

INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS FOR SECRETARIAL PRACTITIONERS

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Abstract

Innovation in management and administration is what is shaping business today. With every new idea in running a business, there have been a creative individuals or team of innovators with a Secretarial professional among them. Secretarial Professionals as Office managers and administrators have to take care of the people around them regardless of how the team, client, or executive is showing up. They have to be constantly innovative in their duties in order to make the world a better place for their subordinates, colleagues and superiors. This paper explores how Secretarial Professionals can engage in innovation and raises awareness of how they can define a role in innovation in partnership with the executives and teams they support. It provides a way for Secretarial professionals to be able to see themselves engaging in innovation – by building foundations for innovation through creativity and problem-solving skills.

Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, innovation in Administration and Management is a key for businesses to increase productivity and profitability. As a result of the importance of innovation, it is not enough for only senior management to be innovative. (Andy, Goran & Min 2022). According to Janse (2019), organisations are increasingly expecting employees at all levels to come up with innovative ideas at work.

Innovative employees are able to make a larger impact in their roles, thus showing that they are valuable, competent and motivated employees. Through creative problem solving, these employees find ways to work more efficiently and effectively, which can cut costs for their employer. (Keith 2016).

This is not an exception with the Secretarial Profession. If you observe the top Secretarial Practitioners in any organization, you'll notice they all have one thing in common: innovation. You won't get anywhere by using the same ideas and methods you've used in the past, and successful Secretarial Professionals know that. In order to grow, you'll need to get creative and experimental with your duties and responsibilities.

The term management and administration in Secretarial Practice represents the controlling of tasks and process, and the coordination of activities to achieve work

and organizational objectives. A successful innovation, in the perspective of Secretarial Profession, is often thought of as ‘something new’ that just appears and offers advantages or value for an organisation, or for the profession.

In practice this can be the development of new ideas and new way of doing things to ease the job. Drastically updating existing ideas or ways of doing things in order to distinguish these from what was done earlier is also innovation.

Because innovation takes place in varying fields, innovative management and administration in Secretarial Practice often looks different. This paper explore secondary data to explain how Secretarial Professional can be innovative in the management and administration of their offices.

Administration and Management

John (2021) sees administration & management as an act of juggling a variety of interests and approaches. He believes that true Administration and Management is about guiding others to common goals through respect, passion, and persuasion, regardless of whether you’re in charge or not.

Administration and management doesn’t come from titles, power, or rank, it comes from within... and it comes from the heart. Otherwise, it’s just plain bullying. True administration and management isn’t about intimidating people with a title or bullying them into doing what we want them to, despite what too many titled leaders seem to believe. (Hannah 2017)

Laurie (2016) states that Administration and Management is an amalgamation of confidence, poise, clear and concise communication, reliability, vulnerability and strength. As he noted, administration and management, in short, is your ability to inspire confidence in your leader, your colleagues, and your direct reports.

Secretarial Professionals as Administrators and Managers

According to Jeremy (2020) Leadership comes with the job of a Secretarial Professional. Though, as he remarked, it may be untitled, hence may not always have the rank to assist with the responsibilities which is actually not a problem.

Secretarial Professionals, as the Office Managers, are often asked to lead without a traditional title of authority and the people they work with must rely on their influential leadership skills to make things happen. The professionals are leading up to their executives and down and out to others throughout the organization. (Wanner 2020).

A Secretarial Professional, according to Julia (2016) may sometimes not manage a team, but is working in a management role. As she observed, the Secretarial Professionals manage the Executive, work with and support the leadership team, and is a role model for other staff members within the organization. She further

observed that, regardless of the office they work, Secretarial Professionals still need to deal with everything that comes with the responsibilities of leadership in the workplace

Secretarial Professionals as leaders are accountable for the strategic direction and the performance of their organization through effective management practice. The Professionals must manage flexibly, effectively and appropriately, particularly when it comes to decision making. Jeremy (2020)

Here is where a new expanded role and responsibility for top tier Secretarial Professionals to create awareness using evidence-based management practices. Hence as Office Professionals, we must always focus on enhancing our innovative administration and management skills for us to survive. (Hannah 2017).

What is Innovation?

Innovation according to Janse (2019), can be defined as a process that involves multiple activities to uncover new ways to do things. Innovation, to him, is not just represented by introducing or implementing new ideas or methods but means of discarding old procedures that are no longer needed.

Innovation is seeing beyond existing work practices and developing new ways of doing own job. It is also preparing to challenge existing positions and putting forward own ideas. (Steven 2011).

