root cause: Self-devaluation, holding onto limiting beliefs about yourself

Solution: Focus on your strengths. The idea of prioritising your weaknesses is out-dated and unproductive! Make a list of all your strengths – your skills, abilities, characteristics, values and behaviours. Next to each strength, write down a piece of evidence to demonstrate it. Consider why you got promoted in the first place. Look at your CV, appraisals, and past

achievements. When you get stuck, ask your colleagues for evidence. You'll be surprised what they offer!

2. They'll know I'm a fraud!

Problem: Your promotion was based on your great track record, but now you're wondering if those successes were just luck, and you won't live up to expectations. It seems only a matter of time until people find out ...

Root cause: Negative self-talk

Solution: Your negative inner voice is gaining control and generating doubt. You've got to challenge that voice. Ask yourself: How do you know that it's true? How do you know exactly what others

expect? And how do you know what they're thinking? What do you expect of yourself, and are these expectations realistic? We're often plenty harder on ourselves than others are. With a balanced perspective, you can put that negative voice back in its place.

3. I'm out of my depth!

Problem: You feel overwhelmed by the demands of the job. There's so much to do and constant pressure ...

Root cause: Lack of strategy

Solution: Many of us are on the effect side of the cause-effect equation, which means that we're constantly

fire-fighting. Get clear, strategise and prioritise. Create time and space away from the day-to-day to gain a broader perspective of your new role. What needs to be done on a week-by-week basis to achieve your objectives? What can wait until next week? Next month? Divide your tasks into bite-sized chunks, and set time aside to deal with unexpected demands. This way, you can make real progress and remain in control.

4. I don't know what I'm doing!

Problem: You can't see how you're going to learn, remember and master everything to become competent in this role ...

Root cause: You're at the 'conscious incompetence' stage of the learning cycle

Solution: This is a natural stage of learning. Like when learning to drive, you know what competence is, but haven't yet mastered the skills! Take a deep breath, relax, and give yourself time to adjust to your new role. Don't be afraid to ask for help. People like to lend a hand, and now's the perfect time to ask. Remember, everyone goes through the learning process, and has been at this stage!

All of these are common and resolvable challenges, triggered when starting a new role, and it's all because you're stepping out of your comfort zone. Persevere, learn from the challenges, take positive action and in time you'll create a new, bigger comfort zone. Then you'll know it's time to move on!

Life coach and trainer Joanne Ross is available to answer readers' workplace conundrums. If you have a suggestion, send it to: editor@opportunities.co.uk.

Also visit: www.getcoached.co.uk



Emergency measures: Police cordon off a farm near Wanborough, Surrey on 4th August after a reported outbreak of foot and mouth. Behind the scenes, Kevin Chesson was working day and night to help prevent a replay of 2001

Rex Features

Beyond the call

After the first report came through, Kevin Chesson racked up over 94 hours of overtime, doing his bit to stave off another catastrophe

WHEN CRISES HIT, the efforts of council staff on the ground rarely make the news. Whether it's floods or foot and mouth disease, the hard and often selfless graft of workers gets lost amid the sensational headlines.

For Kevin Chesson, Friday, 3rd of August started like any other. He was probably looking forward to the weekend, since his section, animal health and welfare, part of Surrey County Council's Trading Standards office, was two inspectors short – 50%, in other words – due to a vacancy and long-term illness.

Then came a most unwelcome call from DEFRA. Inspectors were checking a possible case of foot and mouth at a Surrey farm. Don't worry, they said, it was highly unlikely, but they had to check.

Kevin had been through this before. During the 2001 epidemic, he'd been seconded to North Yorkshire where he'd spent a solid two months on shift attempting to limit the damage. You don't forget an experience like that.

Throughout the day, the news got worse and

by 9pm it was a confirmed case. Any thoughts of a weekend went out the window.

He got home just before 10pm and switched on the news – he was as much in the dark as anybody else. Sleep was out of the question. He had to think. There were more than 600 farms in Surrey, many with farm shops, plus a sizable equestrian community and a big network of bridal paths. Working with DEFRA, he had to help get the message out and make sure measures laid out in the Animal Health Act were carried out correctly.

There was a plan, and protocols had been rehearsed, but faced with the real McCoy, and in the height of summer when people were on holiday, there was plenty to worry about.

"What you don't know is how long has it been incubating, and whether it had already spread," he told *Opportunities*.

The next day, Saturday the 4th, he was at the office at by 7am, briefing the personnel who would hold the fort while he attended sites with DEFRA officials. From then on, it was a gruelling campaign of coordinating with

DEFRA, police, farm organisations and the public, making sure everybody understood compliance issues and combing databases to make sure no herd went unchecked.

In the ensuing two weeks he racked up more than 94 hours of overtime. He finally got a day off on the 11th of August, by which point fatigue had set in.

"You just don't get a break," he said. "You take it home. It's splashed all over the papers and TV. You're always thinking about what you should be doing."

He didn't even get much of a break on his day off, as domestic responsibilities had also piled up: "I think I got kicked out of bed early and told to help in the garden," he said with a chuckle.

National disaster was averted, though a number of farmers suffered dearly as herds were culled to eradicate the disease or to stop potential spread. What still plays through his mind, however, is what would have happened if his section had been the weak link in the broader chain of response.