

SECRETARIAL PROFESSIONAL AND ITS IMPACT ON NIGERIA ECONOMY

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Introduction

I want to thank the organizers of the conference for this opportunity. I also wish to express my delight at this gathering of leaders in business and professions, educators, National Association of Professional Secretaries, Office Administrators and others from different walks of life. On behalf of the National Association of Professional Secretaries, I most heartily welcome you all to this conference.

The theme of this conference “The Secretarial Profession and Its Impact on Nigerian Economy” is a good one for discussion at this point in time when our nation is critically ill; and unless it receives proper diagnosis and the right therapy applied, it may surely die. For this not to happen, Professional Associations as stake holders should rise up by holding conferences, seminars and symposia which are problem solving devices in areas where employees and employers are affected, hence the timeliness of this conference.

Viewing what is happening critically in offices, organizations, and among employees nowadays, part of the diagnosis of the nation's ailments is indiscipline against which efforts should be made to wage a ferocious war. Indiscipline, which is already having a negative impact on the economy of our dear country, is the capstone of most lapses found among office workers/professionals in various organizations nowadays and secretarial profession is not an exemption. This if not nipped on the bud will definitely have an adverse effect on the economy of our dear country,

Need For Secretarial Professionals (Historical Overview)

Secretarial personnel are not just making impact on the economic development of our dear nation; they have and will always make an impact. The need for secretarial assistance is as old as the history of education in the country. The first secondary school which was established in Lagos between 1859 and 1920 had liberal arts subjects as its curricula; Fafunwa (1977). The need for clerical and secretarial assistance forced the colonial officers of that era to introduce elements of secretarial/business subjects into the curriculum. This made Bonny Government School and Hope Waddell Secondary School established almost the same period to include more business subjects like Shorthand, Typewriting, Economics, etc. into its curriculum.

In 1920, Phelps-stokes Report recommended that Trade Centres and Modern Schools be established in Nigeria as a result of the need by the British Government and the Colonies in Africa then. These schools admitted primary school leavers and gave them vocational skills which qualified them for employment in the various areas wherein they were trained. The subjects taught in these four-year training institutions were Shorthand, Typewriting, Book-keeping, Economics, Commerce and Business Arithmetic. Students were required to take Modern School Leaving Certificate (MSLC), the City & Guilds (C&G), Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and Pitman Examinations of London and others.

Between early fifties and late sixties, there arose a sharp demand for qualified secretarial and administrative staff for the expanding civil services of the Federal and the Regional Governments. This made the Federal and Regional Governments to establish Clerical Training Schools and Staff Training Centres to produce Secretaries, Typists and other middle level allied staff. According to Fafunwa (1977), the rapid economic development that took place in Nigeria during 1950's promoted the establishment of Secondary Commercial Schools. Some called it Commercial Institutes, Schools for Secretary-ship and Accountancy-offering courses varying from two to five years duration. Private entrepreneurs were also allowed to establish commercial secondary schools to augment government efforts in the production of manpower for the business activities of the country. Most commercial schools then were privately owned and offered business courses already mentioned. Students' enrollments into these Commercial Schools were categorized into six groups according to their interest.

1. Those without ability to compete with secondary level students;
2. Those who are physically handicapped;
3. Those who only wanted vocational training without having to go through a five-year grammar school course;
4. Those who wanted to complete their training in shortest possible time;
5. Those previously/currently and wanted a brief refresher course to upgrade their skills; and
6. Those who could not afford the cost of public grammar schools.

Looking at the historical overview of Secretarial programme; you will observe that it was established to serve a purpose and to meet some needs which as at that time were adequately met. With this, one can say that commercial schools provided a service to individuals who wanted some sort of secretarial/business education by equipping them with needed secretarial/typing skills with which they were gainfully employed in the civil service as typists, stenographers etc. to contribute their quota. This also is in line with the NPE (1981) revised which states that youths should be equipped with skills to enable them be useful not only to themselves but to their community thereby preventing them from constituting a nuisance in the community. The schools then

also helped indeed to supply the business community with needed workers. They provided training through courses and curricula that could be adapted quickly to apparent needs in the employment picture. Thus making them to make a positive impact on their community as at then; though not on a highly professional grade or level. If such a noticeable impact could be made then; one should expect more impact from professional secretaries of today.

