



Calgary Chatter

International Association of
Administrative Professionals

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Pathways to Excellence

You hear it mentioned and you see it on our web pages but what is 'Pathways to Excellence'?

The Pathways to Excellence has three parts;

Division of Excellence
Chapter of Excellence
Member of Excellence

A definition of excellence – **Excellence** is the state or *quality* of excelling. Particularly in the field of business and organizations, excellence is considered to be an important *value*, and a goal to be pursued.

If you use the above definition, that is what your Calgary Chapter is trying to bring to you. We want all of our members to know that you belong to an organization that lives and believes in excellence. We are working very hard to be able to acknowledge that we are indeed a '**Chapter of Excellence**' and we hope that

this shows you our commitment to IAAP and what it stands for.

As administrative professionals, we believe in excellence and we perform this way everyday, sometimes with and sometimes without the recognition. By becoming a '**Member of Excellence**' this is a way that you can gain the recognition that you deserve.

Questions were posed to a number of people; "Why – why would you become a member of excellence. Why- do we need to be a chapter of excellence?" The answers were very interesting and all with the same theme.

That to belong to a chapter that is committed to bringing a level of professionalism, educational and informative meetings is very important. Knowing this makes you believe in what you are doing and that it really does matter.

When you see the pride in the faces of the board and membership to know that we have accomplished this task, hopefully it makes you want the same thing for yourself.

This brings the 'Member of Excellence' into play. Just by doing a few small things you can achieve a certificate to show what we know you do every day and that you are indeed a committed administrative professional.

A quote from **Vince Lombardi**

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence"

APW – Administrative Professionals Week

As you may know our **APW** event is scheduled for **April 22, 2009**. **Rhonda Scharf** is our guest speaker and she is amazing!

We are moving full steam ahead with the event planning, and are looking for help from our membership in collecting

silent auction items, as well as donations of items for the take-home bags each delegate receives.

You should have received your invites by now; please complete and send in your registration form ASAP. Also, please pass along a registration form to anyone you know who

would benefit from attending our event.

If you require more information, please feel free to contact the email on the bottom of your registration form, or Lucinda.J.Sharlow@marsh.com.



President's Message – A Word from DecolynneJo

Our "2nd" Newsletter for the year! And we have a lot to celebrate.

As Professional Administrators - you already know that there are vast changes in our role in the "Business World". Here are some points to consider:

Professional Administrators hold more middle-management and supervisory jobs North America. More companies are coming into line with the concept of equal pay for work of equal value.

Professional Administrators are coming back into the work force in larger numbers.

Professional Administrators starting out are more likely to choose a female mentor to help them get a start and avoid errors.

Professional Administrators are more

likely to use networking and form cordial business relations. You need to have people talk about you - your staff - your co-workers - you are "Dynamic Individuals" in a chosen "Career" as a Professional.

As members - give yourself the positive self-talk messages that say "You can do a good job" and "You do a good job". As your President - I believe in all of you to go above and beyond your regular job.....again it is your chosen "Career".

Visualize your self doing well and being successful. As a member of the International Association of Administrative Professionals - you deserve to "Stand Out" and be recognized!

Expand your networking at our chapter meetings and look for a mentor. A mentor can help you succeed in your job.

Definition of a Mentor: A mentor is an individual, usually older, always more experienced, who helps and

guides another individual's development. This guidance is not done for personal gain.

It establishes that contact has been made, introductions have been heard and that networking can commence. The handshake is as binding as a written contract in many cultures and is tantamount to giving a verbal promise to others. Assertive handshakes are fairly brief, warm and firm. They will give you a "Professional" appearance, especially accompanied by a smile and the repetition of the person's name.

I would like to challenge the definition and think that each of you as "Administrative Professionals" have the potential to be mentors in your own way. To encourage, to share and to develop other members of our Calgary Chapter.

I challenge our Members - to find a Mentor or become a Mentor within our membership and grow as individuals in a "Leadership" role.

Here is a side note - remember - a business handshake is part of making a good first impression. It establishes that contact has been made, introductions have been heard and that networking can commence. The handshake is as binding as a written contract in many cultures and is tantamount to giving a verbal promise to others. Assertive handshakes are fairly brief, warm and firm. They will give you a "Professional" appearance, especially accompanied by a smile and the repetition of the person's name.

I look forward to seeing you at our March General Meeting and the professional handshake we can exchange.

DecolynneJo

IMPACT and another benefit of membership

We held our IMPACT meeting on February 11, 2009. The meeting was relaxed and very informative. We were fortunate to have representation from our Western Canada Division.