The concept of innovation should not be confused with creation, since creating can be defined as the act of making, inventing, or producing something. However, new innovations can be realized with creativity. To him, people need to think outside the box in order to create incremental enhancements. (Keith 2016).

What does being innovative at work mean?

Being innovative at work, according to Matt (2020), means the contribution of ideas and solutions to workplace challenges or problems. Innovators, according to him, recognize when there's a need for improvement, and they use logic, reason and creativity to come up with ways to meet those needs.

Innovators at work often structure systems, collaborate and build tools or products that add value to their environment or culture. Innovators work to improve productivity, increase revenue or develop collaboration—and the effects are often memorable and impact change. (Tushman 2019).

Secretarial Professionals are ideally placed to lead in this area as administrators and managers of the office. The Professionals are required to be middle management and have been taking on this role since the late 1980s, when mid grade management roles were absorbed by them in each team. Dinah (2022).

Types of Innovators

A latest study by Andy, Goran & Min (2022) across as many people in as many organizations as possible revealed that there are four types of innovators among employees, each of which maps on to a distinct phase of a four-stage innovation process. Each style has a role to play in an organization:

1. Generators

According to the survey by Andy Et-el (2022), innovators in this category find new problems and ideate based on their own direct experience. For the Generators, physical contact with, and involvement in, the real-world alerts them to unresolved gaps and inconsistencies — problems that might be worth addressing as opportunities and possibilities. However, the result of the survey further found out that, generators only find these problems at a high level; they do not necessarily gravitate towards articulating a clear understanding of a problem's specifics or its potential solutions.

Across all organizational levels according to the survey, generators are rare. Overall, the survey revealed that, just 17% of the sample were generators: 19% of executive managers, 18% of middle managers, 15% of supervisors, and 16% of non-managers. This means that, unless leaders are deliberate about including generators on teams, they may not be represented at all. Generators are perceptive of the world around them, and initiate and proliferate opportunities.

According to the survey, there are some occupations where generators are more common than others. School teachers (56%), academics (38%), and artists (34%) are the occupations with the greatest proportion of generators; engineering (8%), strategic planning (9%), and manufacturing (9%) have the lowest proportion. This means a lack of generators may be acutely felt on certain teams in certain fields. For instance, there is a 71% chance a four-person team from a strategic planning department has no generators at all.

Secretarial Profession could fall among the occupations that have more generators. This is because, Secretarial professionals have to always generate ideas, employ the right tactics and walk through the tactics to help them execute their duties better for the achievement of the organizational goal.

2. Conceptualizers

Conceptualizers, according to the Andy Et-el (2022), define the problem and prefer to understand it through abstract analysis rather than through direct experience. Like generators, as the report indicated, they like to ideate; but in contrast they prefer to model the problem clearly — integrating the various parts, relationships, and insights together — which can then be used as the basis for one or more solutions.

As the result of the survey revealed, Conceptualizers are the second rarest innovation style, making up only 19% of the sample. They are relatively evenly represented across most occupational levels, with 17%, 18%, and 17% of non-managers, supervisors, and middle managers as conceptualizers, respectively. But more executives — 25% percent — are conceptualizers. This likely reflects the specific cognitive demands for that role: executive managers must strategically plan for more distant goals, rather than execute more tactical tasks.

Conceptualizers are most common in jobs where understanding the definition of the problem is vital, such as organization development (61%), strategic planning (57%), and market research (52%). Conversely, conceptualizers are rarest in operations (7%), technical support (11%), and project management (13%). Secretarial Professionals are majority in the group of conceptualizers as understanding and defining problem is vital in discharging their duties in addition to the fact that they are the managers of their executives.

3. Optimizers

Optimizers evaluate ideas and suggest solutions according to Andy Et-el (2022) survey. As the report revealed, they prefer to systematically examine all possible alternatives in order to implement the best solution among the known options.

The report further revealed that optimizers are most common among lower occupational levels (27% of non-managers) and decrease with a rise in occupational levels (23% of supervisors, 22% of middle managers, and 20% of executives). Because most solutions are implemented at lower levels of hierarchy, it makes sense that occupations at these levels are more likely to engage in optimization.

The report also indicated that, Optimizers are also most common in positions where practical, precise, and detailed plans, processes, and solutions are sought. Engineering (43%), manufacturing (38%), and finance (36%) had the highest proportion of optimizers. Product developer (9%), academic (10%), and school teacher (11%) had the lowest proportion. Secretarial Professional are optimizers as their duties required practical, precise and detailed plans, processes and solutions to day to day activities of the office.

