

EXECUTIVE PA

THE LEADING BUSINESS MANAGEMENT RESOURCE FOR EXECUTIVE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

What's in a name?

The final instalment marking 30 years of *Executive PA* magazine, our readers reveal what their job titles mean to them

Desired destinations

Update your little black book with these hotspots

AIME 2023: bigger and better!

Event planning EAs, find out what's in store in February in Melbourne...

SUMMER ISSUE 2023

RACV CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

AMAZING MEETINGS
WITH EVEN BETTER VIEWS



The perfect events destination with nine properties
across Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania





MORNINGTON PENINSULA
RACV CAPE SCHANCK RESORT

75 minutes from Melbourne, RACV Cape Schanck Resort is a state-of-the-art facility tailored to large-scale events. With fully equipped event spaces and flexible break out areas, and the capacity to host 450 guests. Abounding views of the pristine golf course and natural surrounds make it the perfect location to impress.



BALLARAT AND DAYLESFORD REGION
RACV GOLDFIELDS RESORT

80 minutes from Melbourne, RACV Goldfields Resort is located on 150 acres of stunning State Forest. Choose from a range of purpose-built function rooms, with floor to ceiling windows. Or host your event outdoors, against a backdrop of rolling hills, native gardens, and the resort's championship golf course.



YARRA VALLEY
RACV HEALESVILLE COUNTRY CLUB & RESORT

RACV Healesville Country Club & Resort is in the heart of the Yarra Valley, an hour's drive from Melbourne. With 14 flexible meeting spaces, you'll have everything you need to make your event a success. Host a conference, launch, retreat, against the breath-taking scenery of the Great Dividing Range.



GIPPSLAND COAST
RACV INVERLOCH RESORT

With sweeping views over Bass Strait, RACV Inverloch Resort is nestled in the heart of Victoria's South Gippsland Coast. The light-filled conference and events centre is a spectacular large-scale venue, while the executive board rooms with ocean views cater perfectly for smaller groups. Choose a range of seasonal team building activities to add to your event.



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
RACV TORQUAY RESORT

RACV Torquay Resort is perched between iconic Torquay and Jan Juc beaches, at the gateway to one of the world's most stunning coastal drives. With 10 versatile function areas looking out over the expansive golf course and sweeping ocean views, you'll find everything you need for a memorable conference or event.



MELBOURNE CBD
RACV CITY CLUB

With its 100-year legacy, RACV City Club offers standout conference facilities in the heart of Melbourne's CBD. From intimate dinners in the wine cellar to a banquet for hundreds, the luxurious rooms and innovative menus cater to all tastes. Bring your event to life with a package tailored to your needs.



HOBART
RACV HOBART HOTEL

In the centre of Hobart's cultural precinct, near the vibrant Salamanca place, RACV Hobart Hotel is a unique venue suited to a range of events. From The Stables to The Boardroom, the contrast between historic buildings and contemporary design creates an atmosphere of old-world charm, alongside the latest conferencing and event facilities.



GOLD COAST
RACV ROYAL PINES RESORT

An hour from Brisbane Airport or 25 minutes from Gold Coast Airport, between Gold Coast beaches and hinterland, idyllic RACV Royal Pines Resort can host up to 1800 guests. The 14 versatile meeting spaces include Australia's only floor to ceiling, glass walled state-of-the-art conference facility.



SUNSHINE COAST
RACV NOOSA RESORT

Overlooking pristine wetlands, RACV Noosa Resort is a five minutes' drive from Noosa's much-loved Hastings Street and just 30 minutes from Sunshine Coast Airport. Five flexible-format rooms boast an abundance of natural light, along with inviting alfresco and undercover spaces for breakouts, displays, workshops and pre/post-event gatherings.



Request a proposal at
racv.com.au/venues

TAKE YOUR EVENT SOMEWHERE FAR FROM GENERIC

Discover how New Zealand offers a business event destination unlike anywhere else in the world.



Fiordland
Southland



100% PURE NEW ZEALAND

businesssevents.newzealand.com



CONTENTS



32

Desired destinations

As people are finally getting back together post-pandemic, EAs have a thirst for meetings and bringing teams back together. Turn to page 32 for a handpicked selection of destinations, suitable for every budget...



18

What's in a name?

PA, EA, advanced EA, legal assistant, project manager, management secretary, chief of staff... Bringing the thirtieth year of Executive PA Magazine to a close, page 18 asks readers what they are referred to in their high-level assistant role.



50

EA Profile

On page 50, meet Executive PA Media award winner, runner up and finalist, Natalie Kennefick who shares her career journey and offers top tips for fellow admin professionals.



ExecutivePA.com



facebook.com/executivepa



twitter.com/PAofTheYear



linkedin.com/Executive PA Media

12

Briefing

All the news, views and information you need to stay at the top of your EA game.

13

Summits briefing

Executive PA Summits provide a unique opportunity to meet suppliers on your terms and 2023 booking is open!

16

Member events

All you need to know about the first 2023 Executive PA member events at Pullman Sydney Hyde Park, Pullman & Mercure Brisbane King George Square and Pullman & Mercure Melbourne Albert Park.

22

Recognition

Not your usual high-level EA, we catch up with Judith Sharon Willett as she celebrates ten years since being crowned PA of the Year at the Executive PA Media Awards.

24

Office essentials

Keep your desk organised and your workflow smooth with this roundup of the best products around.



26

AIME 2023: Bigger and better!

If even a small part of your role involves organising meetings and events, then AIME is for you!

30

Technofile

Your resident tech expert, Tim Stackpool, outlines some of the new tech you can expect to encounter when it comes to recruitment.

42

Venue Menu

Read up on the newest event and corporate space openings, and peruse potential accommodation for your exec and their clients.

47

Gastronomer's Guide

Chanaka Jayabahu, executive chef at The George's Hotel's 50 Bistro in Christchurch, tells us the secrets behind their signature dish.

48

Boarding pass

Planes, trains and automobiles – all the latest corporate travel news for you and your exec.

64

Book reviews

Find out what our readers thought of *Add Value* by Mark Carter and *Resilience Recipes* by Fleur Heazlewood.

66

Career

Professional development tips for executive-level PAs, courtesy of an award-winning chief of staff – enjoy the last word from new columnist Jo Jones.

NETWORKING



44

Member events

Read how our EAs got on visiting some of our favourite venues at our exclusive member events, from hidden gems in the Hawkesbury to award-winning culinary teams at Woodcut at Crown Sydney.

DEVELOPMENT



52

Education & training

Six minutes is the amount of time people can stay focused on a task before succumbing to email or messaging apps, according to Dr Amantha Imber. Find out how to buck this trend... Then keep reading for ten more pages of professional development intel, tips and tricks.

EDITOR'S LETTER

SUMMER ISSUE 2023

As we move into 2023, I'm delighted to have pulled together another issue of *Executive PA Magazine*, packed with lots of information, insight, inspiration, tips and tricks to help you in your role.

Talking of which, our 'What's in a name?' feature on page 18 looks at the wide variety of ways in which high-level assistants are referred to. Drawing our celebration of 30 years of the magazine to a close, I ask what that means for you, your role and your perceived value.

The very lovely Jo Jones, deputy chief of staff at Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, voices her opinion in this feature but you'll also find her on page 66 as our new regular contributor on all things PA/EA/chief of staff. After all, who better to share musings on being an executive-level PA than an award-winning chief of staff? She kicks off what promises to be a superb series of articles with one on the most best bosses she's ever encountered.

As always, the professional development section is bursting with tangible takeaways. If negotiating a payrise is your to-do list, Michelle Gibbings has some wise words for you on page 60. Meanwhile, Paul Lewis talks you through the ultimate LinkedIn profile, but if you need help managing digital distractions, Dr



“As always, the professional development section is bursting with tangible takeaways. If negotiating a payrise is your to-do list, Michelle Gibbings has some wise words for you on page 60”

Amantha Imber is on hand! And make sure you check out Donna McGeorge's piece on death by meetings – very thought-provoking...

I do hope you enjoy all of the above – and everything else in the issue.

Claire

Claire Muir
Editor
Executive PA Magazine



/ SYDNEY
/ PULLMAN SYDNEY HYDE PARK

STAY RIGHT WHERE
WORK MEETS PLAY

THE PLACE TO MEET

WELCOME TO A PLAYGROUND WHERE PEOPLE, IDEAS AND AMBITIONS COME TOGETHER TO UP THEIR GAME. MEET/PLAY AT PULLMAN SYDNEY HYDE PARK PUSHES THE LIMITS AND IMAGINES NEW WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS IN AN EVER MORE CONNECTED WORLD.

DAY DELEGATE PACKAGES FROM \$85 PER PERSON.



OUR WORLD IS YOUR PLAYGROUND

36 COLLEGE ST, SYDNEY NSW 2000 / AUSTRALIA / +61 2 9361 8400



pullman
HOTELS AND RESORTS

SYDNEY HYDE PARK

EDITORIAL TEAM

CONTRIBUTORS



Dr Amantha Imber

Dr Amantha Imber is the Founder of Inventium, Australia's leading behavioural science consultancy. She also hosts an insightful podcast about the habits and rituals of the world's most successful people, called *How I Work*.



Dr Jenny Brockis

Dr. Jenny Brockis is a medical practitioner specialising in brain health and mental performance in the workplace. She is also the author of *Future Brain: The 12 Keys To Creating Your Own High-Performance Brain*.



Michelle Gibbings

Michelle is a change, leadership and career expert and founder of Change Meridian. Michelle works with global leaders and teams to help them get fit for the future of work. She is the author of *Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work*.



Paul Lewis

Managing director of Pitman Training, Paul is an expert when it comes to helping people improve their career prospects, securing promotions and getting back to work.



Philippa White

Philippa is founder and CEO of The International Exchange (TIE), a comfort zone disruptor. Following a successful career in advertising, she has created a unique programme that exposes people to global challenges to ignite their humanity, ingenuity, and purpose.



Professor Adam Boddison

Adam is a qualified clinical hypnotherapist and chief executive at the Association for Project Management. Prior to this he held leadership roles in several membership organisations and has also published a range of books and articles.



Donna McGeorge

A global authority on productivity and a best-selling author, Donna's book series *It's About Time* covers meetings, structuring your day and doing more with less.



Michelle Bowden

Michelle is a certified speaking professional and communication skills coach who has delivered her Persuasive Presentation Skills Masterclass more than 950 times for 12,000 people. She has also authored a number of books.



Michelle Gibbings

Michelle is a change, leadership and career expert and founder of Change Meridian. Michelle works with global leaders and teams to help them get fit for the future of work. She is the author of *Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work*.



Brad Foster

Brad Foster has been a journalist covering the events sector for many years. He now works as a communications specialist with ICMSA, a writer, and just recently, a radio reporter.



Jo Jones

Winner of Executive PA Media's PA of the Year award in 2017, Jo Jones is deputy chief of staff at the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. She is responsible for making life easier for senior leaders and is instrumental in helping them getting the job done.



Tim Stackpool

Tech expert Tim is the technology writer for Executive PA Media. He can be heard on talk radio in Australia and is a tech presenter who speaks at conferences and trade shows about technology's impact on work and lifestyle.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Anthony Carthew

Anthony is our 2018 PA of the Year Australasia. He is EA to Sydney Opera House CEO, Louise Herron. Among his many responsibilities he is also Protocol Officer, a team leader and more.

Gina Mavrias

Gina is the COO of Australian Hearing. Gina was awarded Boss of the Year at the 2018 Executive PA Awards for recognition of her exceptional leadership and executive skills.

Natalie Kennefick

Natalie is EA to the CEO at Arriba Group, and winner of Up & Coming PA of the Year at the 2018 Executive PA Awards, and runner up for Best Organised Event in 2019.

Nyssa Lambkin

Nyssa was an advanced EA at Ernst & Young (EY) and our 2017 PA of the Year Australasia. Nyssa now works in Oceania Markets Operations at EY, with the backing of experience in the EA profession.

EXECUTIVE PA MEDIA

Informing, empowering and inspiring EAs worldwide

ENQUIRIES

Editorial
editor@executivepa.com

Advertising
info@executivepa.com

Membership
membership@executivepa.com

CONTACTS

Editor
Claire Muir
editor@executivepa.com

Director
Russell Peacock
russell.peacock@executivepa.com

Advertising Sales
Hanako Chua
hanako.chua@executivepa.com

Administration
administration@executivepa.com

Published by
SPL Learning & Media
PO Box 10137,
Adelaide Street,
Brisbane,
QLD, 4000

www.executivepa.com

© Copyright 2022 Solutions Publish
All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be copied or reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publishers. While every care is taken in the compilation of this publication, the publishers can not accept any responsibility for any inaccuracies or changes since compilation, or for consequential loss arising from such changes or inaccuracies, or for any other loss, direct or consequential, arising in connection with information in this publication. Acceptance of advertisements does not imply recommendation by the publisher.



This publication is produced from sustainable sources and is a recyclable product. We encourage our readers to reduce waste by recycling.