There was a section in the presentation that asked "What do I get from IAAP?"

In our audience we had two long term members; one with 17½ years and one with 22 years. We also asked our WCD representative, Jayne Clark, to tell us how she has benefited over the years from IAAP. The stories were great and what they've learned are actual skills

they use in their everyday work and home lives. They also talked about the friendships they have formed and retained over the years.

The friendships we form was something I never realized; while we get together every month and share our stories and little bits about ourselves, that we are actually forming friendships that will potentially last over any number of years. I was only looking at the skills I have gained from IAAP and now I know that we can gain a lot more from membership in IAAP...

Certification – CPS / CAP

Congratulations to **Karmal Beninger** on recently achieving the CPS designation!!

Reminder...the registration deadline for the May 2009 CPS® and CAP® exams was February 15th...I happen to know late applications are accepted so if you have missed the deadline don't despair, email or fax your registration right away.

A few of our members are planning to sit the May exams. If you are interested in forming/ joining a study group, or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Lucinda.J.Sharlow@marsh.com

Why Certify?

Improve your professional qualifications, increase your skills and knowledge, and raise your self-esteem; and don't forget, by taking and passing the exams you may also obtain college credit and, according to

the latest survey from Office Team, get up to a 7% increase in salary.

Networking – Can you do it?

Networking...it doesn't matter where you go or what you are doing, you are always networking.

When you walk into a room for a meeting and you know four out of the six people in the room, by the end of the meeting you know all six. It is very comfortable for you to go up and shake hands and introduce yourself; that is networking.

You go out to a party with friends; you don't always start

out knowing everyone but by the time you leave you've met a few new people; that is networking.

So why do we find it so hard to walk into a room full of strangers and introduce ourselves? Not everyone has trouble doing this, but it can be very intimidating for the ones that do.

Here are some suggestions that might help you, and hopefully over time you will become a natural.

- If you have trouble actually getting in the door – find someone you know or just casually join a group that is walking in. Surprise you're in the room!
- Watch the room and find someone that looks like a master at networking and introduce yourself to them; if they are good they will notice you need a little help and you can watch how they do it. Next thing you know you will be the master for someone else.



Study Groups?

Do study groups work?

It has been proven that study groups do in fact work; as adult learners everyone learns by a different method. In group study, adult learners are able to get down to business faster and go through more topics than doing it alone.

The CPS/CAP exams are due to be written in May. If we have enough members that are going to sit the exam, maybe we can work in a study group.

This way if we have some members that are proficient in some areas and not in others we might be able to get a great mix and a great study group is born.

Feel free to contact me if you are interested in forming or joining a study group.

Lucinda.J.Sharlow@marsh.com

Office Team – Finding a Workplace ‘Hero’

Almost everyone had an individual they admired as a child. Whether your hero wore a red cape or a football jersey, he or she served as an example for you to follow.

As an adult, do you still seek someone to inspire success? If not, you should. While personal ambition and talent are key to accomplishing your professional goals, looking to a trusted mentor for advice and guidance can be one of the most important steps you take in your career. A mentor can help you navigate the ins and outs of your field and derail any obstacles that threaten to halt your professional progress.

Unfortunately, many people fail to partner with a mentor because they are intimidated by the prospect of identifying and approaching a potential candidate. But finding a mentor isn't as difficult as you might think. Here's what to do:

- **Be proactive.** A mentor is unlikely to approach you, so you need to take the initiative. After identifying someone you respect, explain that you would like to learn more about how the person honed his or her skills and abilities. Moreover, show your enthusiasm and desire to grow.
- **Cast a wide net.** It's perfectly acceptable to reach out to more than one person. For instance, one individual might be able to help you improve your technical proficiencies, while another advisor can share expertise on dealing with office politics.
- **Respect the person's time.** Once you have found a mentor and start meeting, be respectful of his or her time. Arrive at scheduled sessions with a list of questions, but don't expect your contact to have all of the answers. Research issues before you bring them up.
- **Be appreciative.** After you've established the relationship, keep your mentor updated on progress made in areas in which the person has helped. Always thank him or her for any assistance provided and share the credit for your successes when appropriate.

Office Team is the world's leading staffing service specializing in the placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. The company has more than 300 locations worldwide, and offers online job search services at www.officeteam.com

Announcements



These pins can be purchased for US\$6.25 from Lucinda Sharlow. Orders will be submitted on February 27, 2009

April 22nd, 2009
Calgary Stampede
Round-Up Center – Palomino Room “E”
12:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Guest Speaker: Rhonda Scharf
Topic: Are YOU Excellence in Action?

