

Shhh! MY MOBILE IS PROOFREADING!

by Lizelle Gilliland

How our working world has changed! We have become almost completely dependent on technology. Around us live the human mind and the machine mind!

Technologies that started out as aides to our existence have grown into being vital to our everyday lives. The dependency on technology is a two edge sword. One can work, shop and talk with friends all from the comfort of your home or where ever you find yourself.

How much of your work could be done from home!

Technology is rapidly becoming smaller and faster

From what used to be heavy and massive to something that is now about the size of a postage stamp. The laptops we have now are just as powerful as most desktops. Many younger users who grew up with this technology may not realise just how amazing these new improvements are. Nowadays one is able to take a laptop out of its box, make a few connections and have access to the world. It used to take hours, sometimes days to make the simplest connections. In fact, there was a time, long ago, when we had to build the boards we needed.

In the beginning...

We used to type documents, make tea/coffee, we were Secretaries. With the changes in technology, our roles have already evolved. Before we can decide where the role of a PA is heading, we first need to understand where it's been.

Do you ever take time to think how it used to be?

The role of a PA has always been to provide crucial support to their Manager so that they can solely concentrate on their principle objectives. This could cover anything from clerical administration, coordinating events and travel planning, compiling reports and creating presentations. In some cases, this could also include tracking finances, budgets, and processing invoices, and even Human Resources and training duties. The primary change Personal Assistants have had to adapt to over the years is the drive towards a more digital and connected business environment.

Where is it all heading?

Advances in technology eventually brought an end to spending all day typing, proof reading, answering phones and making coffee, however the public's perception of what a PA does has yet to catch up!

Do you feel that executives have grasped how much we have evolved?

It is clear that the demand for digital skills is intensifying, and automation seeks to make changes to our professional reality. It is clear that technology will once again play a leading part in the evolving role, it will beyond just having proficiency in Microsoft Office, and into new digital spaces, such as cloud-based applications, social media, and website and database management.

Even if artificial intelligence is introduced, the balance between office automation and the human touch is entirely possible.

Have you been part of any discussions around AI?

You will need to be up to speed with market trends and be an expert in general industry knowledge. Attending industry events that are specific to your organisation will help you to stay on top of the latest trends and news, ensuring that you are prepared for changes and enabling you to stay ahead of disruption. It's also worth noting that if you're planning on moving to a new sector, attending industry events can provide you with the exposure you need to make that jump effectively.

Conclusion

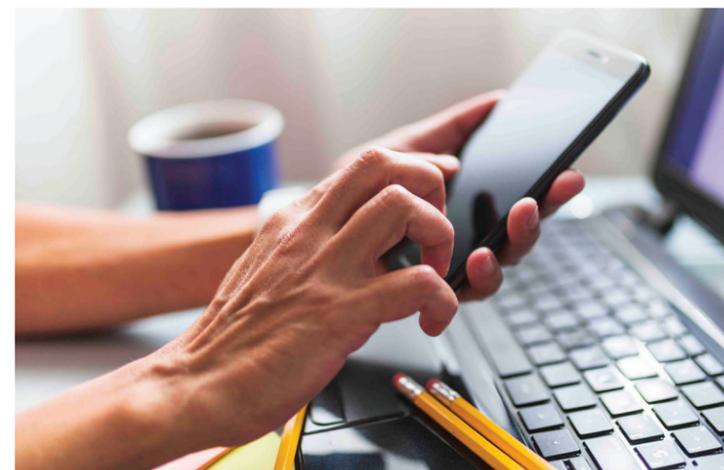
Once you've identified what areas you can develop or which skill gaps you need to close, the next step is to upskill yourself.

What would you like to become more competent in?

Stay up to date with administration matters, IT, marketing, project management and Human Resources. Continuing to develop your skill set is key to prospering in a volatile business environment, and by keeping an eye on industry trends and adapting your skills to suit, you can ensure your career remains on an upward path.

As a Personal Assistant, turning a blind eye to the changing trends within the office support space can be a significant setback for your career. To avoid being left behind in the wake of disruption, it's crucial to keep your skills and experiences relevant.

Our future is in our hands isn't it!



Lizelle Gilliland is Executive Personal Assistant to CEO and Head of Legal & Industry Affairs.

Her tenure of 24 years in the Industry has contributed to her extensive knowledge of business and operational procedures.

She is a member of PAFSA's Academy of Excellence.

Lizelle has reached both semi-finalist and Finalist status in PAFSA's PA of the Year Award.

**She believes that:
To have success and fulfilment you need purpose and passion!**