

不合時宜

bu4 he2 shi2 yi2

The office is too cold. You bring a jacket/a big scarf/blanket to the office to keep warm.

If you agree with the above statements, you are probably a woman. That is according to a group campaigning for adjusting the office thermostat to create a work environment that is suitable for both men and women.

The “Change Your Work Climate” campaign launched by a Toronto advertising agency is encouraging women to petition their building management to set the office temperature warmer. One of the campaigners actually had to put a heater under her desk to keep warm.

Women generally find the office too cold because they have slower metabolism than men.

Unsurprisingly, a survey showed that office thermostats are generally set according to a male-oriented standard set in the 1960s on the basis of what was comfortable for a 40-year-old man of 70 kilograms.

That might be practical at a time when men dominated the workplace. But times have changed

Idiom by Lon Yan

and those standards are clearly “不合時宜” (*bu4 he2 shi2 yi2*).

“不” (*bu4*) is “no,” “not,” “合” (*he2*) “to suit,” “to agree with,” “proper,” “appropriate,” “時” (*shi2*) is “time,” “the times” and “宜” (*yi2*) “suitable,” “appropriate,” “fitting,” “becoming.” As a term, “時宜” (*shi2 yi2*) means “what is appropriate for the occasion.” Literally, “不合時宜” (*bu4 he2 shi2 yi2*) is “not appropriate for the occasion,” “not appropriate for the times”. The idiom means “out of keeping with the times,” “out of time,” “untimely,” “irrelevancy.”

The remedy for things that are “不合時宜” (*bu4 he2 shi2 yi2*) is “因時制宜” (*yin1 shi2 zhi4 yi2*) – to use methods appropriate for the current situation.

Terms containing the character “合” (*he2*) include:

合作 (*he2 zuo4*) – to cooperate; collaboration

合適 (*he2 shi4*) – suitable; applicable; fit

合理 (*he2 li3*) – reasonable; rational

合法 (*he2 fa3*) – legal; legitimate