Meetings and events located at Brisbane Airport Conference Centre in 2023

As an EA, you've most likely started to organise and book domestic or international travels. As corporate travel begins to slowly resume in 2023, so does the demand for conference rooms around Australia. Brisbane Airport Conference Centre offers 1,800 square metres of architecturally designed space with state of art facilities in a convenient and accessible location.

The purpose built space can accommodate up to 300 guests across its flexible floorplan with a pillar-less ballroom, conference rooms, boardrooms as well as an onsite commercial kitchen and bar.

Designed as an entirely flexible space to meet the dynamic needs of any group or business, the centre includes audio visual and presentation equipment, 8 medium to large conference rooms, 4 executive boardrooms, an open-air terrace overlooking Brisbane Airport and a cloak room.

Brisbane Airport Conference Centre caters for all event requirements. With skills and imagination, we create memorable experiences unique to each guest and each function.

"Fantastic conference venue, with world class service, facilities and food. We had a group of 10 people and worked perfectly with a private room. We were so impressed that we will be returning for a larger size function of 150+ people very soon. Thanks again for the great day!" says Cameron Clark.

Catering

EAs are able to select from a range of conference and event packages with a variety of catering options. Ranging from informal buffets through to a la carte dining or cocktail and canapé menus, Executive Chef, Murray Paterson has prepared a range of menu items to cater up to 300 guests, be it for business or pleasure.

Brisbane Airport Hotels

Conveniently located between the Pullman and ibis Brisbane Airport. In



tribute to its location in the heart of the airport precinct, the dynamic events centre includes a series of specially commissioned aviation artefacts which form a natural centrepiece for the space.

The facilities are a short 5-7 minute walk from Brisbane Domestic Terminal and a 1km drive to Brisbane International Airport.

From its unique vantage point overlooking the airport precinct and Moreton Bay, the Brisbane Airport Conference Centre provides ease of access to some of the city's hottest shopping, dining and entertainment destinations. The ibis and Pullman offer guests access to a relaxed style bistro and café, and an a la carte restaurant.

For those seeking to experience Brisbane City and all it has to offer, the Brisbane Airport Conference Centre is located a short drive from the Skygate and DFO shopping precinct, Brisbane Entertainment Centre, Doomben and Eagle Farm Racecourses, Westfield Chermerside, Brisbane Cruise Terminal and Portside Wharf.

Transport

Car parking for delegates is available beneath the Brisbane Airport Conference Centre at a fee (please talk to our team for applicable pricing). Alternatively, parking is also available at

the Brisbane Airport multi-level carpark adjacent to the Conference Centre.

Skygate Shuttle is a complimentary service that operates between the Domestic Terminal, International Terminal and the Skygate precinct. From the Domestic Terminal, it is just a short walk to Brisbane Airport Conference Centre.

Travel with Airtrain between Brisbane Airport & the City in just 20 minutes. Airtrain have an exclusive discount offer for delegates. Please speak to our conference sales team for information on how to book.

Private and group charters can be arranged for you by our conference sales team. All pricing will be quoted on a request basis and will be dependent on your requirements.

Let us bring your vision to life

Are you researching Brisbane for an upcoming meeting or event? Whether you're planning, Brisbane Airport Conference Centre has released a Conference kit on the website. We can turn your ideas into reality. Tell us your future event plans and our team will take care of your needs and requirements. ✪

Contact us on h9559-sb@accor.com or (07) 3188 7373. For more details, visit our website at www.bneacc.com.au



BRIEFING

Keep up to date with the latest news surrounding the role of the EA



Is your employer tempting you?

As more businesses attempt to transition back to having workers in the office, employers are coming up with some creative ways to incentivise employees to work from home less. To gain a better understanding, business services provider Money Penny recently analysed 1000 job listings and surveyed 1000 office workers to gauge the most desired benefits.

The most popular offering is a pension but the research shows some other interesting perks on the table, too. With working from home second on the list, it's clear that some businesses are comfortable moving forward with the work model used throughout the pandemic. But this, of course, contrasts with the inclusion of benefits hoped to lure people back into the office – the gym, company events and cycling to work, for example.

Wondering about some of the quirkier benefits on offer? Take your pick from a free breakfast (0.6%), yoga sessions (0.4%), childcare vouchers (0.3%) and ski trips (0.1%).

- Pension: 41%
- Working from home 22%
- Gym: 12%
- Flexible working: 11%
- Sick pay: 11%
- Company events: 11%
- Casual dress: 10%
- Bonus scheme: 8%
- Wellness programmes: 8%
- Bike to work scheme: 7%

Looking at this from the employee point of view, there is clearly still a huge demand for working from home but pension and sick pay. Both pension and sick pay are featured as the top perks wished for by office workers at 42 and 41 per cent.

Benefits desired by employees that didn't make the top ten include; on-site cafes (7%), team nights out (4%) and yoga sessions (3%).

It's interesting to Ceri Henfrey, Chief Operating Officer at Money Penny said: "After spending months cooped up

indoors, having a healthy work-life balance is more important than ever.

"We believe that one of the ways to help keep your staff happy is to provide them competitive and useful benefits that will enhance their experience working for you.

"We're not surprised to see flexible working, wellbeing programs and more 'fun focused' perks being featured across the listings we analysed, however, it would be amazing to see more companies following suit in the future!"

Next, let's take a look at the benefits desired by employees, with results taken from the survey:

- Pension: 42%
- Sick pay: 41%
- Flexible work hours: 40%
- Ability to work from home: 30%
- On-site parking: 23%
- Death in service insurance: 21%
- Training: 20%
- Bonus scheme: 19%
- Free eye tests: 18%
- Time in lieu: 18% ✖

BRIEFING

Keep up to date with the latest news surrounding the role of the EA

2023 dates set for the Executive PA & Event Organisers Summits

You'll be glad to hear 2023 Executive PA and Event Organisers Summit dates have been set and applications are open for both suppliers and delegates. Summits provide a unique opportunity to meet suppliers on your terms and are a time efficient way to find out what's new in events.

This year will see two Summit streams: One for EAs and one – the Event Organisers Summit – for in-house event managers, experience officers, event management companies, teambuilding companies, associations and marketing managers.

During the series of one-day events, you'll enjoy tailored meetings, breakfast, lunch and post-event drinks, plus keynote speeches and intelligence briefings throughout the day.



Here's what previous attendees had to say...

"All the presenters were perfect and I loved the sense of humour everyone had. I've already passed on a few details, so they should expect to get business."

Donna Flynn, administration officer, UNSWIT

"The Summit was great. The number of attendees was comfortable and the agenda on time. I particularly liked the 'Five Minute Power Pitch' and roundtable presentations. I took away some personal tips and connected with a couple of the suppliers."

Tracey Roberts, executive officer to CEO, president and chair, RSL NSW

"What an amazing day! It ran so smoothly and every part was so informative. I learned a lot and it was great to network and meet other EAs. I would love to be part of these events going forward."

Patricia Letran, Data Addiction

Russell Peacock, Summit Organiser at Executive PA Media, believes professional event organisers are likely to be just as busy in 2023 as they were in the last half of 2022: "As international events slowly make their way back, domestic business event activity is going to continue to buzz. These events may be slightly smaller but there will be more of them and we're going to see some very creative ideas used to maximise budget and engagement."

He believes it will be the same for EAs pulling together business events for their bosses and organisations: "Back in 2016, independent research showed that EAs have average budgets of over a quarter of a million dollars. And every high-level assistant we've spoken with has said that rebuilding teams and focusing on employee re-engagement is high priority for their exec. Budgets for business events will increase this year – there's no question about it." 🗣️

Find out more and apply to attend a Summit near you: executivepa.com/summits

HOW TO APPLY



Scan the QR code for more information on the Executive PA Summits



Apply for a free place at:
Brisbane
23rd March 2023



Apply for a free place at:
Melbourne
11th May 2023



Apply for a free place at:
Sydney
27th July 2023



Apply for a free place at:
Auckland
19th October 2023

BRIEFING

Keep up to date with the latest news surrounding the role of the EA

Why prevention is better than cure when it comes to project burnout

Burnout is on the rise. Employees who were under stress before the pandemic often found that their workloads increased during it. With perks like business travel and social gatherings stripped away, the ‘always on’ culture that has been exacerbated by the digital transformation of organisations got worse.

With people spending their days on video meetings while working from home, they were often unable to separate their work lives from their personal lives. This led to increased levels of stress and anxiety but also caused people to reassess what they were looking for in their work.

Here, co-founder of leadership advisory service Wading Herons, corporate strategy guru and future of business expert Micael Johnstone explores what burnout is and how you can spot – and stop – it...

“A recent report by worldwide employment website Indeed found that over half of workers experienced burnout in 2021 while the World Health Organisation (WHO) places the cost of depression and anxiety to the global economy at \$17 trillion. Before Covid the WHO declared stress to be the single biggest health epidemic of the 21st century.

What is burnout and how to spot it?

Burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterised by the WHO as having three dimensions – feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from your job, or feelings of negativity or cynicism about work, and reduced professional efficacy/effectiveness.

Spotting burnout can help you recognise when things may be getting too much for you or your



colleagues. The 12 phases of burnout, as identified by psychologists Herbert Freudenberger and Gail North, are:

- Excessive drive/ambition and need to prove yourself and your value
- Pushing yourself to work harder/ being a workaholic
- Neglecting your own needs (self-care like sleep, exercise, socialising and eating well)
- Displacement of conflict (blaming others for pushing yourself too hard or you feeling stressed)
- Revision of values – family and friends seem less important.
- Denial – do you get impatient/ intolerant and blame others?
- Withdrawal – are you avoiding social interaction, or self-medicating with alcohol or drugs?
- Behavioural changes, including being snappy and aggressive
- Depersonalisation, feeling detached and questioning your value
- Inner emptiness and turning to external gratification through overeating, sex, alcohol or drugs
- Depression, feeling lost and fearing the future
- Burnout syndrome – a mental or physical collapse requiring medical attention.

Preventing burnout

I’ve experienced burnout myself and seen it impact colleagues, friends and

loved ones. As a dad I didn’t want my son to have to put up with the same stress and outdated ways of working.

Thankfully, many modern businesses know that the nine to five and daily commute is now a thing of the past. To keep the best talent, companies are essentially having to invert the old model where employees might work from home one day a week. They’re having to get really creative about how to engage teams and build loyalty and engagement. Days in the office need to be worth it to ensure people feel valued and listened to.

But such a radical change isn’t easy and organisations are having to rapidly reassess how they relate to their people. The tyranny of the office has been overturned and we know that our people can be trusted.

Unplugging and time for self-care and fun is absolutely vital to ensure employees get the right balance at work. Time to switch off is essential if we want creative, innovative and happy individuals and teams. In a world where machines are increasingly replacing humans at work, we need to use all our unique strengths that technology can’t replicate!

Three practical steps you can take:

- Build in time for self-care during the working week. Take time to eat properly and step away from your computer regularly. Get some fresh air!
- Digital switch-off. Make sure you’re not checking your emails and your phone after working hours or at the weekends, unless something really is an emergency!
- Share with a friend. Find a colleague, friend or loved one who you can check in with regularly to support each other, share problems and discuss how you’re feeling.” ❖

BRIEFING

Keep up to date with the latest news surrounding the role of the EA

Do you plan to stay home to cut commuting costs?

A survey of 1,000 Australian workers conducted by digital workplace platform Citrix Systems, Inc. has revealed that more than half are not returning to the office due to the rising cost of commuting – although things might change in winter because of high heating bills.

By working at home just one day a week, Australians are set to save \$394 in public transport costs over a year, according to the Productivity Commission. As such, 54% of office workers say they'll stay parked at home – and close to half of their counterparts around the world say they will do the same.

Nearly seven in 10 Australians (68%)

believe their employers should help them offset the costs of travelling to the office when they choose to by, either increasing their salaries or providing a fuel allowance. This aligns with expectations around the world:

- Mexico: 87%
- Brazil: 87%
- France: 84%
- Colombia: 84%
- Germany: 77%
- United States: 74%
- Australia: 68%
- Netherlands: 65%
- United Kingdom: 65%

However, in winter this may change

– 16% of Australians said they would work in the office more often during winter months to reduce the costs of heating their homes if higher prices persist. The good news? Employers that embrace flexible work models, technology and policies can accommodate these changes and keep their people and businesses performing at their best.

“The key to keeping employees engaged and productive lies in creating work-from-anywhere experiences that are seamless, fuel connection and collaboration, and empower people to do their best work, regardless of their location,” explains Martin Creighan, managing director at Citrix. ☘

EAs, meet your machine mates

Leading artificial intelligence (AI) expert Dr Catriona Wallace predicts AI-powered ‘robot’ colleagues will be a key part of business teams by 2030, helping to combat skills shortages, as Australia undergoes a significant post-pandemic digital transformation: “Over the next decade, AI will become even more wide-spread in life and work; in fact, we will interact with it hundreds of times a day, including when we’re sleeping,” she explains.