At the April APW Event we will be holding a silent auction. If you have an item you would like to donate, please contact Cheryl Gathercole or Lucinda Sharlow.

Western Canada Division Laptop Fundraiser

Tickets are on sale now for the WCD laptop fundraiser – tickets are **1 for \$3.00** or **2 for \$5.00**. Tickets can be purchased from any of your Calgary Chapter board members.

Using the Trifecta Strategy To Impact Your Career

By: Kathy Hampton CPS/CAP

February 16, 2009

Preface

While this submission may seem directed at students and Generation Y (a.k.a. Millennials - those in the know of the *information age*) who are studying, or have entered into a career in administration, it is in no way isolated to only these two groups. At any age, and at any time during your career, the Trifecta Strategy can be useful to move your career as an administrative professional forward.

The point that I would like to make about the Trifecta Strategy encompasses a trio of ideas; theory, experience, and leadership/networking. I would like to share with you instances of where these trios have either touched me directly, or where I can see the benefits of combining the trio to create a Trifecta Strategy.

Administration is all-encompassing don't you think? Who in the world does not need to know something about it? Even if you dig ditches for a career, you still need to understand how to pay your rent and buy groceries from your job earnings. However, being an administrative professional furthers that ability into the realm of effectively running a business, or a division within a business.

Theory: When you think of a time during school, how much of that time is spent on theory? It is difficult to give it a percentage because it differs depending on the class – and within administration – there are more than several factions of study. The percentage is very high; however, this is where part one of the trifecta strategy comes in.

The International Association of Administrative Professionals has partnerships with several post-secondary learning institutions. The Calgary chapter collaborates with the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and their Administrative Information Management (AIM) two-year program. This is a solid foundation to begin a successful career – the theory of business management. True, there are labs where it is not all theory - including computer courses to develop the dexterity required for administration. Because of SAIT's diligence in placing a variety of professionals on their advisory board for the AIM program, theory encompasses several industries by widening the understanding for students who otherwise, would not have the benefit to know the various administrative departments within a certain corporation or industry. As well, SAIT has acquired a great deal of corporate support to place students during their practicum towards the end of their two-years within the course.

Experience: No one is alone on this one! Think back to when you were 17 or 18 and looking for a summer job. How many times were you turned down because you did not have any experience? Did you ever ask the question 'if you don't hire me, where might I get the experience?' That happened to me early on in my career and while I struggled for a time, it wasn't until I got on with a temporary service that I was able to take some giant steps and make up for lost ground. IAAP has an international partnership with OfficeTeam who specialize in administrative staffing both for temporary and permanent work. That partnership extends down to the division and chapter level where OfficeTeam has offices. We are very fortunate in the Calgary chapter that we have a *very* active relationship with OfficeTeam as they participate largely within the chapter. My personal experience with a staffing agency goes back far beyond the days of OfficeTeam in Calgary, perhaps before OfficeTeam had even started up in the U.S.

The great thing about taking time to be on the roster of a staffing agency is that you can still be committed to being an outstanding administrative professional, however it provides you an opportunity to work in a variety of corporations and a range of industries to allow you to determine where your best fit is. Perhaps you have had assignments at a conglomerate such as Esso, a medium-size business like Pembina, and a small business like Richards. The use of these names is personal – I worked temporarily for each of them about a quarter-century ago and can tell you first-hand, that one of them provided me the atmosphere where I could grow my career, enjoy going to work each day, and be appreciated by my colleagues. So, with being able to write my own poem ... 'three job offers, diverged in downtown Calgary, having travelled each for a short time, I chose the one that best suited my career goals and personal life' – I chose where I was able to be challenged, provided the support, and given the opportunity to grow my career.

Through experiencing an assortment of companies and their culture, you will be able to make a good decision and control your career path.

Leadership and Networking: Do you show leadership driving down the road? Do you network in line at the grocery store? These are not likely places where you can do either to build your career - a professional association is. For administrative professionals, that association is the International Association of Administrative Professionals. How important is leadership to your career growth? If you would like to always be given tasks by your superior then the answer is – not important at all. If you would like to take the initiative on projects and other activities at your workplace – then leadership skills is extremely important. Does networking influence your career? There is something wrong if you said no. Networking is essential whether you are happy where you work or not. It can provide several opportunities for you and not only for career growth, even just the ability to do your job exceptionally well.