According to Fafunwa (1977), the Ashby Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria emphasized and acclaimed the existence of business subjects in secondary schools and advocated for specialization at higher levels of education for professionalism. This led to the establishment of business courses with specialization in Accounting, Marketing, Banking, Business Administration, and Secretarial/Office Management options. Secretarial/Office Management programme was mounted in various higher institutions like Staff Development Centres, the Polytechnics; Colleges of Education and the Universities; to give room for professionalism.

The curriculum at these level was always subject to review in line with the needs of the environment since it is a continuous and not a once for all exercise. This happens because any professional programme should be relevant in functional terms to the economic need of a nation. This signifies that the content should be designed to embody the needs of the community and manpower should also be trained with most modern equipment for effective economic development.

The question to ask now is, are our schools and institutions of higher learning producing appropriate secretarial personnel required for the present and future development of the Nigerian Developing Economy?

Overview Of The Word Secretary

A secretary can literally be referred to as one entrusted to keep secret, in other words a confidant **OR** one who keeps records, takes notes and handles general clerical/administrative work. Since most of the records and notes he takes are confidential, he therefore becomes a secret keeper, i.e. a confidant of the boss to which he is responsible.

Chambers Universal Learners Dictionary International Students' Edition (2004) defines a secretary as a person employed to write letters, keep records and make business arrangements etc for another person.

However, Oyesode (2008) sees a secretary as one who possesses a sound general education and has undergone a prescribed programme of instruction in the areas of secretarial training with appropriate skills, attitudes and competencies required for assuming the roles/duties in an office. Not this alone; he must have also acquired both personal and business attributes; for secretarial training involves the process of guiding and initiating learners to acquire necessary skills, facts, knowledge, habits

and attitudes that will make him live and work peacefully with others as useful and productive members of the society. Secretaries occupy enviable positions in organizations due to their invaluable roles towards the achievement of the organizational objectives. From the definition, one can see that the Secretary, to a large extent, is an important figure to reckon with as no organisation can function well without them. As a result, secretarial services are very important in every organization both large and small; though people may not seem to notice their importance. The Secretary occupies an indispensable position in the diversified daily activities of the world enterprise and their impact on the development of the Nigerian economy cannot be under-estimated.

The precise nature of secretarial services and its relationship to other organizational and managerial services is difficult to discern. Consequently, it can be interpreted in various ways depending on the people concerned, the organizational circumstance and any other compelling factor. One point to bear in mind is that secretarial services are the nexus of all managerial and administrative activities because they involved largely information management, organizing, planning, coordinating, control, retrieval, dispersal, preservation and feedback. Secretarial services encompass all the manager does which cannot be efficiently and effectively done without the services of a secretary. As a result of this, the usefulness of a Secretary in any modern or ancient office for economic development makes the relevance of the Secretary an ageless constant factor in any area of human endeavour. Secretarial profession is a specialized area of business/office administration that cannot be wished away no matter the stage of scientific and technological advancement of any nation.

Oyesode (2008) added that Secretarial services involve operating at the managerial sphere of influence where the Secretary is hand in glove with the executive in making managerial works successful through the provision of vital support services. **An “able” Secretary is an “Office Manager”**. The managerial function of getting things done through people, to achieve a pre-determined goals forms the core of secretarial profession. In a nutshell, this confirms the assertion that no Manager can effectively function well without the services of a qualified and experienced Secretary.

How Secretarial Profession Promotes Economic Development

Economy according to Senn (1998) signifies effective management of the resources of a country, system or system of production, distribution and consumption. Economic Development therefore may be defined in two ways. It refers to economic growth plus improvement in the distribution of material welfare within the low income groups. This implies improvement in the nutrition, health and education of the low income families', reduction in infant mortality among families, and increase in the dignity of their lives.

For the economy of a country to grow and equally for an improvement to be noticed in the distribution of goods and services among the citizenry in a particular country, Secretaries have significant roles to play in both private and public sectors of the economy of such country. No organization can exist in isolation to achieve its set objectives. As a result, organizations are involved in communication processes and procedures. Secretaries are the agents through which organizational communication processes are accomplished. From the day a decision is taken to set up an organization, Secretaries are involved. Secretaries type Articles and or Memorandum of Association which give legal backing for organizations to operate. Secretaries type letters of appointment and promotion of workers in any organization. In situations when workers are to be disciplined, documents to this effect are also produced by Secretaries.