Dr Wallace recently partnered with digital workflow company ServiceNow to explore why AI will be at the heart of nearly everything we do within the next 10 years and revealed four key societal trends:

The emergence of ‘machine mates’
AI will move from tools to teammates with widespread virtual assistants helping people complete everyday work.



Digital employees will be considered intelligent, valuable co-workers and by 2025, machines will spend more time completing work than humans.

The rise of hyper-personalisation for both employees and customers
The worker of 2030 will prioritise self-care, take ‘me time’ more frequently and have a side hustle that they openly discuss with their employer. Bosses will

be expected to know their staff better, appreciate them more and help them find balance – and they’ll use AI to do it.

Ethical considerations will drive AI-adoption

AI ethics will move from an academic discussion to business strategy. Employees and customers will choose to work with brands that demonstrate, not just talk about, ethics, accessibility and fairness.

Issues diversity will redefine team success

Employers will embrace a ‘divided we stand, united we work’ mentality. ‘Agree to disagree’ will become the norm for societal issues like vaccinations, climate change, pandemics and technology. Managers will need to focus on finding value in divergent perspectives. ☘

MEMBER EVENTS



DATE TBC

Pullman Sydney Hyde Park

Located in Sydney, overlooking Hyde Park and a short walk from Museum Station, Pullman Sydney Hyde Park is contemporary, stylish and cosmopolitan. And it opens up new travel possibilities – did you know Oxford Street and the cities east are on your doorstep and Sydney International Airport is just 20 minutes away by car?

You'll find Pullman Sydney Hyde Park sets the tone for successful meetings and corporate functions in the Sydney CBD. There's space for you to work, create and connect in the 241 design-led rooms and suites, 10 flexible meeting rooms – not to mention the happening lobby.

Most function spaces are bathed in beautiful, natural light and offer pillar-free interiors – ultra-flexible for an event planning EA. Going big? The largest space can accommodate up to 250 guests for a conference or a cocktail-style function, and your attendees will enjoy gorgeous views of Hyde Park and the city to boot. Contemporary design sets the scene while a spacious workspace and complimentary Wi-Fi means you can simply plug in and get down to business as soon as you arrive.

If you're treating delegates to a feast, the Pullman's menus have been expertly created by executive chef

Biprajit Banerjee with one thing in mind: Getting the best out of your guests during their meeting. What more could you want from this playground for creating memorable meetings and events in the CBD?

pullmansydneyhydepark.com.au

HOW TO APPLY

A member event will take place in 2023 (dates to be confirmed). Register for our reader event at www.executivepea.com



MEMBER EVENTS

DATE TBC

Pullman & Mercure Brisbane King George Square

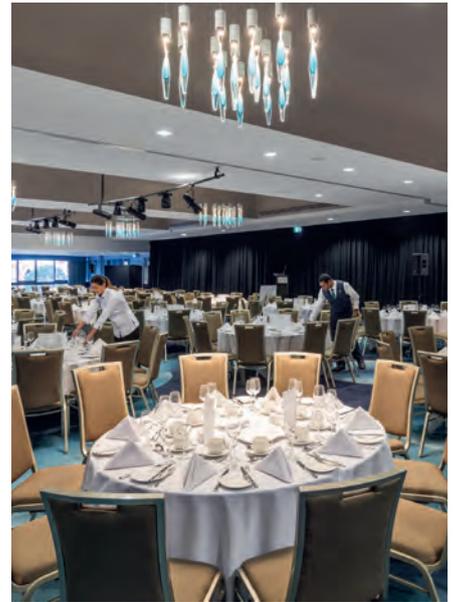
Pullman & Mercure's four- and five-star CBD hotels have won praises for inspired menus, excellent customer service, state-of-the-art function rooms and innovative solutions for all events and, boasting one of the River City's largest hotel conference space selections, Pullman & Mercure Brisbane King George Square doesn't disappoint.

It specialises in large conferences, trade shows and gala dinners but can also cater for smaller, intimate events and corporate meetings. High-level assistants will find a selection of conference packages and more than 1,000m² of flexible spaces, including the rooftop bar and pool deck area with amazing city views. There are also two huge ballrooms with large exhibit

access and multiple spaces with natural light and superb views of King George Square and the surrounding streets.

Innovation is at the forefront with the Pullman Co-Meeting concept; a new take on meetings that includes latest-generation equipment, innovative breaks and special-purpose meeting teams.

pullmanbrisbanekgs.com.au



HOW TO APPLY

A member event will take place in 2023 (dates to be confirmed). Register for our reader event at www.executivepa.com



DATE TBC

Pullman & Mercure Melbourne Albert Park



A neighbourhood hotel on the city edge, Pullman & Mercure Melbourne Albert Park is only moments from the hustle and bustle. And with more than 2,600m² of flexible function space, 32 adaptable venues and capacity for up to 1,600 delegates, the hotel is Melbourne's meeting hub.

A team of experienced in-house planners can unlock the potential of your Melbourne event with customised seating configurations, décor and design that brings your vision to life and the best in AV technology and connectivity. Delegates staying over? The hotel combines 378 Mercure & Pullman rooms with up to 500 on-site parking spaces, plus offers an in-house workout ready Fit Lounge, and a restaurant and bar.

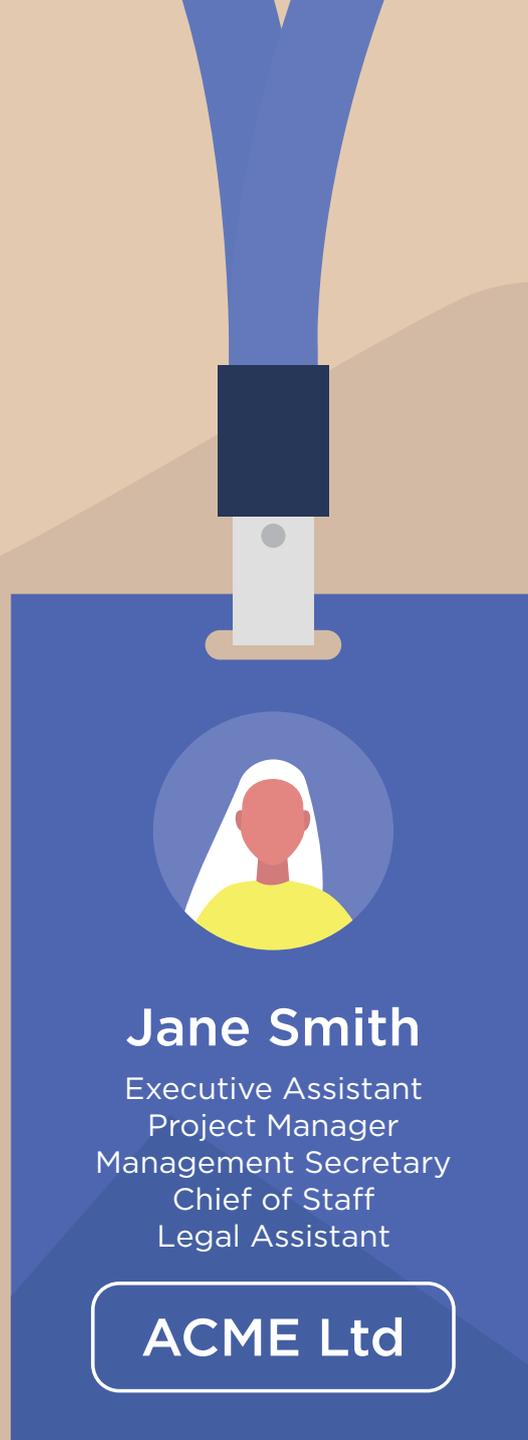
The city fringe location gives the convenience of easy CBD access along with peaceful park views. After hours, your guests can explore the laidback laneways in the city centre, recharge in cosmopolitan St Kilda or network in Southbank – all options are within a 10-minute drive.

pullmanalbertpark.com.au

HOW TO APPLY

A member event will take place in 2023 (dates to be confirmed). Register for our reader event at www.executivepa.com





WHAT'S IN A NAME?

PA, EA, advanced EA, legal assistant, project manager, management secretary, chief of staff... Continuing to mark 30 years of *Executive PA Magazine*, editor *Claire Muir* asks our readers what they are referred to in their high-level assistant role, and what it means to them.

Natalie Kennefick

EA to the CEO, Arriba Group

“I think there are pros and cons to the variety of titles. A major pro is that it allows for development within the role, as well as recognition that it’s more than it was in the past. A major con, though, is that it allows for confusion about what EAs do – and provides an opportunity for some employers to ‘hold down/back,’ or put us into a very outdated box.

This then impacts the views people have of us, the value we can add to a business and our monetary worth. Admins are traditionally paid lower as we’re perceived negatively due to the lack of understanding around our roles.

Something that I have seen in the market is employers wanting an EA but marketing the role as something else – an admin manager or office manager, for example. This can be used to cap the pay and have us do the ‘less desirable’ tasks that would have traditionally been looked after by someone in a secretary role. I believe very few executives and hiring managers understand the true strategic benefits of an EA, and this is often reflected in our salary.

On looking at recent job adverts, the number I saw looking for an EA with the headline ‘Are you my Donna Paulson?’ (referring to the character from *Mad Men*, a show based in an advertising agency back in the days when women were expected to ‘know their place’ at work) was mind boggling. The fact that this strapline is consistently used as a recruitment tool in 2022 is staggering and, to be honest, a little alarming!

Also, although many of these job adverts state that they need a ‘high calibre EA’ to run meetings, diary and be the



exec’s right hand, they also say you’ll be responsible for keeping the kitchen and meeting rooms clean and tidy. This shows that most businesses still see us as less than others in the office and it’s sad to see that this is just accepted. I’ve never seen a senior leader’s job description stating that they need to clean a kitchen...

Ultimately, what I’d like to see is the title of EA being phased out altogether. The role has evolved from traditional secretary to a business/strategic partner and if you’re lucky enough to have an executive that sees your worth in these areas, you’re much more than a traditional EA. But as long as the title has the word ‘assistant’ in it, there will always be a preconceived idea of what the role involves – and it will always have a lower value added to it.

The titles should move in a direction that truly reflects what we do and the impact we make on a business. How about business partner? Strategic partner? Operations partner? We hold a partnership role with our executives and the job title should reflect that, instead of screaming ‘I’m here to serve and assist you.’”

“We hold a partnership role with our executives and the job title should reflect that, instead of screaming ‘I’m here to serve and assist you.’”

● Holly Davies

Head of vice-chancellor's office,
University of the West of England

"I like the variety of titles. And I think, increasingly, there is a shift away from PA towards EA. It feels more modern and in keeping with what a lot of roles do – supporting executives. But I do feel it's difficult sometimes differentiating the hierarchy of executive support staff. Sometimes you end up with senior EA or executive officer or similar... Where does each one fit?

My role is a bit different as I'm responsible for the executive office in addition to directly supporting the vice-chancellor at the university. My title (head of vice-chancellor's office) is very specific to my sector, and I do love it. I feel it articulates what I do (leading the office) and commands respect to what I do. That's something that's often very sadly lacking when people view you as 'just an EA...' I think my title leads to people understanding the breadth of my role and that I'm responsible for the office as a whole – but perhaps not always that I'm a critical support to the vice-chancellor, too.

Career progression can be challenging for EAs and I said to my manager at a recent appraisal that I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't this! For some, being a career EA is absolutely what they want but for others who want to progress, it can be difficult. Project manager type roles, for example, often require qualifications and specific, related experience, while chief of staff (COS) can be a monumental leap from EA looking at some of the job descriptions out there.

Often salaries don't reflect the value of EAs, which adds yet another challenge. I think if there was a way of carving



out some of what a COS does (and, of course, having EAs heavily involved in this process), it would justify salary increases and provide a stepping stone for career progression down the line.

In a changing world where tech and automation are becoming more important, we need to be clear on the value of EAs – and shout about it. We also need to keep evolving to keep the role relevant and meaningful for the future. We need to keep up with the latest tech advances and use them to our benefit to enhance what we do.

The world is changing and we need to keep up with it! Fortunately, though, I think that execs are increasingly seeing the true value of their EAs. We are becoming recognised as someone who works alongside and in step with them, rather than beneath them."



Caroline D'Souza

Security coordinator at The National Gallery

"PA and EA titles have evolved from 30 years ago, as has the job role. I think it's now more specific and specialised.

My job is a good example of this as I'm now security coordinator. I'm still supporting multiple managers and senior management and, with hybrid working, one-to-one meetings are very important. Troubleshooting skills are also critical. We need to be working on issues before the boss even realises, leaving them to concentrate on their job. But I also lead on any queries on vetting, access control and security. And I take on specialised projects – auditing contractor companies for Baseline Personnel Security Standard compliance, for example.

Where I work, The National Gallery, values its staff and knows how important it is for everyone to work across the board as one team. What I think should come next for the PA/EA role is a secondment to various departments or companies, thus gaining experience in different fields and decision-making on behalf of the boss."

