

# **PROMOTING EMPLOYER'S SUCCESS THROUGH SECRETARIAL PROFESSION/SERVICES**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examined Promoting Employer's Success through Secretarial Profession/Services. Secretarial profession/practice encompasses everything the Manager does but which no Manager can do effectively and efficiently, without a Secretary. The paper also examined maximizing time in the work place and optimizing the use of time. It also examined the Secretary and modern office/technology. It has also proffered solutions for Safety of Files, Information, Sensitivity Access and Key Control and Protective Measures.

## **Introduction**

“A Secretary is a warm, endlessly helpful, and understanding individual whose sole aim is to alleviate, solve, prevent, or soften problems, workloads and upsets from his/her Executive. He is the means by which and through which his executive initiates, handles, and completes a project.”

A good secretary is an essential resource for any key organization. Indeed, the secretary should be the most influential and trusted aid of his Manager or Executive. His role is very challenging, demanding, interesting and dynamic. He keeps records, custodies important confidential information, manages correspondences, maintains contact lists, ensures travel arrangements, organizes meetings, manages the Boss, the office and subordinate staff. Acts as the unofficial security adviser; and must ensure that no time of appointment collides with the other and so on.

Secretarial profession/practice encompasses everything the Manager does but which no Manager can do effectively and efficiently, without a secretary. To attain optimal job performance, the secretary must be conscious of the value and characteristics of time. He manages time and ensures that the Chief Executive appointments do not collide with other schedules. (H.C. Afam, Vol. 06/009).

Promoting employer's success through secretarial profession/services is a sub-theme of “Secretarial Profession and the Dynamic Nigeria Labour Market” for the Chief Executive to smile and say thank you to his secretary, great deal of sincere service, dedication, devotion and indeed indescribable sacrifice had been offered to the overwhelming satisfaction of Chief Executive.

## **Promoting Employer's Success**

### **1. Employer's Principles**

- a) Management is the direction and control of an enterprise involving planning and directing the work of others
- b) Management is concerned with the direction and control of resources usually referred to as the 4-Ms (men, money, machines and materials).
- c) Management is the science and act of reaching a given objective with the utmost economy of means (resources).
- d) Management is a social function that gets things done. It takes us from some condition or state of affairs we do not want, to one that we do want. This is done through people.
- e) Management is also defined as the scientific use of resources (human and material) to achieve pre-determined organizational objectives. Employers/Managers are those people that make things work through the efforts of others. They must learn to put a square peg in a square hole.

2. **Principles of Management**

- a) **Planning:** Is defined as a system arrangement of work to be done, or the laying down of certain process of attaining pre-determined goals. Planning is synonymous to goals, a goal represents what we intend to do at some time in future rather than at the past or present. Its functions in management include the determination of the personnel or human resources requirement of the organization.
- b) **Organizing:** Is the process of arranging activities and allocating resources to such activities to enable set objectives to be achieved. It is concerned with building organizational structure, dividing up the total job into department, divisions, or sections; delegating authority to carry out the jobs providing systems of information and communication and for the coordination of activities within the organization.
- c) **Directing** is the process of guiding all activities and functions towards the achievements of set objectives. This pertains to getting people to carry out the activities of the business organization.
- d) **Motivating** is the urge or drive that propels one to work or carry out an action. This is the process of making all categories of staff especially the personnel department's staff perform better.
- e) **Controlling:** is the end of the management process; involving the comparing of what has been accomplished with the plan which represents what was intended to be achieved within a specified time scale. This function involves regulating activities to personnel department in accordance with the personnel/human resource/manpower plan. The objective of control is to point out weakness and errors in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence.

- f) **Coordinating:** Is the process of harmonizing activities and functions to enable them to have a common focus and purpose essential to the achievement of set objectives. It is the process of integrating the works of different sections and department of an organization towards the effective achievement of the organizational goals and objectives.

### **Characteristics of an Efficient 'Time Manager'**

In order to promote employer's success through secretarial profession/ services, the following are indispensable characteristics. The Secretary is the key used by the Chief Executive in planning and promoting the objectives of the organization.

- i) To be an effective Time Employer, one must be an organized, efficient, and effective in planning the daily activities in the work place in order to be result oriented.
- ii) Such an Employer would have a clear understanding of the kind of personality he possesses in order to impress his colleagues in business.
- iii) What are his aims?
  - a) His goals and values must be directorially result-oriented
  - b) His aspirations must be enviously attractive to colleagues and other establishments.

### **Maximising Time In The Work Place**

- Time is intangible and a peculiar asset, very scarce that man cannot generate or produce it.
- Once spent cannot be retrieved or recalled and cannot be stored or saved for future use.
- All human beings are blessed/given equal amount of time, their positions and status notwithstanding.