Apart from the traditional secretarial services performed by the Secretaries, they also perform managerial and administrative functions. Just like the Manager, Secretaries are equally involved in decision making and execution processes. They are involved in planning, administration, controlling, reporting, communicating and other administrative processes of the organization. Secretarial roles are not restricted to secretarial and supportive activities alone, but transcend to real administrative duties. Thus, Secretaries are regarded as neo versatile administrations (Austin 1978).

The extent of performing these secretarial services depends on two factors. The first is the nature of the organization while the second is the degree of confidence and hierarchical level of the Secretary. In most cases, these functions are performed without direct supervision by the executive. The definitions and functions of the Secretary as given by divers authors depicts her as an indispensable, versatile and central figure in the working team of an organization. Her services cannot be dispensed with even when economic downturn occurs. In his opinion, Akubo (2001) expresses that a Secretary is a warm, endlessly helpful and understanding individual whose sole aim is to alleviate, solve or prevent problems, workload and upsets for her executive.

This shows that if Secretaries carefully and professionally carry out their duties, the organization will achieve its goals and objectives set and by so doing improves the economy of the country. Her non performance of her functions accordingly will also have a negative impact on the organization which will in turn affects the economy of the country.

The New Webster's Dictionary of English Language (1992) sees the Secretary as one in charge of the records and correspondence of the organization or individual employers. This shows that it is the Secretary that provides the necessary information for the smooth running of the office. This also was confirmed by the World Book Encyclopedia (1991), gave the services of the Secretary among others as:

- Maintenance of office files and records;

- Taking dictation and translating them into mail-able form;
- Typing reports and handling correspondences;
- Sorting incoming and outgoing mails;
- Coordinating office activities;
- Keeping the secrets of the organization;
- Supervision of junior colleagues; and
- Performs delegated managerial functions like replying to letters engagements and applications; etc.

This shows that there is initially no aspect of the office activities that does not involve the Secretary (Denyer 1996). This also goes a long way to say that when the organization is doing well, there will be an improvement in the economic activity of the citizenry and the contribution of Secretaries in this situation is paramount.

Professionalism In The Secretarial Practice

Looking at the origin or history of the secretarial profession to-date, you will agree with me that it is a profession on its own.

Profession

Oyesode (2008) defines a profession as a calling or an occupation in which special education or training is required. Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines a profession as occupation or vocation that involves learning skills for which recognition is accorded. Few examples of professions we have today are: Secretaryship, Surveying, Architecture, Medicine, Accounting, Marketing and Banking to mention just a few. Amongst all professions practicable in the world today, Secretarial profession is the least recognized. You will bear me witness that even farming is far more recognized today than Secretaryship for people know without them; all will die of hunger. However, the notion that people have, those of us in the profession inclusive, about Secretarial profession should not blind fold us to see the importance of the profession. This makes most secretarial trainees mostly the male ones to feel shy of professing their profession in the public. Many hold the view that Secretaryship is not dignifying enough a profession; most importantly when one gets older because of the attachment to a boss. As a result, they conclude that a Secretary is a glorified Office Messenger, Cleaner and Errand worker. This makes many who willingly or by accident find themselves on the job not to have the mind practice it for long. Some, after working for few years as Secretaries in the office will either cross over to the classroom as a teacher if they have the teaching qualification or establish their own private schools where they bring up youths in computer training and allied secretarial skills. This happens for fear of working under a boss that is junior to them, coupled with lack of freedom and working late hours on daily basis.

Is Secretaryship a Profession?

Secretarial profession for years back had been known to be a field that is very useful in

the day-to-day running of an organization. It must be admitted that just like others, Secretaryship is a profession. To further confirm this, a question to ask may be what are the yardstick or distinguishing marks of a profession and how far does Secretaryship in Nigerian context fits in.

Many years back, Secretaryship was not rated highly by some members of the public as a profession. The argument was that there were certain characteristics found in other professions (Law, Architecture, Accounting) which were lacking in Secretaryship. However, in the recent past, lots of changes have taken place in terms of training and development that may not make it easy to write off Secretaryship as a profession.

Acceptable Criteria for a Profession

Let us now examine Secretaryship in the context of some conditions which a profession is supposed to meet up with have as listed by Oyesode (2008).