Jo Jones

Deputy chief of staff, Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

“Basically, the PA/EA/project manager/chief of staff roles all have very similar skill sets and all operate from the birds’ eye view of an organisation, seeing everything and saying nothing. The evolution of the position is down to a change in an organisation’s mindset and culture, and a recognition, from the leadership team of the importance of ‘that’ position in playing a pivotal role in the company’s success.

When I tell people that I’m a deputy chief of staff, the first thing I’m asked is: ‘Do you work for the military?’ I think it’s natural for people to make that assumption. Although the chief of staff (COS) role dates back centuries and actually originated in the military and/or government, the position nowadays is becoming much more common in many organisations.

Being COS you have a high number of activities to balance. I see the position as one that trades on trust and makes the absolute most of our time. We’re the air traffic controller, communicator and problem solver. You take ownership for the principal’s routine matters and are the decision maker for the day-to-day activities. And you act as a buffer between the principal and his/her direct reports, while offering advice, guidance and a space for the leadership team to think, discuss and vent where necessary. Diplomatic and sensitive, we have a values culture mindset and, I’m sure fellow COS will agree when I say we have masses of emotional intelligence and humility – two vital qualities to be competent in the job!

I was an EA for a long time and, in a previous role, my boss recognised me more as a COS – but when it was suggested to the chief operating officer that I perhaps had a review of my job specification and title, I was faced with negativity. I was told that he could see how I saw the roles being similar but said the organisation didn’t warrant having a COS at that time... Even though I was essentially doing that role! Years later, that company has now introduced the COS position, which makes me giggle.

In my opinion, the EA is, whether recognised or not, acting more like the COS role and has been for some time. But it seems to depend on the leadership of the organisation you work for whether they recognise the value of having the COS, whether they know what the role means and if they ‘get’ what it can help the leadership team achieve. It has been my experience throughout my career that leadership generally doesn’t know what good support looks like until they get it. Then they wonder how they ever survived without it!

Going back in time, when I started out as a PA a million years ago it was definitely more of a reactive role, supporting one person with specific tasks – calendar management, events, some budget management, meetings, expenses and so on. Now, the traditional PA role seems an old-fashioned approach, especially with the advancement of IT. The PA now generally supports multiple individuals and is no longer ‘personal’ to any one individual.

At my current organisation, we recently discussed whether all five directors need one-to-one PA support or not. My view is that they do not, and it led to a very interesting



conversation where input ranged from ‘I’m a director and should have a PA’ (status) to ‘Well, my PA doesn’t really do PA duties’ (not understanding what support is required) to ‘I couldn’t function without my PA’ (recognising the value of this skill set but perhaps the role needs redefining).

In one PA position, my boss thought it hilarious to refer to me as a rottweiler. I didn’t like it – I wasn’t rude or aggressive but I was a very good gatekeeper and this was achieved by building a good, reliable reputation with my stakeholder group. My previous boss’ approach, though, shows how misunderstood the role was/is. Years ago, I think it was accepted that a PA may let gatekeeping go to their head and, dare I say it, approach their day-to-day with a large ego. But as a COS who is satisfied with making an impact for the greater good while very rarely being in the spotlight, there’s no room for ego.

Next step up, the EA is more of a proactive, strategic role and is relied upon as such. There are still the specific tasks as above but throw into the mix email management, time management and decision-making on the activities and focus of your boss. You’re seen as a trusted partner and often parachuted into various groups, departments or functions to give direction or advice. Then you’re out again and moving on to the next thing!

Project manager is another title we’re often given – and it’s not surprising as managing projects has always played a part in the role of PA and EA. My current organisation has just introduced a ‘PM office’ with a ‘head of’ and several programme managers. These programme managers look after a variety of major operational projects within the business but, at the end of the day, we all have a very similar skill set.” ❁

A personal PA

Not your usual high-level EA, *Judith Sharon Willett* is a personal PA to Lord Harris of Peckham, owner of Harris Ventures Ltd, in Kent in the UK. We catch up with her as she celebrates ten years since being crowned PA of the Year at the Executive PA Media Awards...

Tell us about your career journey to date.

I trained as a secretary at the BBC then moved on another company. At that time there was no such thing as maternity leave, so I was a stay-at-home mum for six years with my two children. I returned to work as a secretary at a brewery based in East London for nine years. Then I started working at Carpetright in 1991 in the buying department. I was offered the role of PA to the chairman and chief executive, Sir Philip Harris (*pictured below*). I remained in that role until Lord Harris (he'd been elevated to the peerage in 1996) retired in September 2014. He asked me to go with him and work privately at his personal offices in Orpington, Kent, so I did just that.

How interesting! What are your main responsibilities?

Lord and Lady Harris are exceptional people, and they are extremely generous with their time and charitable donations. My role encompasses every asset of their lives and each day brings along its own challenges. I enjoy all aspects of my job but working on my own initiative is my greatest motivation as it shows the trust Lord Harris has to allow me this freedom.



He is an entrepreneur so has many interests and responsibilities which I am also involved in. He is a director of Arsenal Football Club, for example, which keeps him very busy. His son founded a company (flooring specialists, Tapi Carpets) in late 2014 and although I don't work for it directly, I get involved with arranging its events and corporate gifting. My love has always been arranging events and I've organised some fabulous parties for both the business and the Harris family.

What's been your favourite event to organise?

I've arranged many sales conferences (600+ delegates, so exhausting but very satisfying when it all goes well!) but my highlight would probably be Lord and Lady Harris' Golden Wedding in 2010 – an extremely special occasion for two special people.

What training and professional development have you undertaken?

My only professional training was at the BBC where I learnt to touch type and do shorthand. Apart from that I am completely self-taught, learning on the job. I'm quite proud that I can use the latest technology as so many of my age group find this a daunting prospect. I suppose I should say that life experience has been my training!

Tell us about your award win...

I was lucky enough to win Executive PA Media's PA of the Year award in 2012 and it was truly the highlight of my working career. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of my peers and having the opportunity to travel around the country sharing my experiences. Winning gave me more of a sense of purpose and realisation that what I experience every day in my role was something quite special.

Back to work – how is the work/life balance?

I have always been treated like part of the family. Lord Harris is very generous and always shows his appreciation for what I do. Our office is very relaxed – everyone works hard but has fun too. Since the pandemic I've been working from

“My top tip for EAs looking to create a great culture would be ‘never ask anyone to do anything that you wouldn’t do yourself.’”



home two days per week, which suits me travel-wise. My boss knows I’m only a phone call away and I can work as I would in the office.

What about benefits and perks?

Even though I am not actually employed by Tapi Carpets, I’m included as part of the Tapi family and they have recently been developing incentives. The company has introduced ‘Tapi Treats’, which include having your birthday off and, for five years’ service, receiving a £500 Virgin Experience voucher. I was, therefore, presented with my Virgin Experience and I’m using it to have a private dinner with my husband on our 45th wedding anniversary.

Do you have any direct reports?

Not now, but I did in my previous role. They were always extremely supportive and I’m still in touch with them. In fact, my husband and I are godparents to the children of one of them.

Finally, what are your top tips for senior level PAs looking to create a great culture in their organisation?

I would say never ask anyone to do anything that you wouldn’t do yourself. Treat everyone equally and as you would like to be treated yourself. Always be an ‘ear’ to listen, take note of any problems or concerns and make sure you act upon them. 🗣️

For more information on Executive PA Awards visit <https://executivepa.com/awards>

OFFICE ESSENTIALS

Discover apps, websites and products to make your days easier



ACCESSORIES

Ember Travel Mug²

ember.com

We enlightened you on how to keep your coffee warm with the Ember Mug2 in an earlier issue and, now, it comes in a funky travel version. For those not in the know, this clever invention connects to your smartphone with an app. You get a notification when its contents are at the perfect temperature and the heating element in the bottom of the mug will keep it warm until you've guzzled every last drop.

HEADPHONES

HyperX Cloud Alpha

hyperx.com

Marketed at gamers, these headphones would be amazing for a busy EA. With more than 300 hours of battery life, you could use them for more than two working weeks without a charge! In addition to this, you'll find they have a powerful, crisp sound and a truly excellent microphone quality – perfect for important conference calls.



NOTE-TAKING

Amazon Kindle Scribe

amazon.com

Amazon has come a long way since releasing its first Kindle and now you can make handwritten notes on it. Perfect for busy EAs taking instructions – but also if you like to take notes as you read your professional development books. Another bonus – it's one of Kindle's best displays so rest assured you'll be reading in bright lighting.

WELLBEING

Therabody Wave Roller

therabody.com

If you're planning more self care this year, this nifty gadget will help you factor it into your working day. Taking the traditional foam roller model and adding a whole lot of tech, the Therabody Wave Roller helps work out your aches and pains with vibration therapy and its wave-style texture. Its handy app will guide you through a routine and explain the customisable vibration frequencies.



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



AIME

ASIA PACIFIC
INCENTIVES AND
MEETINGS EVENT

13-15 FEBRUARY 2023

FIND YOUR EVENT
INSPIRATION IN MELBOURNE



REGISTER NOW



AIME.COM.AU



AIME 2023: *bigger and better!*

Its first fully in-person event in three years, AIME 2023 in Melbourne is shaping up to be a cracker. *Brad Foster* found out what'll be in store for attending EAs...



If even a small part of your role involves organising meetings and events, then AIME is for you! And, luckily, there's still time to register to attend Australia's largest gathering of meeting and event planners and suppliers at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre in February.

With more than 300 exhibitors expected (giving you the opportunity to talk directly to the latest venues and product suppliers from Australia and further afield) it's a definite time-saver compared to have to scroll through hundreds of web pages.

You'll find convention bureaux from every Australian state and territory, and plenty from New Zealand. Why not give these organisations with a brief about your event and let them do the heavy lifting for you – all free of charge!

The event kicks off with a full day of conference sessions, dubbed The Knowledge Program by organisers. The theme is Your Industry. Your Opportunity. And focuses on looking at future potential for the events industry. After much upheaval, renewal and refocus, how can you use this time in history to emerge stronger and more important to your clients' businesses and industries?

The exhibition component starts the following day, although not before the traditional evening welcome event. Don't forget to check out the Ideas Academy, too. This will be an intimate space with short, thought-provoking sessions led by some of AIME's exhibitors. Each session is delivered silently via individual headphones, creating a more engaging experience. ☺

Stellar speaker line-up at AIME Knowledge Program

Before the exhibition begins, the AIME Knowledge Program will wow you with its stellar line-up of speakers, including the much-love retired tennis professional, Jelena Dokic...

The 30th anniversary of Australia's premier business event is sure to be a great one with an incredible line-up of speakers and topics on the day prior to the exhibition kicking off – savvy EAs will find plenty of inspiration and ideas.

The theme of this year's event poses the question of what's next for the events industry and the focus is on wellbeing, and IQ and EQ development. The program has been designed to make attendees feel engaged and renewed, and to return to their desks armed with new skills to take their events and their career to the next level.

Set to be particularly inspiring is one special keynote: Tennis ace, and now commentator and mental health advocate, Jelena Dokic (*right*). She has had a well-documented life and career both on and off the court. Her rapid ascent through the world rankings, including defeating then world number 1, Martina Hingis, at just 16 years of age, was marred by her off-court struggles.

She has since penned the best-selling autobiography *Unbreakable*, a book that details her life and career. Her work talks of her struggles of being a refugee, and dealing with poverty, racism, bullying and discrimination. She also talks about the physical and emotional abuse she suffered for over 20 years at the hands of her father, which started when she was just six years old, and discusses how she dealt with depression and contemplating suicide.

As a motivational speaker she talks on mental health and empowerment and, courtesy of ICMI as part of The Knowledge Program at AIME, she'll talk in detail on resilience.

Another session, presented by Tim Jack Adams, will ask whether your organisation is thriving or just surviving. Tim,



a wellness expert, believes that pre-COVID wellbeing was a subtle footnote but sees it's now a prominent keynote. He'll examine the impact working remotely is having on people.

Then a look at our future work life will be examined by Professor Ben Hammer, one of Australia's few accredited futurists and a global expert on the future of work. He says we may still be a long way off the flying cars predicted by *The Jetsons* but some things – robot maids, smart watches, video calls, and holograms, for example – are all part of life as we know it today. Ben believes there can be a lot of fear about the future, however by better understanding it, we can find our place within it.

Finally, Allan Briggs will lead a session on *Creating Order From A Chaotic World*, with a particular focus on leadership. His view is that in an increasingly fragile world we need good leadership more than ever, with leaders succeeding by focusing on trust, integrity and hope. ✖

The Knowledge Program at AIME is a ticketed event for Hosted Buyers, Hosted Media and Exhibitors. Visitor Buyers can purchase an upgrade to attend The Knowledge Program. For more information visit www.aime.com.au

Professor Ben Hammer: Accredited futurist

In this keynote, you'll get:

- An introduction to futures thinking and its application in work and life
- A series of current day innovations that show the future isn't as far away as we think
- Forecasts for what life and work could look like in 2035
- What the future means for today and why we should be optimistic about it.