4. Implementers

The last categories are the Implementers. Implementers, according to the Andy et-el (2022), put solutions to work. They enthusiastically (and sometimes impatiently) take action, experimenting with new solutions before mentally testing them and then make adjustments based on the outcome of these experiments.

Implementers, it was further revealed, are the most common innovation style, representing 41% of the survey respondents. The result showed that thirty six percent of executive managers are implementers, but are about as common among non-managers (41%), supervisors (44%), and middle managers (43%).

It was further indicated that, individuals working in positions that require achievement of short-term results, such as IT operations (64%), customer relations (51%), and administration (50%) favor the implementer style. Artists (6%), strategic planners (7%), and designers (10%) are least likely to be implementers.

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Why Innovative Management and Administrative Skills for Secretarial Professionals

Dinah (2022) quotes the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report which indicated that, the number one skill that will make employees stand out in an over-crowded, ever AI-developing marketplace is a combination of analytical thinking and innovation. However, Dinah (2022) observes that, whilst this might, initially, sound like great news for most Secretarial Professionals, clearly being core skills in their role; it is also a challenge to fully embrace this way of being and working. The role of the Secretarial Professional is changing drastically. Secretarial Professionals are now being asked to do more than before. Businesses want to get more for less. Organisations are looking for high performing Secretarial Professional. Executives want to have a Secretarial Professional Leader at their side. They are looking for strategic thinkers and people who have a voice. They are looking for People who can stand for the business, Someone the Executives can partner with and someone with the ability to ask high-quality questions. (Julia 2019), (Arini 2019).

Sandy (2016) posits that, in this age of advancing technology and evolving business environments, having the right skills and a lot of experience isn't enough. As she has stated, today, Secretarial Professionals need to embrace new ideas, technology, best practices, and industry trends in order to excel. Dickerson (2018) also states that Executives want Secretarial Professionals who can collaborate, lead, manage, and provide solutions to the problems that arise daily. So, innovation isn't optional a Secretarial Professional – it's a required skill for success.

It is therefore not enough for Secretarial professionals to realizing the powerful impact innovative thinking can have on their career, but they need to take action and cultivate the habits that will make them the Innovative Secretarial Professional. (Dinah 2022).

Who is an Innovative Secretarial Professional Innovative?

Secretarial professional, according to Jeremy (2020), is a professional who introduces, creates, or applies new or renewed ideas or methods of doing things to the office environment. This is someone, as he said, who is actively doing, seeking, and implementing, not someone who is simply coming up with ideas or maintaining the status quo. (Jeremy 2020).

The Innovative Secretarial Professional is uniquely prepared for changing workplace trends, and the evolution of the Secretarial role in the 21st-century office. The Professional is always learning how to become a connected collaborator as essential to his/her continued success. (Perrine 2022)

Innovative Secretarial Professionals, according Perrine (2022) surround themselves with people who help them see things differently and consistently stretch their thinking. She said, they understand the skills, expertise, and value they offer, recognize what their executive and colleagues bring to the group, and how their collective skills sets work together.

The ability to implement your ideas – both big and small – is a key part of being the Innovative Secretarial Professional. Yet many Secretarial professionals struggle with this skill because they feel overwhelmed, overbook, or underprepared. (Joan 2022).

Benefits of Innovation to a secretarial professional

Innovation is one of the most valuable skills a Secretarial Professional can demonstrate in the workplace. Knowing how to innovate not only improves his/her productivity but can also demonstrate to his/her employer, willingness to work hard and think creatively. As further proved, innovation at work is rewarding and can help us set an example for new people. (Perrin 2022).

Some of the few ways that innovative thinking benefits Secretarial Professionals and improves the workplace are:

1. Improves motivation

According to Janes (2019), being an innovative thinker requires Secretarial Professionals to be proactive in their careers. Secretarial Professionals with this quality are excited by challenges, and they seek solutions instead of focusing on problems. Having a positive attitude and maintaining proactive habits helps Secretarial Professionals to be more engaged at work, which is likely to increase their productivity and motivation.

2. Contributes to your Personal Brand

Working to become an innovator in your job as a Secretarial Professional place adds to your professional persona and brand. Your personal brand is an expression of your overall workplace strengths and abilities in combination with your professional attitude and demeanor. Developing a memorable and consistent personal brand is a powerful tool for networking and career development. (Trott 2018).

