

Your Personal Assistant – Your Strongest Asset

A good personal assistant is one of the most valuable business assets an executive manager can possess.

The role of a personal assistant today is diverse, multi-faceted, complicated, demanding and challenging. Often it is an executive role providing high level key administrative support in a busy corporate office. Many business professionals would not be able to maintain the organization of their offices and business dealing were it not for their personal assistant. That is why it is so important to hire the right assistant.

As the reliance on technology continues to expand in offices, the role of the office professional has greatly evolved. Office automation and organizational restructuring have led personal assistants to increasingly assume responsibilities once reserved for managerial and professional staff. In spite of and in addition to these changes, however, the core responsibilities for secretaries and administrative assistants have remained much the same: performing and coordinating an office's administrative activities and storing, retrieving, and integrating information for dissemination to staff and clients.

The days of simply taking dictation, typing letters and announcing calls are long gone. As management has its own hierarchy, so do administrative positions. Specific job duties vary with experience and titles. Personal assistants perform more information management and fewer clerical tasks than secretaries. Today's career-minded personal assistant will be highly skilled, versatile, organized, pro-active, professional and, above all, able to think independently. Exceptional organizational skills are essential as is impeccable presentation, diplomacy, perception, and a strong ability to communicate effectively and productively with people at all levels. They may be responsible for representing an executive at meeting or events or even presenting prepared information on behalf of the executive. They are often be privy to very confidential information and therefore must be able to work with such in a professional and confidential manner. They may handle more complex responsibilities such as reviewing incoming memos, submissions, and reports in order to determine their significance and to plan for their distribution. They also prepare agendas and make arrangements for meetings of committees and executive boards. They may also conduct research and prepare statistical reports.

Developments in office technology are certain to continue, however, many secretarial and administrative duties are of a personal, interactive nature and, therefore, are not easily automated. Responsibilities such as planning conferences, working with clients, and instructing, require tact and communication skills. Because technology cannot substitute these personal skills, personal assistants will continue to play a key role in organizations.

In addition to jobs created from growth, numerous opportunities will arise from the need to replace the top-level personal assistants who often move into professional occupations. Applicants with a bachelor's degree will be in great demand to act more as managerial assistants and to perform more complex tasks.

Here are a few of the skills a top personal assistant can offer an organization if she is given the authority to do her job productively:

- Better understand the organization and the business environment in which it operates
- Recognize their professional role as part of the team and develop strategies for enhancing their service provision
- Create meaningful relationships with your colleagues and her/his peers internally and externally
- Develop strategies for planning and organizing work, including effective techniques for creating letters memos and emails that influence others
- Adopt a systematic approach to decision-making and problem-solving
- Assess their own interpersonal skills in order to communicate more effectively at all levels
- Deepen their understanding of their manager's challenges
- Set a solid foundation in the partnership with their manager
- Master effective influencing and interpersonal skills
- Adopt tactics to multi-task increased workload
- Expand their knowledge of current business developments
- Improve their professional relationships and networks

Cross Cultural Cosmos

International Corporate and Business Communication and Behavior

business@crossculturalcosmos.com

LinkedIn: Annette Rondos

www.crossculturalcosmos.com

- Increase their contribution to their executive team
- Diplomacy, tact, discretion, confidentiality
- Deal with difficult personalities
- Manage stressful situations
- Solve problems effectively in the manager's absence
- Be proactive and anticipate situations
- Team working skills for enhanced performance
- General paperwork and diary management
- Short and long term planning
- Set priorities and objectives
- Adopt a systematic approach to work methods
- How to differentiate between important and urgent
- How to prioritize work according to the company's key performance indicators.
- Set objective activity
- How to create and monitor an effective time budget

As in any profession there are those who stand out and those who don't. Are you making good use of your personal assistant's skills, are you giving them the opportunity to support you and be involved in your professional duties and projects, or are they looking for a more challenging position elsewhere?

Choose your personal assistant well. They will be your greatest asset and loyal ally. Earn your personal assistant's respect - it will make your life much easier.