EXECUTIVE PA — SUMMIT —

“This event will more than justify your day out of the office”



A unique free event designed for busy senior and executive level assistants who want to source business travel, events and meetings solutions providers in a business-like, yet relaxed environment over the course of a professional development day with world-class speakers.

To apply to attend please visit www.executivepa.com

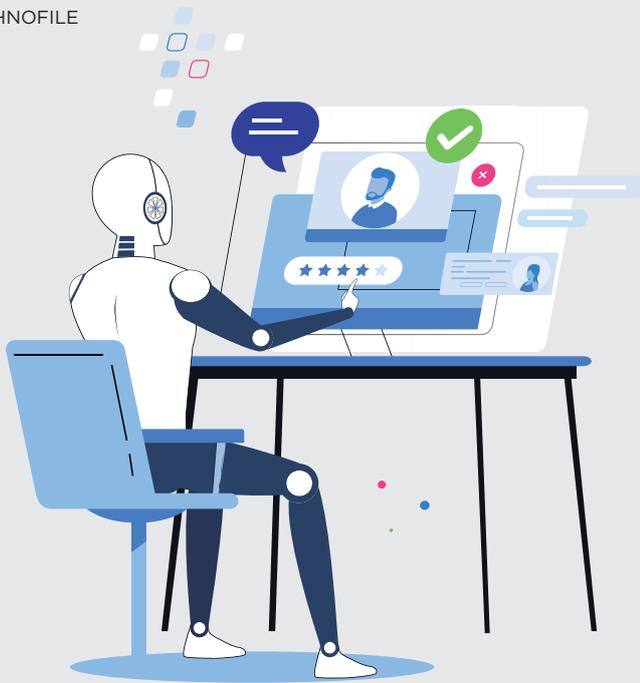
SPL LEARNING & MEDIA

2023 Dates

Brisbane	23 March
Melbourne	11 May
Sydney	27 July
Auckland	19 October

NEW
DATES





Tech and recruitment – what’s going on?

Whether you’re searching for that new position or seeking the best candidate, tech expert *Tim Stackpool* outlines some of the new technology you can expect to encounter...



THE EXPERT

Tech expert Tim is the technology writer for Executive PA Media. He can be heard on talk radio in Australia and is a tech presenter who speaks at conferences and trade shows about technology’s impact on work and lifestyle.

The cost of individual recruitment can run into the thousands, so tech is being relied on to ensure the best candidate is recruited every time. Don’t be surprised if any of these technologies become part of your job search or candidate-hunting journey...

Smart writing assistance

A new breed of language analysis tools, such as TEXTIO, can cement corporate culture or help nail that application. Think about how the inadvertent use of hidden gender expectation might discourage an applicant or employer (consciously or subconsciously) purely because the word ‘nurture’ was used instead of ‘manage’ – now, writing assistant software can ensure unconscious bias in job advertisements or applications is minimised.

This type of software can also be used beyond recruitment. Corporations have reported success using the same technology for developing cultural change within an organisation or turning data into meaningful language.

Automated applicant tracking

Technology has been employed for this purpose for over 20 years with varying degrees of success – and there is truly a love/hate relationship in this realm between recruiters and candidates alike. But machine screening is here to stay – a human will take at least two minutes even for the most cursory observation of a resume while software can take mere seconds.

An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) becomes more important after this step. ATS should be used to send ‘rejection’ letters, even within a matter of hours, and move other applicants onto the next stage. Given that around 75% of applicants never hear any response from recruiters and 60% are left in the dark after an interview (worldwide average), resume screening combined with an exceptional ATS reduces the risk of poor candidate experiences. That also means less chance of a negative review on Glassdoor for the company.

Chatbots

Chatbots, like offered by PHENOM, can work well to initially connect both candidates and recruiters. For recruiters it can help attract the right talent, showcase the brand, build a strong talent pipeline and convert best-fit applicants. For candidates, it can be a non-confronting way to make first contact with a preferred employer, determine whether there is an appropriate cultural fit and quickly learn of the skills required of any role.

One other advantage? Use the chatbot to subsequently schedule an interview with a qualified candidate. Scheduling links can be generated and used by candidates once they’ve passed the filtering questions. And unlike a human recruiter, a chatbot can talk to candidates 24/7, so they can answer questions and filter candidates much faster across multiple time zones.

Interviews with artificial intelligence

This is where both Zoom and in-person interviews can head to the next level. We all know HR managers who are ‘a good judge of character’, but what if an algorithm could analyse facial expressions like furrowing your brow (or raising eyebrows), eye-widening, chin raising or smiling?

It’s also important to ensure an objective and non-biased approach is made to recruiting. That’s where TENGAI positions itself. It’s designed to ask neutral, non-leading questions that accurately assess a candidate’s soft skills without any form of bias. The personnel recommendations are then presented as scientifically factual.

It can also deal with volumes of work much more quickly. Hiring speed critical? Trial AI tech as recruitment turnaround can be significantly shortened – and candidates can be confident of an objective and measured consideration. ✖



VICTORIA PAVILION
MELBOURNE SHOWGROUNDS

MELBOURNE'S PREMIER EVENT VENUE



THE ONLY LIMIT IS YOUR IMAGINATION

Centrally located only a short distance from Melbourne's CBD, with onsite parking and convenient access to public transport, Victoria Pavilion is perfect for all types of events, from conferences and gala dinners through to award presentations and cocktail parties.

A BLANK CANVAS FOR YOUR DREAM EVENT

Architecturally-designed, featuring a spectacular purpose-built atrium with floor to ceiling windows and complete with state-of-the-art sound and lighting, Victoria Pavilion is an event organiser's dream, offering an unprecedented flexible floorplan and a blank canvas – a timeless, neutral colour palette to bring your vision to life.

Let us help turn your ideas into a spectacular reality. Contact us at:

+61 3 9281 7444 | info@melbourneshowgrounds.com | melbourneshowgrounds.com

Desired destinations



After two and half years of separation from family, friends and colleague, getting out & about is back. And with employee re-engagement and the rebuilding of teams now top of your executive's list, 2023 is going to be a busy one for business events and travel.

We explore some venues and destinations offering new, memorable or usual experiences that will make your next event stand out.

Tourism New Zealand
page 33

Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley Resort
page 34

Phillip Island Pages
page 36

Marnong Estate
page 38

Penrith Panthers
page 40

If you seek a transformational event, it's here to find

New Zealand is extending an invitation to incentive planners who seek more through extraordinary travel.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of transformational travel. Engaging with unique cultural experiences that provide an authentic window into people and places. Immersion in nature that both revitalises the visitor and the environment. Exploring somewhere new and inspiring but enjoying experiences that connect.

The logical next step for our sector is 'transformational events'.

Tourism New Zealand's first 100% Pure New Zealand global campaign post-pandemic, *'If You Seek'* showcases how New Zealand rewards those curious enough to look a little deeper and go a little further to discover more authentic, meaningful connections.

It extends to conferences and incentives too, with an emphasis on the activities that can be added to an agenda that are far from generic.

René de Monchy, Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand, says: "Aotearoa New Zealand is a place for those who pursue meaningful connections with culture, people, and the environment.

"Those curious manuhiri [visitors] are rewarded with a rich experience of our beautiful country and are met with manaakitanga [a deep expression of hospitality and reciprocal



understanding/connection]. These are visitors who we think will explore more deeply and ultimately contribute to New Zealand's tourism sector in ways beyond the economic benefit."

A sneak peek of how to create an incentive with a difference in New Zealand includes:

Cultural connection: Visitors can feel the thrill of facing a traditional Māori pōwhiri welcome or accepting a wero (challenge). Incentive groups can learn about and take part in the storytelling of a haka or poi dance. Engaging with New Zealand's indigenous Māori culture can provide a platform to expand on your organisation's own culture and values.

Revitalising nature: The idyllic nature of New Zealand's diverse landscapes amazes and inspires. Making positive event choices, such as opting for the forest zipline that ploughs profits back into pest eradication, or the whale and dolphin safari that contributes

directly to marine conservation, means that experience is protected for future generations.

Embracing the unique: Great places to eat, comfortable places to sleep, and a means of transport are essentials to the smooth running of an event. But why not elevate it? From the venues nestled amongst native bush, to cooking your meal in a geothermal pool, or taking a jet boat transfer to get from the airport to the hotel, every experience can add to a memorable event.

Seeking the extraordinary options that will ensure a transformational event adds value to an incentive already packed with amazing activities, innovative content and stunning scenery. 🌟

If you seek more, visit businesssevents.newzealand.com





Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley

A WORLD AWAY IN UNDER AN HOUR

Who needs to hop on a plane or drive for days when you can be in one of Sydney's most luxurious country retreats in under an hour from the city?

The Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley, just 45 minutes from the Sydney CBD, has an enviable reputation as one of the greatest boutique venues in the country. This is true for the simple fact of its repeat client list. They come, they meet, they relax, they leave, and they return to do it again.

Set on eight hectares of manicured gardens, the Crowne Plaza is nestled between the historic villages of Windsor and Richmond in the lush Hawkesbury region of Sydney.

The resort, like the area, is a special place, oozing country charm with all the modern conveniences of those found in the big city.

It's the kind of place that seems to

almost instantly brush off any of the stresses you might have been feeling as soon as you turn into the drive and meander along the tree-lined entryway.

The property underwent a multi-million dollar refurbishment of its 105 rooms and suites in 2021, providing guests with the latest in styling, technology and comfort, all with environmental considerations in mind through the use of low consumption LED lighting.

The fully renovated bathrooms feature frameless glass walk in showers, free standing soaker baths, premium Kohler tap wear, and elegant stone and timber floating vanities with illuminating mirrors.

There are eight room types ranging from queen configurations to king bed Executive Suites with balcony views to the Blue Mountains. The most lavish option is the three-bedroom Bilpin Suite complete with two bathrooms, a kitchen and a separate dining and lounge. Definitely the room of choice for your company CEO.

Beyond the accommodation rooms – if you can drag yourself out of them – are three dining outlets, a welcoming reception area, 10 light-filled meeting and event spaces, an indoor heated pool and the Villa Thalgo Day Spa.

The property's signature restaurant is Harvest, often rated the best in Windsor, which is committed to



sourcing and partnering with local suppliers. Menus are seasonal and include delicacies like Windsor Duck and Pistachio Ravioli.

Like Harvest, Barracks Bar is a popular venue for locals and guests, providing a relaxed ambience with a touch of country hospitality, complete with an open fireplace. Barracks Bar has an extensive range of wines, spirits, beers and cocktails and features home-grown award-winning ciders from Hillbilly Cider based in nearby Bilpin, and gin from local Karu Distillery.

Meetings, Events & More

When it comes to meetings and events, the Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley has all bases covered.

There are 10 event spaces in total, the largest of which can accommodate up to 250 people theatre-style.

And the beauty of this property is that the expansive grounds surrounding the resort means that indoor meetings can spill into the outdoors where morning and afternoon tea breaks, lunches and even evening events can be held. A number of meeting rooms have direct access to the gardens.

Some groups take advantage of this further by creating team-building-style experiences with local professionals just beyond the conference rooms.

Those staying for two or more days are encouraged to shake off the cobwebs together in one of the many activities available within the region. These include the Tree Tops Adventure Park, the iFly Indoor Skydiving centre, Indy 800 Go-Karting, the Wild Cats Conservation Centre and the Tobruk Sheep Station.

Nature lovers can pick apples in nearby Bilpin or sample cider. The Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley has an exclusive arrangement with Bilpin Hillbilly Cider where master cider makers come to the resort to treat guests to a cider tasting masterclass.

The same is possible with the local award-winning gin makers Karu Distillery, with a tasting right on-site.

Both are wonderfully unique ways to break up a conference program.

Country Hospitality & Value For Money

Sydney-based EAs are no doubt aware of the high prices currently being

quoted for Sydney CBD venues. Not to mention the challenges many are having with finding experienced staff.

There are no such issues at the Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley. As expected accommodation and meeting room hire rates are more conducive to those found in regional areas, and the property has a strong team of local employees, many of who have been working at the venue for many years.

Having played host to everything from product launches to board meetings to corporate retreats and sales conferences, and not to mention weddings, the Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley should be your resort destination of choice for at least one of your upcoming event programs.