3. Encourages Collaboration

Brainstorming ideas and having confidence in your problem-solving skills play significant roles in having success as an innovator in your career as a Secretarial Professional according to Dinah (2022). Speaking with your superiors or colleagues about your ideas often sparks incitement or creativity in other people. It's likely to lead to in-depth conversations, professional partnerships and collaborative efforts on projects or initiatives. Also, when problem-solving and innovative thinking become a part of your personal brand, people are more likely to come to you for help or advice when they are assigned creative projects or assignments. (Dinah (2022).

4. Increases Professional Recognition

According to Perrin (2022), thinking creatively at work and seeking out innovative solutions for workplace challenges—not only helps Secretarial Professionals develop their personal brand—but it also helps define their professional reputation. Resolving problems using strategy and creativity and maintaining a proactive and positive mindset according to her is likely to help the professionals gain recognition from their peers and superiors. As she said, as a skilled and inventive persons, it may even improve their professional standing or help them be considered for a promotion or leadership position. (Perrin 2022).

Skills Needed to be Innovative at Work

According to Kelly (2016), innovation isn't always easy as it often requires a unique blend of skills, attitudes and behaviors. Fortunately, as Kelly (2016) further observed, it is possible for Secretarial Professionals to develop these skills and become more innovative in discharging their responsibilities — and it pays to do so.

Taking action right away is one of the behaviours that make great innovators. When taking steps to become more innovative at work, below are some things to keep in mind:

1. Have an Open Mindset

The way to become innovative at work, said Megan (2021), is to have an open mindset. Having an open mindset allows you to think of ideas and theories beyond what your employer expects from you or what you've been taught. To him, Innovation requires looking beyond the established status quo, so it's important that you learn to think openly and creatively.

Indeed Editorial Team (2021) further added that the first step in becoming innovative in your career is to develop a mindset that is open to change. As they said, Innovation involves coming up with new ideas or new systems for completing tasks. They observed that being overly connected to the way things are done presently may limit your creativity. They therefore advised that, you can practice being open to change by participating in newly implemented processes or by attending a new work event or professional outing. As they further suggested, you can also improve your mindset by telling yourself that change is good and that you can adjust to new circumstances. (Indeed Editorial Team 2021 & 2022)

2. Consume Inspiring Content

Once you have begun to think openly, said Janse (2022), you can now create a positive mindset for yourself. Having a positive outlook on your innovation project as observed by Janse (2022), allows you to approach the project with confidence and certainty. A positive approach enables you to emulate the confidence that other innovative thinkers have, which can help your ideas become a reality.

Megan (2022) also says that, after developing an open mindset, you should work to establish a sense of positivity in your personal and professional life. Having a positive outlook, he added, allows you to maintain your openness to change, and it can help you be more confident about your ideas or decisions.

This outlook can also help you be more receptive to budding ideas that your colleagues or co-workers may have, and is likely to encourage collaboration and team brainstorming. You can find this positivity internally and externally by connecting with colleagues or a mentor who has a cheerful or hopeful disposition, and making positive affirmations at the start of each day. (Megan 2022)

Creativity and inspiration are necessary prerequisites for innovation. After all, innovation stems from conceptualizing ideas and coming up with new solutions to problems. So, if you're lacking in creativity and inspiration, it will most likely be difficult to generate those ideas. For this reason, engaging with inspirational content is key to innovation. (Janse 2022),

When looking for content to get inspired, try engaging with materials outside your field or usual interests. Oftentimes creative ideas aren't always completely new and original, but actually stem from divergent disciplines and concepts. (Megan 2022).

1. Question Assumptions

If you've been working in a role or organization for a while, it can be natural to develop some blind spots. These are habits or behaviors that you may fail to see but could be considered weaknesses or hindrances to performance. For this reason, blind spots provide great opportunities to innovate.

One effective way to start uncovering blind spots is through questioning common assumptions. This works by essentially taking any long-held principles, practices or behaviors at work and taking the initiative to observe them in a new way.

For example, consider how you were trained to do a certain task when you started your job. Then ask yourself if there is a more effective or efficient way to complete this task. Assuming that something is correct because it has always been done a certain way is the quickest way to stifle innovation. (Indeed Editorial Team November, 2021 and March 2022).

2. Shift your Mindset about what 'won't' Work

Often our ideas are limited by what worked or didn't work in the past. Opening the discussion with the art of inquiry can help shift mindsets and uncover true innovation. Instead of offering that it won't work because of A, B, C or "we've tried it before," shift the line of questioning to: "What must be true for it to work". (Forbes Coaches Council 2019).