1. A common body of knowledge through a long and sequential process of training and learning continuously throughout the career period i.e. it is systematic and a specialized academic and practical training attainable within a particular period either long or short.
2. A profession must be seen as contributing to the economic development of the society. This is noticed with secretarial profession judging from the contributions which the members make towards making an organization to achieve its objectives. It equally makes youth to be gainfully employed fast thus preventing them constituting nuisance in the society.
3. A profession must have a strong organization, i.e. a regulatory body to oversee the welfare and regulate the affairs of its members. Such also include discipline when members engage or exhibit behaviours that could tarnish the image of the profession. Members come together regularly to discuss issues affecting their profession e.g. NAPSSON (National Association of Professional Secretarial Staff of Nigeria); NMA (Nigeria Medical Association); ABEN (Association of Business Educators of Nigeria); NUT (Nigeria Union of Teachers to mention just a few.
4. Admission into every profession is controlled and restricted on the basis of the qualification and training acquired. This may also involve taking examination to ensure that only the qualified ones are admitted into the profession.
5. There should be a high degree of autonomy whereby the profession controls the affairs of members. This includes provisions of welfare services, close monitoring of members to ensure compliance with rules and regulations at all times.
6. Working condition: A profession must have a working condition which spells out the employment procedure and entitlements, training needs, promotion, demotion and discipline to mention just a few.

7. A profession must have a code of ethics or standards of conducts or dos and don'ts. It is a set of rules that guides the conduct of individuals. It also harmonizes the conducts of workers.

A close observation of the above attributes show that Secretaryship is a profession.

A Professional Secretary

A professional secretary is one who has been trained in the art of secretarial practice to carry out assigned duties from time to time in the office. We often hear how important it is to behave “professionally” in the workplace. If you want to forge ahead in your chosen career and be taken seriously and have your boss think of you as an asset to the team who in turn will contribute her quota to the nations economic development; doing things in a professional way is very important. Your employer may not tell you exactly what being professional means, but we should all know from experience how to get labeled as “unprofessional”. This happens when one finishes tasks late, being unprepared for the day's work, spending time to gossip at work, treat people with disrespect, keep them waiting unnecessarily, say one thing and do the opposite, break promises regularly etc.

How To Be Professional At Work

Being professional is one of the most important thing about work life. It helps you to gain popularity, get your office work organized and also gain more customers or make callers to your office have good impression about you and your organization. Acting like a professional person means do what it takes to make others think of you as reliable, respectful and competent. Though, to an extent being professional may be a gifted thing, but a bit of hard work and the following tips can make you a professional secretary.

- (i) **Competence:** When you do something repeatedly, you will gradually build up confidence in yourself at doing it well and your skills will keep on improving till you achieve expertise. You can only be good at what you keep doing regularly.
- (ii) **Reliability:** Always ensure you do your best at all times to satisfy your employers, or callers in your office and co-workers as well. Let people know and trust you for your characters. Do what you feel is right and to the best of your ability and you will not walk about with guilt and sense of condemnation. When you are assigned a job, do it well irrespective of whether or not your boss is around to supervise you.
- (iii) **Integrity:** Let people know you for your consistent principles. Integrity is the quality mostly needed for success in your career as a Secretary. Integrity means what you are in private is what you are in public. You need to be perfectly honest in your dealings with your employers and other colleagues in the office.
- (iv) **Self-Upgrading:** Do not allow your skills to be obsolete. Endeavour to seek for ways to be current professionally. Life and everything therein is

dynamic and so as professionals you must add to your qualifications and skill if you want to remain marketable and contribute effectively to national economy. This could be done through short and long term courses like work and study leave and part-time programmes to upgrade your skills.

- (v) **Jot Down Everything You Need To Do:** A good professional knows the difference between things he needs to get done urgently and those things on which actions should be delayed. She sets priority and work accordingly. A good way of doing this is to have a to-do-list which spells out or state the task to be done as at a particular time.
- (vi) **Don't Wait for Tomorrow:** Do not postpone what you feel you can do today. Always remember that time waits for no man. A good professional should make good use of the time available at his disposal. Start on the task assigned to you in good time so that you do not need to stay late to finish.
- (vii) **Be Systematic:** People often say that slow and steady wins the race. This is born out of usage of time. Get yourself a time table so that you can work without stressing yourself. A professional is the one who follows time and keep her customers/employers happy. Work out the number of hours per day.
- (viii) **Your customers Needs attention:** As a professional, you must always be at your seat all the times. A professional who is not always around stands the danger of losing his customers or create a bad impression in the mind of his customers and callers who could have come to give a genuine advice on how to improve on his services.
- (ix) **Have Joy in Your Work:** As a professional, you must be happy on the job you are doing. Try to be comfortable with your work, position and workplace as this is the only way through which progress and improvement could be experienced. A professional who is not happy at her workstation will always make mistake and will eventually end up not being able to reach the peak of his/her profession.
- (x) **Keep Good Relations:** A professional secretary should always be in good term with her employer, employees, co-workers or customers. Your ultimate aim as a professional secretary is to keep them happy, by having good but not-so-close relations with them for human being will always behave like human being.

