

Title:

Administrative Professionals-Keeping A Competitive Edge

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Summary:

Administrative professionals are among the most highly skilled and competent people in today's workforce. Many are experts in desktop publishing, spreadsheet reporting, budgeting, and Internet research.

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Article Body:

Administrative professionals are among the most highly skilled and competent people in today's workforce. Many are experts in desktop publishing, spreadsheet reporting, budgeting, and Internet research.

Beyond these proficiencies, they possess enhanced verbal and written communication and multi-tasking capabilities, the ability to work in a team environment, and problem-solving skills. Because of their versatility, administrative professionals play an essential role in many organizations.

Although the demand for office staffing is strong now, the future is less certain. The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates overall job growth for administrative professionals will decline over the next eight years. Still, opportunities will exist for those who keep pace with new technology.

Ed Meisenheimer, vice president and general manager of Kelly Services, experts in office staffing, suggests, "To increase marketability, become an authority in Web content, multimedia presentations, online meetings, and video conferencing. Specializing in the accounting, insurance, legal, or medical field is another way to widen employment opportunities."

Having employed millions of administrative professionals during its 60-year history, his company offers these additional career tips to keep a competitive edge:

• Enhance computer skills and be proficient in all the software applications your organization uses. Volunteer to teach others.

• Further develop time management, organizational, and prioritization skills to manage multiple projects and priorities.

• Sharpen written and verbal communication skills.

• Expand leadership, negotiation and strategic thinking skills. Join associations that provide educational seminars and offer networking opportunities.

• Volunteer to participate on teams to increase exposure among executives.

• Create a portfolio of your skills to give yourself a competitive edge when marketing your accomplishments.

• Subscribe to various periodicals to stay informed about your industry.

• Dress appropriately for your office environment. Whether the dress code is business or business casual, dress to convey a professional image.

• Keep a positive attitude. With constant change in organizations today, this is an important quality that will be recognized by your boss and your peers.

Administrative professionals are among the most adaptable and resourceful employees, and the best employers nurture them by offering training and providing a career path. In today's fast changing business climate, administrative professionals who hone existing skills, gain new talents, and are proactive in career planning, Meisenheimer concludes, will enhance their advancement potential.