3. Be Confident in your Innovation

One of the most important skills in innovation is to develop confidence in your ideas according Megan (2022). Propose your innovation with confidence. This includes planning a presentation or speech of some sort or a formal email proposing the idea to key stakeholders. Having confidence in your innovation can help persuade your company to give your innovation a chance. Emulate the characteristics and traits of innovative thinkers that you learned during your research, and brainstorm ideas for change. If you notice room for improvement, reach out to the appropriate person and let them know how you feel. If you believe you have a good idea, express your thoughts and take action to make a positive change. (Forbes Coaches Council 2019)

4. Get others involved

They say that two heads are better than one, and when it comes to being more innovative at work, this is often true. While innovation may start with one person's idea, refining the idea is a necessary component of innovation.

Seeking input from colleagues can help you better refine your idea and become more aware of any blind spots you may have missed. Since different people have diverse experiences, perspectives and skill sets, they can also help you form connections and spot patterns — which are key for innovation. (Forbes Coaches Council 2019).

If you have an idea for an innovation at work, try asking a colleague if they'd be available for a brainstorming session. They may have ideas and input that you most likely hadn't thought of yourself. Even if you're working from home, there's nothing stopping you from reaching out to coworkers for their ideas and opinions. (Megan 2022)

5. Don't Fear Failure

A popular philosophy within tech startups is “fail fast”. This mantra may at first seem like a form of self-sabotage. However, the premise of the approach is that innovation is not possible without failure. (Forbes Coaches Council 2019).

So, through experimenting often, you're bound to have some failures but also some winners as well. Although you don't want to be completely foolhardy when attempting to innovate, it's vital to not let fear of failure stifle ideas. (Megan 2022).

Without execution, ideas aren't much use. Try to not over think all the things can go wrong and just take action. Starting out with low-risk innovations where the consequences of failing are minimal will help you build up your risk tolerance. (Forbes Coaches Council 2019).

6. Embrace Vulnerability

According to Janse (2019), “There is no creativity without vulnerability.” This is because expressing the creative ideas that are required for innovation involves opening yourself up to potential criticism, failure or judgment. However, having the courage to be vulnerable and put yourself out there is a necessary prerequisite for innovation.

It isn't always easy, but there are steps you can take to be more vulnerable at work. Try sharing some of your innovative ideas first with colleagues you trust. You can then work your way up and gain the confidence to share your ideas in meetings and with other colleagues. (Janes 2019)

7. Get Comfortable in the Learning Zone

When we are in our learning zone, we are growing, stretching and developing new skills. To innovate, Secretarial Professionals need to push into the learning zone while ensuring they don't become overly stretched. It's a fine balancing act that requires perspective and a high level of self-awareness. (Megan 2022)

8. Strive for Process Improvement

Often we think of innovation as introducing something new. However, some of the most effective innovations resulted from changing how we do something we're already doing. Process improvement is a place ripe for the need for innovation. This is also where we can look to other industries for best practices we may not have considered within the bubble of our own and create more differentiation. (Indeed Editorial Team 2021).

Conclusion

Innovative Management and Administration for Secretarial Professionals is the systematic promotion of renewal and innovation in running an Office through planning, organizing, management, and monitoring.

Presently, Secretarial Professionals are positioned in a fast-paced office environment where technology is advancing and changing the way of work. For a Secretarial Professional to realize competitive advantages, he/she should be able to adapt to these changing trends. This means that Secretarial professionals are expected to come up with new ideas in order to cope with the changes.

Innovations in Management and Administration of the office create bigger opportunities and are critical for the survival, career growth, and success of any Secretarial Professional. Secretarial Professionals that innovate are able to set themselves in a different paradigm in order to identify new opportunities and best methods to solve the current office problems.

This Paper has explained what Innovative Management and Administration for Secretarial Professionals is and proposed a blueprint that Secretarial Professionals can follow to improve their innovation process. With all the benefits that come with being more innovative at work, it's worth taking the time to develop these skills. Each and every Secretarial Professional is capable of becoming innovative at work and with those tips, you are well equipped to unleash the innovative ideas within you. Taking action right away is one of the behaviours that make great innovators.

Recommendations

In order to ensure requisite innovation and potentiate best practices in modern secretaryship, the following innovations are advanced:

1. Innovation is critical to the job of any Secretarial Professional, it is important for Organizations to recognize, protect, encourage, reward and train Secretarial Professional who are innovative in their duties.
2. Secretarial Professionals should note that, the most important factor in finding innovation is a change in mindset.
3. Secretarial Professionals should be honest with themselves about the future of their role, and start believing in their own ideas
4. Secretarial Professionals should stop viewing problems as negative obstacles. Problems are opportunities for innovation — and key behaviors that can lead to success.

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