Professionalism

Oyesode (2005) defined professionalism as the behaviour, attitudes, aims or qualities that characterize a profession or professional person. It is an attitude of willingness to work, share, or to disagree when disagreement leads to progress. It is the commitment to self, employers, members of the public and to the profession. It could be said to be a skill, competence or character which a professional person should display. It could

also be looked at as adherence to the standard set for an occupation. Professionalism can be looked at from the angle of demonstrating love, devotion, self-sacrifice to the society and those that come in contact with you like colleagues and customers. James Sternson describes professionalism as “a set of internalized character strengths and value directed towards high-quality service to others through one's work”.

All organizations need willing people to serve. Students in schools can develop leadership abilities through serving as committee members, committed chairperson or officer. In addition to conforming to the obligation of the profession, full professionalism requires that:

- Professional secretaries should be liberally educated; this means they must be exposed to a wider range of knowledge;
- Must possess a body of operational skills and knowledge related to and essentials for the performance of the professional secretaries;
- Must be able to make rational judgments and take appropriate actions within the scope of their activities and be responsible for the consequences of their judgments and actions;
- Should place emphasis on service to society than on personal gains;
- Members of the profession should pay full time attention to their calling and engage in searching for new knowledge and skills;
- All members of the profession should participate fully to develop and enforce necessary standards to continually improve the profession and abide by the standards in their profession.

Characteristics that Undermine Professionalism

- **Gossiping:** This attitude is very common among office workers nowadays, Secretaries inclusive. This idea is not good if actually we are working for the betterment of our organizations and the nation at large. Do not gossip, do the work for which you are being paid. It is not only detrimental to the work ethic between employees; it can endanger your job. One can easily lose his/her aura of professionalism by being a target of or a participant in office gossip.
- **Negative Attitude:** Your attitude colors everything you do. Ensure you display good attitude to all around you always and callers to your office as first impression counts a lot.
- **Poor Attendance and Frequent Tardiness:** Act promptly on the assignment given to you as postponement causes delay and hinders achievement of goals. Cultivate the habit of regularity at your work stations.
- **Unprofessional Body Language:** It is unethical for Secretaries not to cover their mouth when yawning. Some cultivate the habit of chewing gum in the office which is highly embarrassing. Those fond of these acts should desist from doing so.
- **Excessive Fragrance or Unpleasant Body Odour:** Odours coming out from

some office workers are not good enough. As Secretaries we must look neat, fresh and keep fragrance to a minimum.

- **Unkempt Fingernails:** Avoid keeping inch-long nails or unusual polish colors. Note that ragged or unclean nails make a poor impression. As Secretaries, long nails will not allow you to work well, most importantly on the computer.

Professionalism is a concerted effort by all within the workplace to provide the utmost of their ability on daily basis and a concentration on quality of service and work. Incorporating professionalism in the workplace is a critical element for any organization desiring to achieve success. It is necessary for management to set certain criteria that all in the organization can easily understand and should be followed.

How Secretaries Could Promote Professionalism

Display of professionalism in the workplace is based on many factors which include how you dress, comport or carry yourself, your attitude and how you interact with others. Professionalism indicates that each person performs his or her task with genuine earnest and honesty. It refers to one doing his/her job with sincerity and maintaining professional etiquette and ethics in the workplace. As a professional secretary, you can promote professionalism by strict adherence to the following:

Set Goals for Yourself

As an office worker, you must note that there are no vehicles going to nowhere. Life has no space or room for the person going to nowhere. As secretaries, have specific goals without which you cannot succeed. Nobody travels without a destination in mind. Set goals not only for your profession but your health, family and finances as well. Be focused in your vision, dream and goal without which your impact will not be felt. To affect your society and nation at large, ignore the “**pessimists**” who might have given up at one time or the other whose song is “impossibility”. You may have occasion to amend your goals as need arises for life itself is dynamic. Live up to your commitments every time.