Through your *active* membership in IAAP, you will have occasion to garner leadership skills. The more you participate at every level, the further your skills develop. As a member of the Program Committee within your chapter, you learn how to research speakers and topics within members' interests and the chapter's budget. As the Chair of that committee, you learn to negotiate with speakers. As Treasurer of the chapter, you learn bookkeeping, banking, and potentially auditing skills (if the auditor works closely with you and expresses their comments thoroughly to you). As President of the chapter you have the opportunity to 'run the business' – not unlike it was your own corporation. As a member, you already represent your chapter and can influence people - as President, you are intimate with the details of how your chapter operates and can explain it to colleagues and media AND, have a greater influence on people. While any of these positions take a few hours away from your personal time, it is truly amazing how intangible learning and soft skills are learned and can be used repeatedly in your work environment. At every level of IAAP - chapter, division, international, the work can be more intricate, challenging, and time consuming – but you take away more skills from the effort – if you committed yourself to doing a significant job. My example here is that while I took on a small leadership job several years ago by being active in the company's social club, it did not provide me the same opportunities for business leadership as my involvement with IAAP. During interviews for my current job (my dream job), when asked specific questions about leadership, I had to use my experience as a leader within the association several times because I honestly, could not answer the question otherwise – I had not experienced many of the leadership questions at work.

Networking is not just a matter of shaking someone's hand and introducing yourself – letting them introduce themselves to you is equally important. Neither is it about giving or receiving a name, it is about building a professional relationship with someone. The larger your network of professional colleagues – the more you will advance in your career as an administrative professional. One example is when I worked for a company where the President was travelling to England. He had never been, I had never been, he had expectations of his hotel and that he wanted to be walking distance to the venue of his meetings. Having been to every IAAP Convention and Education Forum since 1996, I have met many people and grown my network well. IAAP having international affiliates of whom several are within my network because of networking at convention, it only took one email to Sue Cook to ask her for advice on a hotel with the amenities and location my President insisted. She provided four, and highly recommended one - which I booked. Jim was a very pleased President when he returned as Sue's recommendation had met all of his expectations. The internet was in its infancy then, had Sue not been a part of my network and I had to depend on a travel agent who may or may not have been to the hotel; how my President viewed my competency could have been quite different in the end.

Another instance about the importance of networking - I would like to use how I was introduced to my dream job in this example. When you are on the International Board of Directors for IAAP, the potential to exponentially increase your network is vast, however not without hurdles – that of time. I had met Dianne Domeyer, President and CEO of OfficeTeam on occasion. She presented a wonderful Keynote at convention in Reno in 2006 and was always pitching in with her OfficeTeam staff in their booth during Office Expo. What a great woman I thought. At some point, I had learned that she was going to be coming to Calgary and retreating into the mountains with many of her Western Canadian staff. Having included Nancy Tegtmeyer of the local OfficeTeam in my network of colleagues, I had asked Nancy if it would be possible to meet with her and Dianne over coffee for fifteen minutes. Nancy took it a step further and put together a luncheon for us three, as well as then chapter President, Rose D'Aversa, the OfficeTeam Western Regional Manager and Division Manager. This provided me the opportunity to get to know Dianne and other OfficeTeam management better; little did I know that opportunity would go the distance as they got to know me! That was early June and in August I received a phone call from Nancy. As a consummate professional, she prefaced her call by saying *'I'm not suggesting that you aren't happy at Paramount – however what I know about you and what I know about our client, I feel that this would be a very good fit and was wondering if you would be interested in reviewing this posting'*. What a surprise – I thought that I was happy, but her question required an answer and so I asked myself several times ... am I happy where I am? Yes, I reviewed the posting and yes, I did apply, and yes, I got an interview and yes, they invited me back for a second interview and yes, they did offer me the job! Where would I be today if I hadn't networked, if I hadn't participated to the fullest in IAAP to gain leadership skills, if I hadn't gotten all of the experience during my time as a temporary secretary, if I hadn't learned any administrative theory during those school years?

Trifecta is a term used in horse race betting when you correctly align the first three winners in their placement coming across the finish line. Look at the Trifecta wins below:

- ♦ Win one - a good base of administrative business theory through formal post-secondary education, voracious book reading and continuing education on administration in business;
- ♦ Win two - administrative business experience from various industries and companies by way of temporary job postings through a supportive staffing agencies; and
- ♦ Win three - leadership training and networking through active involvement with a professional association such as IAAP.

These are easy objectives to achieve and worth the effort to impact your career as an administrative professional.