It is in the light of the above that the topic “Promoting Employer's Success Through Secretarial Profession/Service” is chosen. The Manager or the Chief Executive confidently relies on his/her secretary to guide him with the day's itinerary to be able to competently attend to colleagues and scheduled meetings to interact on modern administrative objectives. As the day's work is about to close, the secretary prepares a summary of unattended items for the Boss to guide against collision with fresh engagements.

### **Rules For Goal Setting**

There are five basic qualities of goal setting. It must be:

A. Specific: This means having a mandate of what you will specifically do within a given time frame. Ask yourself why you are setting the goal and if you really want to achieve the goal or you are setting it to impress or please someone else.

**B. Measurable:** There must be a way to measure the amount of progress being made towards the realization of the set goal. If it is difficult to measure, the chances of realizing the goal becomes slimmer.

**C. Attainable:** The goal must be within your capacity to achieve. Find out if you have all that is required to achieve it, and how much are some of the necessary factors for its realization is outside your control (e.g. power supply by PHCN).

(i) **Time limit Realistic:** The goal must be realistic in the sense that it should be realizable, and not too easily achievable.

(ii) In setting the Time Limit for a goal, consideration should be given to other factors or demands to ensure that it is a realistic Time Limit.

### **Why Set Goals**

Most effective managers and high achievers are known to possess the skill for setting good and clear goals and working to achieve them. Successful employers love challenges and often use the realistic secretary to achieve set goals. Working without set goals makes the job dull and uninteresting. Goal setting promotes:

- a) Better time management
- b) Clear thought on what is at stake
- c) Focusing workers effort on the set goal
- d) Establishment of priorities
- e) Motivation
- f) Communication as every member of the group has a clear understanding of what is at stake
- g) Robust achievement within a time frame

### **Optimising The Use Of Time**

The Secretary must always bring to the knowledge of the Executive the itinerary for the day, because the programme of the day not well perused brings ridicule to the establishment.

- a) The Manager should understand the peculiar nature of time and that time is an asset and should handle it as a personal capital
- b) He should concentrate on activities that will help achieve the corporate goal
- c) Set priorities and treat the burning issues and leave the ones that can wait for the next day
- d) Should not overcrowd your daily schedule
- e) Keep a daily log of activities to enable you monitor trend of result
- f) Avoid distraction by checking those who burst into your time or schedule of activities

- g) Organize your records such that it will make for easy reach
- h) Don't overcrowd your desk with papers
- i) Stop procrastination
- j) Be flexible, ready to learn new or modern methods of doing things
- k) Make use of modern technology to reach beyond your environment
- l) Becoming more computerized will reduce or eliminate desk clustering
- m) Break major task into sub-tasks for better understanding and application
- n) Make use of modern technology in order to come in contact with the benefits of the global world

### **Goal, Objective And Target**

To optimally utilize your time in the workplace, goal setting is the key. There is a world of difference between goal, objective and target. Appropriate application of these elements in production process will not only keep you focused, but a better result will be achieved in a record time.

### **The Remote Office Workers**

Fax machines, computers, copiers and other equipment have become smaller and more affordable, sophisticated home offices that rival business offices have been created, and telecommuting has become a viable alternative to working on site in company facilities.

This option has enabled more executives to work from homes or from other remote locations apart from the regular business facilities. Secretaries to such executives often assume more managerial, decision making responsibilities to fill the gaps left by the executive's absence.

Office workers too, are handling certain functions from a remote location. Instead of visiting a company or other library and checking out books for in-house research or digging through the company files to locate information, they may be using their computers and modems to access a database in another city or state.

### **The Secretary And Modern Office/Technology**

New office communication tools are rapidly developed or improved, but, the commonly used ones are:

- a) Telephones (cellular, fixed or cordless), radios, pagers, voicemail, answering machines.
- b) **Internet**, Intranet, E-mail, fax, Local Area Net Work (LAN), and Wide Area Network (WAN).
- c) **Electronic billboard**, closed circuit TV, Videos, Electronic Cameras, Scanners, and modems.

By inter-connecting some of the above listed, a system of communication is easily developed for the office that is integrated, fast, easy to access, cheap and cost effective. This is communication Network. This implies that communication between individuals will be electronically/electrically controlled with little human assistance.