Maintain Ethical Conduct Always

Keep in mind the rules and regulations that are set to guide you in your day-to-day discharge of your duties. Always be honest and refrain from deceitful practices. You need to be perfectly honest to all around you. Remember that you can only manipulate and deceive people for a while; you cannot do it for ever. Give your boss or employer the impression that you are honest. To have integrity, your conscience should not be dead. Do what you feel is right and to the best of your ability.

Acceptance of Leadership Role

Workers that usually get to the top are those that always act as if they own the organization. They take responsibility for the success or failure of the organization. Responsibility is a combination of two words i.e. response-ability. The ability to respond to situation and circumstances; meaning you do not wait for things to happen but you make them happen. You do all you can about the situation to ensure the

outcome is positive. This is responsibility. In the discharge of your assignment, use the word “we”, our organization, our office and not “their”, “they”, ‘one’ does not know what they are doing; they refer to management as ‘they’. Do not distant yourself from the organization. People who usually accept responsibility work longer hours for the success of the organization. They do not pass blame or excuses on anyone. Do the job which no one-else wishes to do. Go to your boss and request for more assignments beyond normal. Find out what other things you can do to help the organization succeed. This is asking for and accepting responsibility. Ask yourself what if I am the Chief Executive Officer of this Organization, what will I do to make it achieve its goals, any idea you conceive within you, pass it on to your boss. While doing this, you are also paving ways for your promotion and advancement in that organization.

Continuous self-Upgrading

To promote professionalism in your workplace, you must seek for new knowledge on daily basis as learning is a continuous process. You must not allow your skills or knowledge to become outdated, so look-out for ways of staying current. Professionals are known for their specialized knowledge by enhancing their abilities and improvement on personal and professional knowledge which reflects in the course of their professional assignments. As much as possible, make a deep personal commitment to develop and improve your skills, and where appropriate, acquire relevant degrees and certifications that serve as the foundation of this knowledge.

Demonstrate the Core Values of Professionalism

It has been observed that those who dress professionally will behave in the same way. Ensure you put on appropriate attire and etiquette. For many jobs, workplace attire does not include wearing a suit and tie, what is important is a neat and clean appearance. Wear the clothes your employer requires or one that is the norm for your place of employment. Punctuality, organization and dedication to your job is very important. Be polite in speech and body language. Words like “*please*” and “*thank you*” will go a long way in establishing a good working relationship. Ask yourself if you can say “YES” to these statements:

I do the job to the best of my ability

I take pride in the job I do

People are better off because of the way I do my job; I make a difference

I start my work-day neat and clean

I report for work on time and stay for my entire shift or work-day

I honestly earn my pay for I work for it

I treat my customers, clients and co-workers with respect and dignity

I employ good manners in my interactions with others

I keep my mind on the job at hand

I respect my work and myself; and

I take care of my tools and supplies, whatever their cost.

Supporting Others

One is not an island on his own. No one knows all. While you depend on others for

what you do not know, always be prepared to be open-minded to others in your working environment. Ensure you share the spot light with colleagues by taking time to show others how to do properly and lend an ear when necessary. You should not take delight in colleagues not knowing what you know. Take time to teach others and have impact on their lives. This will in turn have a great impact on the society. Remember that if you were not taught, you cannot know, so teach others.

Listening Carefully to Others

Just like you want people to listen to you when you communicate with them, always try to also listen carefully to others because others also want to be heard, as a result, give people the chance to explain their ideas well.

You promote professionalism by doing what it takes to make others think of you as reliable, respectful and competent for by so doing; you will have an impact on the society.

Good Relationship in the Work Place

Having had a clear view of what constitutes professionalism, you can ask yourself whether or not you demonstrate these characteristics to people around you in your places of work. The way and manner you relate with people will not only show to what extent you display professionalism but goes a long way to determine the impact your organization can make on the nation's economy. No organization can make any meaningful impact without good understanding among the co-workers in the office.

Existence of good relationship in an organization denotes establishment and improvement of mutual understanding between workers with a motive to assist them serve better, acquire and retain a good reputation to enable them work together in a cooperative manner to achieve results. As secretaries, we need to maintain good working relationship with people at all levels. Be it your employer, employees, co-workers or customers as your ultimate aim is to keep them happy.

Knowing how to do a job is no longer enough to achieve results at work, but how well one relates with people. Few years back, people felt the product spoke for itself but this is no longer enough. The public today are more demanding and unless employees communicate more positively, the understanding and support may not likely be received.