So what are you waiting for? Visit www.cphawkesburyvalley.com.au, jump in your car and do a site inspection yourself. It won't disappoint. ☘

www.cphawkesburyvalley.com.au



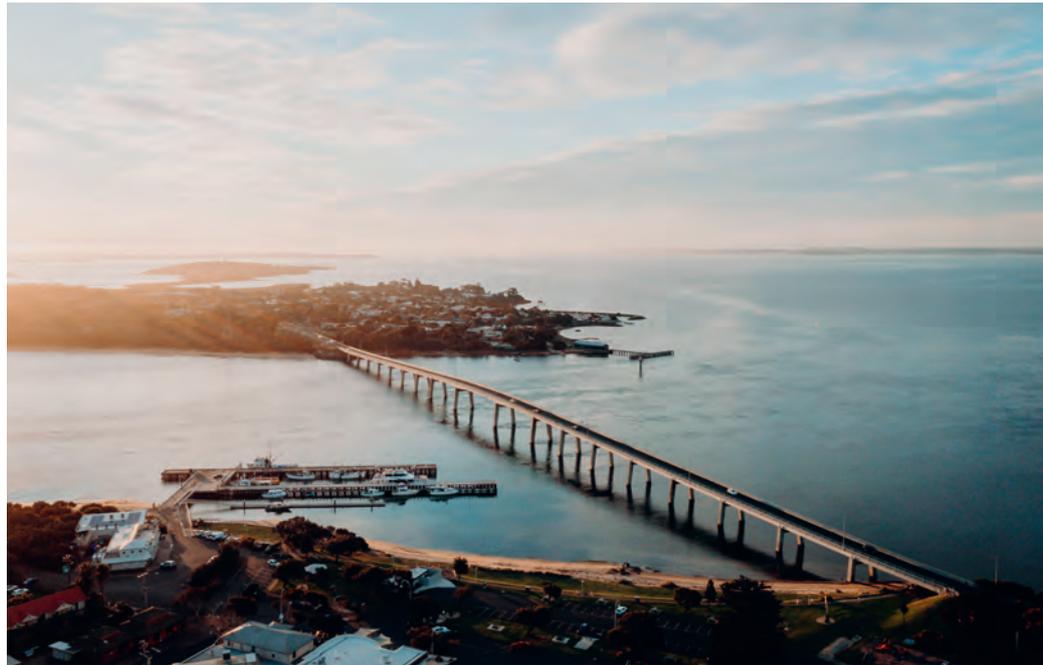
Discover Phillip Island

Welcome to Phillip Island, one amazing place – home to 101 square kilometres of extraordinary experiences and a unique range of boutique conferencing venues, just 90 minutes southeast of Melbourne

From cruising to watching masses of fur seals sun themselves on Seal Rocks to enjoying lunch at a winery or taking to the skies on an exhilarating scenic helicopter flight, whichever direction you head, there's fun to be found for all delegates.

Your Business Meeting Destination

Breathe life into your next corporate event by bringing your team together on Phillip Island. Only 90 minutes from Melbourne, Phillip Island has all the elements conference event organisers look for when planning an event. If you're planning a conference, executive retreat, team building weekend or product launch, Phillip Island is a destination with a difference. At first glance, your guests will be blown away by the island's



phenomenal coastal landscapes, but soon enough, they'll also grow to appreciate Phillip Island's other charms. You can host a board meeting nestled amongst the world's largest little penguin colony, a conference overlooking the stunning southern coastline of Phillip Island and out towards Australia's largest fur seal colony, throw an end-of-year cocktail party in a trendy winery or book luxury cabins for a team building getaway – there's a function space just right for you on Phillip Island.

Your Incentive Destination

If you want to reward your hardworking team with exceptional food and drink experiences, thrilling wildlife encounters, and access to a bounty of beaches, put Phillip Island on your incentive trip list. A compact, easily accessible island that ticks the boxes of foodies, surfers, wildlife lovers, outdoors enthusiasts and beachgoers alike, the universal appeal of Phillip Island makes it a winning



incentive trip destination. If you're hoping to create an incentive trip that captures your team's attention, look no further than Phillip Island.

Your Experiences Destination

The island is famous for its Little Penguin parade and the legendary Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix, but there's much, much more to see and do. No matter what time of year you visit, there's 101 square kilometres of island magic to be discovered. With easy access from Melbourne and Melbourne airport, Phillip Island is just 90 minutes from Melbourne CBD and connected to the mainland via a bridge. Cross over the bridge and experience what makes Phillip Island a unique business events destination like no other. ✖

www.visitphillipisland.com.au



Phillip Island - A Destination With A Difference

Welcome to Phillip Island, home to 101 square kilometres of extraordinary experiences and a unique range of boutique conferencing venues, just 90 minutes southeast of Melbourne.

visitphillipisland.com.au

Welcome to Marnong Estate

Explore Marnong Estate and experience estate-grown wines, gourmet cuisine and stunning landscapes, all on Melbourne's doorstep

La Vetta

We have opened the doors to La Vetta. Experience the refined beauty of Italian dining overlooking the Macedon Ranges. Esteemed chef Salvatore Giorgio leads the inspired menu. The deep love of Italian food and wine has formed a formidable bond between owner and chef; the result of which is the beautifully elegant dining experience at La Vetta. Enjoy a moment of culinary indulgence complimented by our very own award winning cool climate wines.

La Vetta Cocktail Bar

A sophisticated and stylish addition to our offering. Relax in a comfortable lounge chair and sip a carefully curated cocktail of our own design. Our drinks list is a modern interpretation of classic Italian cocktails, aperitivo and digestive. Whether it is a La Vetta Martini; a La Vetta Manhattan or a Giordino di Marnong you will find the perfect pre or post dinner selection with the ambience to match.



Private Dining Rooms

Located at opposite sides of La Vetta these spaces are nestled away for your own privacy. With dedicated wait staff; enhanced menu offerings and polished finishings these rooms always impress. With a smaller room taking a maximum of 24 guests and the larger room a maximum of 30 guests these spaces allow you to create an intimate and memorable experience.



Accommodation

Luxuriously appointed and architecturally designed; these generous lodgings are set amongst the pristine backdrop of the Macedon Ranges. Relax on your private balcony and surrender to the rural way of life. A finalist in the 2022 Victorian Accommodation Awards for Excellence we offer 20 beautifully appointed rooms overlooking the Macedon Ranges. With a current capacity of 34 our growth and vision for the property sees more accommodation complimenting the picture in early 2023.

Executive Planning/Retreats

Perfectly positioned for boutique conferencing we are located 15 minutes from Melbourne Airport and 35 minutes from the CBD. Our 1840's Homestead offers a unique space perfect for high level executive meetings. 4 luxury suites complete the offering and provide a complete oasis for your most senior teams.

Additional dynamic conferencing spaces offer a seamless flow from meetings to breakout activities. Our Green Grove is a light filled contemporary space perfect for all types of standing and seated events for up to 100 guests. The Woolshed is historical in character with a rural and relaxed feel suited for up to 140 guests.

The Angliss Room is our largest space. Beautifully situated above La Vetta with sunset views and catering for up to 300 delegates in a theatre style format.

Seasonal menus are tailored for the ultimate dining experience and our day delegate packages will surprise and delight.

Team Building and Employee Engagement

Offering an abundance of indoor and outdoor spaces Marnong Estate is the ideal venue to promote teamwork, leadership and communication activities. Partnering with leading industry providers who will guide you on team activities tailored to achieve your outcomes. From murder mystery dinners to mad minutes and rock trivia there is something to challenge and entertain every delegation.

Corporate Car Services

Allow us to recommend our corporate car services to whisk your delegates away from the airport to the serene surrounds of our 1200 working farm and vineyard. From carousel to carpark; from CBD to our rural retreat; we can move individuals or groups of up to 50 with ease. ✪

marnongestate.com.au

EXECUTIVE PA
— MEDIA —

UNCOMMON QUALITY

ON TWITTER 

@paoftheyear



Panthers Group ink deal with Accor for Pullman Sydney Penrith

The Panthers Group has signed an agreement with Accor for a new five-star Pullman hotel at the Penrith Panthers precinct in Western Sydney

Opening in the fourth quarter of 2023, the landmark precinct will consist of an upscale 153-room Pullman Sydney Penrith hotel, a 1,000-person conference centre and a community centre. The project will transform the area and create a new state-of-the-art business and entertainment destination for the local community and visitors alike.

The hotel is adjoined to and will service the new 1,250sqm Western Sydney Conference Centre (WSCC), which will complement the Group's current meetings and events business and host industry tradeshow, exhibitions and other major events.

Panthers Group Chief Executive Officer, Brian Fletcher, said: "Pullman Sydney Penrith will be an elevated addition to Western Sydney's tourism offering and builds upon the existing and upcoming new amenities within the Panthers precinct and the wider Penrith locale. It is part of our ongoing commitment to deliver world-class facilities to the local community. This development will further enhance Penrith's reputation as a world-class event and tourism destination."

The City of Penrith is on the precipice of a significant tourism boom, with additional major infrastructure works underway to further enhance the



destination, including the upcoming Western Sydney International Airport just a 30-minute drive away (set to open in 2026).

Accor Pacific Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Derry, said: "We are thrilled to partner with the Panthers Group to deliver Pullman Sydney Penrith. Western Sydney is widely renowned as the engine room of Sydney and we are incredibly proud of our thriving hotels and incredible teams here.

"Pullman Sydney Penrith will offer leisure and business travellers memorable guest experiences and superb facilities and, once open, this hotel will quickly become the leading accommodation choice in Penrith.

"Sport plays a crucial role in Australian culture and, by tourism and sporting organisations working together, our guests have the ability to enjoy incredible experiences and service."

This landmark new hotel announcement is off the back of Accor's seven year deal for the naming rights of Accor Stadium at Sydney's Olympic Park, which delivers incredible experiences for ALL – Accor Live Limitless loyalty

members, owners and clients.

The community centre will serve as a hub for local organisations to operate from, with flexible space for a broad range of community programs. The Panthers Group anticipate this space as a flexible, multi-purpose venue that will enable organisations within the Penrith Community that are helping challenged and vulnerable locals to expand their programs and operate within a state-of-the-art building close to all local amenities.

Located at the foot of the Blue Mountains, WSCC and Pullman Sydney Penrith is perfectly positioned at the gateway to Western Sydney. In the City of Penrith, Accor also operates Mercure Penrith, which is located adjacent to the Penrith Panthers precinct and will continue to work with the Panthers Group. 📍

westernsydneyconferencecentre.com.au



WESTERN
SYDNEY
CONFERENCE
CENTRE



One Destination. Endless Possibilities.

World-class conference centre and 5-star
Pullman hotel coming to Panthers Precinct in 2023.

Now taking bookings. Call or email today on 02 4720 5511
or info@westernsydneyconferencecentre.com.au.



VENUE MENU

Read up on the latest venues to unveil a new look or throw open its doors



Wellington's new convention centre on track for mid-2023 opening

Looking for a new New Zealand venue for next year? Take a look at Wellington's purpose-built convention and exhibition centre, Tākina.

It's set to open mid-2023 – but do plan to get in there early because before the doors have even opened bookings have gone through the roof!

Sitting across two levels and suitable for large gatherings of up to 1,600 delegates, event sizes booked to date will see guest lists of between 300 and

1,500. While 50 of the 70+ bookings are for the venue's first 12 months, Tākina has also seen growing international interest from EAs, PAs and event planners working on longer lead times.

Those who have had a sneak peek will know the stunning building exterior is now complete, with the roof and façade finished to a high standard. There are an impressive 1,300 glass panels across the building's curved profile but it's not just visually stunning

– the panels been designed using cutting edge engineering tech to reduce heat entering the building from the sun, thereby lowering the peak cooling requirements and associated energy.

Whilst you and your delegates are at the venue next year, bear in mind that Wellington is a surprise package to first-time visitors. There are plenty of things to see and do 'beyond the ballroom,' and we can thoroughly recommend the vibrant food scene. ✖

Veriu Queen Victoria Market now open

Event-booking EAs will be delighted to hear that the all-new Veriu Queen Victoria Market apartment-style hotel in Melbourne is open for business.

As is often the case with recent new-build accommodation venues in Melbourne, this is one stylish property that would tick all the boxes

of a PA looking for something a little less ordinary. Featuring 110 micro apartments inspired by the vibrancy of the adjacent Queen Victoria Market, the property includes a 24/7 reception, pool and gym, plus rooms with cooking facilities and, most importantly for event-planning EAs, a dedicated

conference lobby and break-out meetings space.

Booking a meeting, event or away day elsewhere? Bear in mind that Veriu Group's portfolio includes Veriu and Punthill branded properties in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. ✖

VENUE MENU

Read up on the latest venues to unveil a new look or throw open its doors

Devonport welcomes a Novotel

Overlooking the Mersey River, the new venue boasts an unrivalled waterfront location close to the Spirit of Tasmania terminal, and the 187-room hotel includes a signature restaurant and bar, 24-hour room service, a fitness centre and a small meeting room for up to 20 delegates.

Those at the helm say Novotel Devonport's offering is tailored to suit smart, successful business and leisure travellers who value great guest service and leading design – sound like something your delegates may appreciate?

With one of the largest brand footprints across Australia and New Zealand, Novotel has more than 40 hotels in key metropolitan and leisure destinations. The brand's global reputation for intuitive, modern design and rewarding guest experiences is expected to make Novotel Devonport a popular attraction in the city, which



has historically been undersupplied with quality accommodation offerings despite being a major gateway for tourism and trade.