- d) Computer Net Work:** This is a data communication network that links two or more computers and peripheral devices like printers.
- i) Local Area Network (LAN): A computer network generally within the same area such as a building.
  - ii) Wide Area Network (WAN): Networks that span inter-city, inter-state or national borders. With this network, branches and units of an organization can be linked.
- e) Telecommunication:** This is hybrid of Telecommunication and community. Information can be exchanged between workers even from their homes.
- f) Teleconferencing:** Meetings/conferences are held while participants can be located in different places but view themselves on TVs or Computer Screens.
- g) Internet:** A network of electronic devices that provide a 2-way integrated communication for homes/offices, projecting on a single screen, messages and were previously transmitted by telephones, radio, TV, books, magazines and newspapers.
- h) Intranet:** The application of the Internet for organization's internal needs maybe called Intranet. It is the key for information dissemination and browsing within the organization.
- It will enable the organization's staff to exchange E-mail.
  - Organization's corporate image can be internally accessed by the staff and customers.
  - With the monumental advance in communication, particularly, the emergence of the Internet, the net effect of this gigantic leap in InfoTech has reduced the entire Universe to a Global Village and for the business organization we see it as a common market.

### **Safety Of Files**

Information is the life blood of any organization. Organization produces different types of information. Some of these information are so strategically sensitive that their disclosure to unauthorized persons could be disastrous to the organization.

### **When Is Information Sensitive**

For information to be considered sensitive/secret, it must meet the following characteristics:

1. It must be identifiable or classified as such.
2. It must not be already in public sources, e.g. Newspaper
3. It must be disclosed officially only to persons who are under some duty to protect its sensitivity.
4. Persons to whom it is disclosed must know that it is sensitive
5. There must be an objective indication that the organization is attempting to prevent its unauthorized disclosure.

### **Awareness**

1. Create awareness through induction training and by placing campaign posters in conspicuous places in offices.
2. Inculcate into staffers in sensitive offices the need to maintain confidentiality

### **Access Control**

The centrality of safeguarding sensitive information is to restrict access to the information being safeguarded.

1. Access to offices should be limited to employees and visitors who have appointments.
2. Restrict access to sensitive arrears, access must be on need to go basis only.
3. I.D. Card display rules must be enforced for both staff and visitors.
4. Information should be circulated only to those with recognized need to know.
5. People making deliveries and maintenance workers should be screened and their identities verified.

### **Key Control**

This is essential for the prevention of unauthorized entry or key duplication.

1. Key should be handled by those with recognized need to hold
2. All existing and their corresponding locks should be catalogued.
3. Where a key is lost, the lock should be replaced. Use colour code, keys should not be labeled with their purpose.
4. Keys should not be left outside on the padlock or key hole.

### **Controlling Stored Information**

1. Lock sensitive records/files away when you leave desk
2. Maintain clear-desk policy
3. Close open sensitive files/documents
4. Check and lock fire-proof drawers and cabinets
5. do not take sensitive file/document home to work on
6. do not place visibly attractive valuables on top of any document/file

### **Control Over Stored Information**

Stored information could be lost/abused or stolen, if appropriate protective measure are not taken.

1. Classify sensitive information according to their level of sensitivity, using colour-coded file jackets in order to establish different levels of sensitivity
2. Check and lock fire-proof cabinets and drawers before closing
3. Lock sensitive records/files away when you leave your desk
4. Maintain clear-desk policy; do not litter your desk with sensitive documents
5. Do not leave visitors alone in your office or your Boss office
6. Close an open sensitive file/document in personal drawers overnight
7. Don't take sensitive file/documents home to work on unless adequate

~~protection can be given to it in the home.~~

8. Do not place visibly attractive valuables/money on top of any document/file or drawer containing sensitive information.
9. In addition, photocopying should never be done for unauthorized persons.
10. Always check the photocopier after photocopying to see if you have left any document therein.

### **Protective Measures**

1. Non-employees/employee with no NEED TO KNOW should be denied access to places containing sensitive information
2. Warning signs and instructions to alert employees on the sensitivity of certain information, places and things should be conspicuously placed.
3. Employee and visitors should be informed that information obtained in certain locations within the premises are sensitive, and should not be disclosed to unauthorized persons.
4. Store sensitive documents in separate containers and take special security precaution to protect them.
5. Instructing employees and clients not to disclose information entrusted to them to other staff unless such persons have to NEED TO KNOW.
6. Impose area controls within the premises, among different classes of employees with respect to certain information and operation.

### **Conclusion**

To attain optimal job performance, the Chief Executive/Manager must be conscious of the value and characteristics of time. He manages the events of the day's activities in such that he achieves the desired corporate goal within the time frame available to him. The secretary as the custodian of classified documents, must be conscious that the Manger receives visitors at the scheduled time, and makes relevant documents available to facilitate the meeting. The Secretary must be strict with every office materials and tools; and should inform other staff alike. It is the secretary that is first called to answer for any anomaly whether he was there or not. Hence, all staff must be adequately aware of the nature and implication of his/her duties.

### **Reference**

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