What Relationship is all about

- Understand the point of view of others
- Make sure you are a friend to everybody
- Admit your mistakes whenever you are wrong
- Never would you make any unfulfilled promise
- Respect the viewpoints of others and be courteous
- Explain situations well to all
- Look, listen and learn
- Avoid argument as this may cause problem
- Try to be approachable
- Insist on selfless service to the organization and the society at large

- Others first and consider yourself last
- Never criticize in the public
- Stress the positive aspect at all times

Need for Good relationship in the Work Place

1. For ease of accomplishment of the organizational objectives;
2. For operating in an environment devoid of rancour;
3. For effective use of the organization's resources;
4. To promote the good image of the organization;
5. For progress on the part of both the employees and the organization;
6. Wastage would be avoided because everybody will be conscious of doing the right thing.

Skills Needed for Good Relationship in the Work Place

1. Deal with people in an honest, ethical and moral way;
2. Be positive and calm even when working with others who may be negative;
3. Send out positive spoken and non-verbal signals in dealings involving others even when on telephone;
4. Refusal to be involved in any activity that might lead to victimization of another person;
5. Maintain open and healthy working relationship with everyone at work;
6. Treat everyone, regardless of ethnic, religious, socio-economic differences and gender with respect;
7. Keep a strong relationship with one's immediate superior without alienating fellow workers;
8. Contribute to the overall productivity of fellow workers;
9. Acknowledge mistakes, or misjudgments rather than hiding them;
10. Do not allow little misunderstanding to grow into major upsets;
11. Be a good listener
12. Appreciate others' good points
13. Keep official and personal relationship well apart from each other-keep official secrets; and
14. Make only positive comments about those not present.

As secretaries who want to make a positive impact on the economic activities of the nation; you must possess the above listed qualities for effective performance.

Era of Automation

With the changing world of technology today, it is important to say that modern technology has come to stay. Technology plays significant roles in the improvement of the secretary's job and this, in turn enhances productivity in all aspects. The word technology came from *Greek*; the term can either be applied to a general or specific areas e.g. construction and information technologies. Technology has affected societies and its surroundings in a number of ways. It has helped to develop more advanced economies and also influences the value of society via a rise in efficiency in

terms of human productivity with a goal to improving human life and condition thereby leading to a rise in living standard of the citizenry.

Office Automation

The emergence of modern offices is brought about by technological development which has resulted in the improvement of performance of office functions.

Office automation refers to the adaptation of technology to office activities and functions. The innovations in technological development are seriously affecting the traditional office and secretaries should rise up to the challenge by adequately preparing themselves to meet up with this challenge through training and re-training.

Area where automation is experienced in office activities for example are mail handling, filing, etc. Automation aims at saving man from the energy sapping activities that can deface the physical structure of man and obtain effective and efficiency output.

Roles of Secretaries in an Automated Office

The purpose of information technology in a contemporary office is wide and challenging. Amongst reasons why firms automate are for high productivity and efficiency. Justification for office automation has appeared in three distinct areas of office operations. These are mail handling and filing, data and word processing.

The duties of an office worker include: locating, collecting, analyzing, recording and transmitting all necessary information to every part of the organization on time and in the most suitable form to satisfy the needs of everyone.

Specifically, technology aids secretaries to work better in the following ways:

- (i) Tedious work is carried out speedily and accurately;
- (ii) More information are stored in small space electronically and can be assessed as required instead of paper files which occupy large space;
- (iii) Data stored on electronic devices can be easily assessed;
- (iv) Datas are processed impartially during result processing, for computers obey instruction;
- (v) Documents are kept secret with special login name and password protection.

It is obvious that computer is also revolutionizing our daily for life without computer is like a desert without life.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Secretarial profession had been an age-long one as could be seen from the historical background in this paper. The profession has been contributing to national development and will still continue to contribute to nation's economic development. Despite the emergence of automation which people feel will displace the secretary; it has even come to aid the job performance of secretaries which made the impact to be felt in economic development much more greatly. As a result, the indispensability of the secretaries will continue and will even be stronger in the years to come. For this reason, efforts should be made by various organizations to provide all necessary

materials and facilities to make them function better at their duty posts. Modern technologies, coupled with conducive environment should be provided to enable them provide the needed necessary back up support for their bosses because the bosses depend on them for the office to function properly.

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