“The presence of this popular international brand will expose

Devonport and the greater northern Tasmania region to a broader market and contribute to the region's ability to attract major conferences, events and groups,” said the company's Accor Pacific CEO, Sarah Derry. ✖

A new level of luxury on the Gold Coast



Get ready for a new level of luxury because The Langham, Gold Coast officially opened last year! The 339-room property is the first development with direct beachfront access to be built on the Gold Coast in 30 years. And your delegates will love that it boasts

unobstructed beachfront views, opulent designs and a range of premium dining experiences – including the famous Langham afternoon tea.

At the official opening ceremony, general manager John O'Shea said that after months of preparation and

excitement, the hotel team was thrilled to finally welcome guests to Australia's newest luxury destination: “Our vision for this new hotel has always been to bring The Langham's legendary legacy of elegance and luxury to life in an equally iconic beachfront location.”

He continued: “This is our very first beachfront property and we're absolutely delighted to bring these stunning ocean views into the Langham legacy.”

Welcoming the property into the city's growing tourism portfolio, Destination Gold Coast CEO Patricia O'Callaghan added that the hotel will be highly sought after in the Asia Pacific region: “The Langham is an internationally renowned luxury brand that will help to raise the Gold Coast's profile for sophisticated and premium offerings.” ✖

MEMBER EVENT REVIEWS



Hidden Gem in the Hawkesbury

Did you know that just a short 45-minute drive from the Sydney CBD, you and your delegates can escape the city and experience the best of what the Hawkesbury Valley has to offer?

Executive PA members were invited to test this out as guests of Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley, the only 4.5 star hotel in the beautiful region. It not only offers exceptional function spaces but unique experiences too, from locally distilled gin tastings and delicious farm gate trails to adventurous high ropes courses and breathtaking lookouts.

The overnight famil included the Hawkesbury Valley Wine Tour, sunrise yoga on the deck, breakfast in the gazebo, giving EAs a real taste of what the venue could offer them and their execs.

cphawkesburyvalley.com.au

What the EAs said...

“Not only is the Crowne Plaza a remarkable resort with many desirable event spaces and newly refurbished accommodation, service was exceptional from all the staff and local businesses we toured. There were so many surprises and gifts that made the whole experience unforgettable. This is definitely somewhere I’m looking forward to revisiting, not only for business but personally. I’d highly recommend it to family, friends and business colleagues.”

Susan, senior EA to the CEO, KHA Defence

“It’s a fantastic hotel. The rooms are lovely and spacious, and the grounds are gorgeous. It’s just so peaceful. The meeting rooms have a lot of natural light and majority of them offer access to an outside area. The team at the Crowne Plaza...

Wow, what a dynamic team! From the general manager to the events team and all other staff, they just made us feel so welcome. It was like being with old friends and they seriously couldn’t have gone more out of their way for us. It was great to explore the Hawkesbury Valley and everything it has to offer. I’m excited to do something out there for my leadership team.”

Ash, EA, Salesforce

“The event was an absolute success. It was a lovely mix of getting to know the venue, the vendors, local businesses and, of course, fantastic networking with other EAs. Kai and her team went above and beyond showcasing their venue, spaces and catering.”

Kate, EA, PWC

MEMBER EVENT REVIEWS



Experience the Art of Cantonese Cuisine at Silks Crown Sydney

Synonymous with the harmonious flavours of the southern regions of China, Silks brings traditional Cantonese cuisine to Crown Sydney. Some lucky EAs experienced this as expert chefs took them on a journey of discovery based on excellent food, impeccable service and an elegant atmosphere.

They enjoyed a modern take on authentic flavours and dishes, where Eastern and Western cooking techniques were blended with a

modern, sophisticated flair to give a fresh taste on traditional Cantonese cuisine. The food was served in a beautifully presented dining space – one of nine impeccable dining rooms, which accommodate parties of five to 12 guests – with dedicated personal service.

Hosting a bigger event? Check out the venue’s space for a sit-down or cocktail-style event catering for up to 140 guests.

crownesydney.com.au

What the EAs said...

“The event was really nice – an amazing venue and fantastic food!”

Amanda, experience manager, Pendula

“The restaurant and the spaces are just stunning – it was next level. The staff were very welcoming and friendly, and answered all our questions on the tour of each space. Oh, and the food was sensational!”

Michelle, EA, Schroders

“It was great to see the private dining options and I’ll definitely keep them in mind for my board dinners. It was also lovely to meet some other EAs and hear about the work that they are doing.”

Lurlene, EA to CEO, Governance Institute of Australia

“The restaurant and the spaces are just stunning – it was next level. Oh, and the food was sensational!”

MEMBER EVENT REVIEWS

Playground at Pullman Sydney Hyde Park



EAs upped their Picasso game with a specially curated art event at the Pullman Sydney Hyde Park, featuring take home art, prizes and food stations.

A playground where people, ideas and ambitions come together, the

Pullman Sydney Hyde Park features 241 accommodation rooms and more than 10 meeting spaces. The hotel is conveniently located by Hyde Park with impressive views over the city and Eastern suburbs.
pullmansydneyhydepark.com.au

What the EAs said...

“It was an amazing night. I honestly had so much fun and met some really nice people. The venue was stunning, the food and drinks were 10/10 and the staff were so professional.”
 Hayley, EA, Lifespan

“The accommodation rooms were great. Much bigger than I was expecting, and really fresh and modern. I really enjoyed the Pinot & Picasso portion of the night. Although I am a terrible artist, it was a great activity and it something different.”
 Natalie, EA, Arriba

“The venue is ideal, the food was great and the staff were lovely and helpful. The Pinot & Picasso part of the evening made for such a refreshing change from just viewing a venue.”
 Mary, EA to the general manager, CBA

A heightened sense of flavour with Crown Sydney



Sydney dining’s award-winning couple, chef Ross Lusted and Sunny Lusted, opened their latest restaurant, Woodcut at Crown Sydney, and Executive PA members were invited in for an exclusive experience. Woodcut, which provides Sydneysiders with a

unique dining experience that celebrates Australian produce and cooking with wood, charcoal and steam, was inspired by Ross and Sunny’s travels and the memories evoked by meals cooked in a slow wood burning oven/open fire.
crownesydney.com.au

What the EAs said...

“I had such a lovely time and it was great to experience Woodcut. They’ve done a beautiful job. I look forward to the next event.”
 Nic, EA, Optus Enterprise

“The food was fabulous. Simple flavours and dishes prepared in four open kitchens, each with their own cooking method – smoke, steam, fire and ice. The highlight was meeting Ross Lusted, the acclaimed chef and owner of Woodcut.”
 Mench Tearaway, Press Pty Ltd

“Today was amazing – the food was incredible. I will be sure to recommend (and have already done so) and I’ll be rebooking myself.”
 Donna, EA, UNSW

GASTRONOMER'S GUIDE

Feast your eyes on the signature dish of *Chanaka Jayabahu*, executive chef at The George's Hotel's 50 Bistro in Christchurch



THE DISH

Canter Valley Confit Duck Leg

The menu at 50 Bistro is inspired by the best local and seasonal produce and features 50 long-standing favourites, including Wakanui sirloin, Akaroa salmon and Lumina lamb. Alongside these stalwarts are seasonally-driven signature dishes – and this season's popular choice is the Canter Valley Confit Duck. Canter Valley is a gourmet poultry producer near Sefton in North Canterbury and the cooking method involves 12-hours sous vide in duck fat. The duck is enhanced with pears (caramelized in the oven with manuka honey, glazed until golden brown then churned to a smooth velvety puree), winter baby heirloom carrots (slow roasted in a butter bath for four hours) and a house-made, pickled wholegrain mustard. Keen to try the mustard at home? You only need five ingredients – yellow mustard seeds, white wine vinegar, sugar, kosher salt, a fresh shallot and a little water to cover...

THE CHEF

Chanaka Jayabahu

Originally from Sri Lanka, Chanaka moved to New Zealand 10 years ago. He has previously worked at the Palagama Beach Resort in Sri Lanka, and Heritage Hotels and Terrace Downs in Canterbury. He says his 20 years of culinary experience, combined with his achievements in the industry, have brought him to the position and hotel where he works today. The George Hotel's 50 Bistro is renowned for great, casual food, as well as its warm and inviting ambience and its great hospitality. ✪

Our thanks to Chanaka and 50 Bistro, Christchurch: Thegeorge.com

BOARDING PASS

All the latest news for the busy EA organising corporate travel



Sleep easy on Air New Zealand from economy to business class

Booking flights for execs on different budgets who all have an expectation of a good night's sleep? Air New Zealand may have the most innovative solutions yet...

In response to overwhelming customer feedback on the importance of sleep and the need for more comfort and space, the forward-thinking airline will offer a new Business Premier Luxe suite, a new Business Premier seat and the world's first Skynest for economy class travellers from 2024.

Said to give customers more choice than any other airline in the world,

Air New Zealand's new Dreamliners are due to arrive in 2024 and promise "the best sleep in the sky," regardless of the cabin you choose to fly in. Driven by innovation, the Business Premier Luxe seat will suit customers looking for more space and privacy, offering all the features of Business Premier but with a fully closing door and space for two to dine. Meanwhile, Skynest will be the world's first sleep pods in the sky for economy travellers, offering a luxe lie-flat option.

Air New Zealand CEO, Greg Foran,

says the airline's ambition to create the greatest flying experience combined with world-leading Kiwi hospitality, is the winning formula: "New Zealand's location puts us in a unique position to lead on the ultra-long-haul travel experience.

"We have zeroed in on sleep, comfort and wellness because we know how important it is for our customers to arrive well-rested. Whether they're heading straight into a meeting or to their first holiday hotspot, they want to hit the ground running." ✖

Air Asia X resumes flight from Kuala Lumpur to Australia

Need a value-for-money flight to Malaysia for one of your executive team? You'll be happy to hear that Air Asia X has announced plans to resume routes from Kuala Lumpur to Melbourne, Perth and Auckland from November.

Air Asia X is expected to start the

new routes three times per week, gradually increasing to daily by the first quarter of 2023, and the Auckland flight will be a hop from the existing Sydney leg.

The company said the service resumptions would bring the number

of routes it plans to operate this year to 13 – the others being Sydney, New Delhi, Seoul, Tokyo, Sapporo, Osaka, Honolulu, Dubai, Istanbul and London. The return by Air Asia X to London, a route it has not serviced since 2012, would operate to Gatwick Airport via Dubai. ✖

BOARDING PASS

All the latest news for the busy EA organising corporate travel



Spare a thought for your travel agent

In a bold move, Qantas has cut commissions it pays its travel agents for booking international flights from 5% to just 1%. This comes as a particular shock given how challenging the sector and its staff found the pandemic – and they are only just starting to get back on their feet.

So, if you use a travel agent for booking your company or exec's flights, now may be the time to discuss

a fee-for-service model if you don't have one already.

Qantas' decision is said to be discouraging some travel agents from booking with the airline. That may be well and good if your company is open to booking flights with other airlines but not great news if your exec wants to continue flying with Qantas to grow his or her frequent flyer points.

Dean Long, head of the Australian

Federation of Travel Agents, said some airlines, including QATAR and Air Canada, have gone in the other direction and made the decision not to cut agent commissions: "We're seeing a number of travel professionals introducing service fees to cover the cost of supporting customers, especially given the rising cost of doing business and the massively increased workloads they're having to shoulder." ❌

Smart travelling with the Bellroy Tech Kit

Because many of you will have been travelling less over the past two years, you're likely to be a little out of practice – and, as an ever-organised EA, you'll know it's always smart to get organised before you go. Enter Australian company Bellroy, which promises to help with this, offering a range of products for the savvy traveller.

One of the Melbourne-based purpose-for-good organisation's most popular products for the corporate sector is its Tech Kit. A small, stylish

bag, it allows you to organise all your tech accessories and remember where they are without tangling them all up.

The Tech Kit zips out flat for easy access and has a myriad of small pockets where you can fit chargers, cords and all the other critical bits and bobs needed by a busy EA and PA. Made of recycled woven material, it comes in a range of colours. And retailing at just \$89 online, why not stock up on them and kit out the whole team? ❌



“No matter how long you’ve been in ‘the game’, the moment you stop learning or say there’s nothing left for you to learn is the moment you’ll be left behind”

Executive PA Media award winner, runner up and finalist, *Natalie Kennefick* shares her career journey and top tips for fellow admin professionals

Please tell us a little about your career journey so far...

I’ve had a very traditional admin journey. I started sitting on the floor of my mum’s office after school and doing the office filing... Unpaid! As an adult, I did a traineeship in Business Administration and worked on reception, my path was then a steady rise from administration to team assistant, administrator, admin manager, office manager then, finally, EA!

Now, what are your main responsibilities?

I’ve only just started in this role so there’s lots of room for development and growth. While I do the traditional EA duties of diary and email management, as well as some office management, my main responsibilities revolve around helping the CEO and ELT drive performance and meet company goals. I’m also involved in projects over all three business groups (I work for a business made up of three businesses). Previously, I have looked after multiple teams and managers, and been able to bring my passion for events and culture into the role by implementing team engagement initiatives.

What is the working environment like?

Many businesses claim that they have a great culture and that they’re all friendly and diverse/inclusive – but when you turn up to work it’s anything but! I can honestly say that’s not the case with my new company. They definitely walk the walk! Everyone is so welcoming to each other each day, and there’s so much cross-functionality that people will always be helping each other out.

What about perks, flexibility and communication?

We have a hybrid workplace and people really use their days in the office to build and cultivate their relationships. There is so much respect and flexibility in people’s work choices. Our CEO actively walks the floor daily, and an abundance of comms keep us informed about what’s happening. There is a genuine concern for employee wellbeing from the leadership team, and they’re very active on our online recognition platform. They also do weekly check ins with their team members. We have great benefits, and it truly is a great environment from the CEO down. People openly say they love their job and coming to work, and there’s only sincerity when they say it. It’s honestly exciting to come to work each day!

Have your EA achievements been recognised formally?

Yes, I was fortunate enough to be a finalist for Best Organised Event 2018 and runner up for the same award in 2019, as well as winning the 2018 Up and Coming EA/PA of the Year Award – all at the Executive PA Media awards. Being a finalist was exciting but to be a runner up and winner is beyond words because there are so many talented and deserving EAs and PAs in our industry.

Did you feel different as a result of your accolades?

It validated my contributions and position within my team and business. Administrators are often overlooked because we don’t have a quantifiable dollar amount for our work, so the fact that there are awards recognising our work and worth means a lot to me personally. It gave me a greater appreciation for our industry, and I developed a passion for helping to support EAs and admin professionals.



ARRIBA

Arriba Group gives people with disabilities the best opportunity to connect in the community, build social skills and open up work opportunities. The team trains and re-trains people to be work-ready, as well as helping individuals recover from an accident or illness then return to work.

arribagroup.com.au



What's happened since?

Not long after winning my 2018 award, I was offered some public speaking engagements – I got to put my desire to empower other EAs into action by speaking at a number of conferences. I've also moved up into a C-suite role to continue growing and developing in my own career.

What are your top tips for senior level PAs looking to create a great culture in their organisation?

I think it all starts with the relationship between the PA/EA and their boss – there needs to be trust and transparency. From there, the boss needs to empower the EA to own the culture development process. In consultation with senior leaders, a culture plan should be developed – and it should be fluid.

I also think a good culture is made of many parts. Some people think culture is drinks in the office after work or team events. But for me, culture is a trust in leadership, plus leadership being open and honest with staff, and having the right people in the organisation. This is where values come into play. A company – and, drilling down, a team – should have a set of values that everyone knows, understands and demonstrates. A common goal and purpose give people a sense of belonging and achievement, and this fosters a great working environment.

What tips do you have for fellow admin professionals?

Never stop learning and developing. No matter how long you have been in 'the game', the moment you stop learning or say there's nothing left for you to learn is the moment

you'll be left behind. Embrace change and technology and discover how these can benefit you. Always ask for your seat at the table – don't wait to be invited. Speak up – if you have an idea or opinion share it because we're in a unique position and can often offer a different perspective. Finally, network! Join EA/admin groups, build your LinkedIn network and attend conferences. There is no better group of people to lean on when you need help or guidance.

How do you see the EA role developing?

I think the EA role has so much potential to grow into a partnership or leadership role beyond the assistant role, and I hope that the actual title of EA is phased out in order to truly reflect our standing and contributions to the workplace. I would like to see a true strategic partnership role where our ideas and views are listened to. We would be considered in the shaping of our teams' and businesses' goals, and admin professionals would be given a seat at the table.

And what about your own career progression? What is your ultimate career goal?

I would love to be in a strategic role where I'm able to take on projects that are challenging and fulfilling. And, as one of my biggest passions is events, I'd love to be able to have events as part of my role. One of my biggest personal highlights, actually, was taking my love of event planning and management and starting my own small events business. It was unfortunately severely impacted by the pandemic but it remains one of my biggest achievements. ✨



How highly efficient people manage digital distractions

Six minutes is the amount of time people can stay focused on a task before succumbing to email or messaging apps, according to *Dr Amantha Imber*. Here's how successful entrepreneurs, businesspeople and innovators buck this trend...



THE EXPERT

Dr Amantha Imber is the Founder of Inventium, Australia's leading behavioural science consultancy. She also hosts an insightful podcast about the habits and rituals of the world's most successful people, called *How I Work*.

They use checking so-called 'digital distractions' as a mini-break

Professor and best-selling author Adam Grant isn't a fan of going cold turkey. Instead, he uses digital distractions for breaks after a large chunk of deep, focused work: "I have goals for how much work I have to finish before I'm allowed to go over and check. It's a small reward for making progress on the things that I think are important," he explains.

They reflect on their motivation

For Grant, being conscious about his motivation for checking social media is critical. He warns people that if the urge to scroll is constantly taking you away from your work, your work probably isn't motivating enough: "I actually feel the opposite impulse. If I'm scrolling through Facebook, I'm like, 'Ah! I'm going to have this really exciting work to do! I want to get back to that,'" Grant describes.

They create subtle changes to nudge themselves towards healthier habits

Avoiding digital distractions doesn't have to mean making big changes. Sometimes the smaller changes have the biggest impact. Matt Mullenweg, a founding developer of WordPress, says: "If what is closest to me in the bed when I wake up is the Kindle and not the phone, I'm more likely to read. But if the phone is on top, I'm more likely to look at it." Making sure he leaves his Kindle on top of his phone is a small but effective strategy for doing more reading and less phone checking.

They work offline for hours at a time

In today's world, being disconnected from the internet is rare. But for the world's most productive people, deliberately taking themselves offline is key to making progress on their most important projects: "Going offline is really great," describes Mullenweg.

"Occasionally at home I'll just turn off the network – literally unplugging it – and force myself to look at all the things that are there in front of me."

They sometimes go to extreme measures

Prior to becoming CEO of Moment, a company that helps people cut mobile phone time, Tim Kendall was president of Pinterest and struggled with his own phone usage.

He started to research what he describes as "brute force approaches" and discovered a product called the KSafe. A lockable kitchen safe with a built-in timer, it was originally designed as a dieting product where people could lock away unhealthy food. But in recent years, the product has found a dual purpose – a tool for those struggling with mobile phone addiction. Simply lock your phone in the safe!

Kendall tried experimenting with locking away his phone on weeknights, then for a few hours on weekends. While he doesn't use the KSafe regularly anymore, he found it effective at the time. Now, he just leaves his phone in his home office before going to have dinner with his family: "On my best nights, I don't go and get my phone until the next morning, which is effectively the same thing as putting it in a kitchen safe from 6PM to 8AM," he says.

At the end of the day, the world's most productive and high achieving people are human. They have days where they struggle with digital distractions like the rest of us. Kendall adds: "I find it hard and I go through mobile phone withdrawal but I also think that it has a meaningful impact on my relationship with my kids and my wife. I feel less anxious and less psychologically toxic if I can take a break from my phone." 🎧

amantha.com



Advice for the accidental project manager

Professor Adam Boddison outlines the steps that project managing EAs can take to increase your effectiveness, improve project outcomes and support your organisation



THE EXPERT

Adam is a qualified clinical hypnotherapist and chief executive at the Association for Project Management. Prior to this he held leadership roles in several membership organisations and has also published a range of books and articles.

The practice of delivering change through projects (or ‘projectification’ as it has come to be called) is on the rise. Association for Project Management (APM) recently asked its corporate partners about the roles of project professionals in their organisations and most had seen growth in recent years, with some reporting a rise of up to 50%.

As a result, many professionals, including EAs, have become ‘accidental project managers’. In other words, people not officially tasked with managing projects but doing so without necessarily realising it.

As approaches and methods that have long been used only by project specialists prove their value, it’s safe to say the future of work is projects. This should come as little surprise, particularly for EAs well-accustomed to delivering in the face of change – exactly what project management is about.

It is no longer a niche requirement. In fact, understanding of what constitutes a project is evolving. Work is increasingly being evaluated in terms of projects rather than ‘tasks’, with outputs, outcomes or benefits delivered in line with agreed acceptance criteria, timescales and budgets.

Fortunately, there are some clear steps that project managing EAs can take to increase their effectiveness, improve project outcomes and,

in turn, support the ongoing success of their organisation.

Pursue professionalisation

As a high-level assistant, it’s likely your existing strengths already align well with that of a project manager. Consider harnessing these and maximising their effectiveness by pursuing formalised training. This will help give you more professional recognition, strengthen your voice in decision-making and equip you to become more involved in strategic conversations.

Join a mentoring programme

Complementing formal training with hands-on learning methods, such as mentoring, offers you access to impartial, personal advice. While certain elements of project management can be conveyed through a course or book, many aspects are best learned through experience and interaction. Mentoring is also an effective form of knowledge management – your mentor can share best practice and help prevent avoidable mistakes.

Learn from online resources

For EAs who want to learn more about project management before pursuing anything formal, there is a wealth of resources available online, from magazines and blogs to webinars and networking events. These can be a great way for you to learn more about the fundamentals of the project profession, its most pressing issues and the types of people who thrive within it.

Contribute to a culture of project success

A recent APM report revealed the most important conditions for project success (interpersonal skills, training and certifications, team ethos, technology and data, knowledge management, agility, sustainability, diversity and contracts) and how they can be applied at organisational and individual levels. Could you directly improve the chances of project success for your organisation by encouraging these conditions in your work and organisation?

Interpersonal skills are considered the most important dynamic condition explored in the report, with 97% of survey respondents believing these to be either ‘important’ or ‘very important’ for project success. Clearly, successful projects are seen to be as much about people as they are about processes.

In a changing and challenging world, project management has never played a more important role. While the environment for delivery is complex, having clear and consistent standards to aim for will help EAs – and the organisations you work for – reach new heights. 🌟

apm.co.uk



Can I have it all?

It is possible to create a sustainable blend of a fulfilling career and enjoyment of life beyond work, confirms *Dr Jenny Brockis* – provided you recognise what you need to keep yourself safe...

Loving your job is something many others would be highly jealous of. Because being in a role that allows you to play to your strengths, plus demonstrate your efficiency, your superb organisational skills, and your ability to always stay 10 steps ahead in anticipating what is needed next, makes your work a joy.

It's great to take pride in your ability, to gladly step up to a challenge, to put in the hard yards and many extra hours, without question. That's what you're paid for, right?

However, the biggest challenge for those doing work they adore (working alongside people they admire and respect deeply, and always bringing their best self to everything they do) is you can start to lose sight of the fact that you're doing too much. You've taken on too many additional tasks. You're beyond tired. But you rationalise this by reassuring yourself it's only temporary.

Did you know, though, that pushing yourself too hard for too long can seriously backfire? You're at increased risk of burnout or mental

mood disorders... And sadly simply taking a long weekend off isn't the answer.

So, what's the answer?

This is about recognising that it is possible to create a sustainable blend of a fulfilling career and enjoyment of life beyond work. Yes, you can have it all, the caveat being recognising what you need to keep yourself safe.

One good thing to come out of the chaos and heartache wrought by the pandemic has been having to step back from your 'usual way of doing'.

We now have the headspace to consider:

- Is how you're working sustainable in the longer term?
- Have your family and friends been expressing their concern about the amount of time you spend at work? And despite dismissing this, deep down, you suspect they're right?
- How often have you used work as an excuse to justify why you can't attend a friend's birthday party or take a weekend off with your partner?

It's time to create sustainable love for your work

To do your job and do it well requires consistent energy. You also need a learner's mindset and strong interpersonal working relationships. This combination is what enables sustainable high-performance.

Another essential yet frequently overlooked element is your energy management, or what is now known as your physiological intelligence (PQ). Just like your other intelligences you can build a stronger PQ by understanding what you need as an individual (because we are all different) to keep your physical and mental energy tanks topped up across the day.

Emphasising healthy nutrition, getting adequate exercise and sufficient good quality sleep is a given, but there's something else needed too... It's called taking a mental breather.

When less can be so much more

You've probably noticed how taking a small break – even going away for part of the weekend – can be revitalising.

Similarly, studies have shown that taking frequent, small breaks across the day serves to regulate your energy. This will restore your capacity to keep thinking well. Your stress will be lowered and your productivity boosted. Far from slacking off, think of this as your energy optimisation strategy.

If you're now thinking: "I can't not be

available to answer my phone or respond to a message – I'll get fired!" or "How can I take a break when I don't even have time to go to the bathroom?" I hear you.

But I promise a quick restorative mental breather need only take a minute or two, and the benefits will be greater energy across your day, even into the late afternoon.

You'll stay mentally sharp and able to make consistently good decisions. Your problem-solving capability will continue to operate at full speed, regardless of the complexity of the challenge you're trying to resolve. And because these breathers are quick, no-one will notice you taking them. What they will notice is your consistently high performance.

Beyond the breathers

Don't forget – it's also about how you regulate your rest and playtime away from work.

One CEO recently shared with me how he's up early each morning to take the family dog out for a walk before he tackles breakfast and getting the kids ready for school, then he meditates for 15-20 minutes before starting work. He has found over time these rituals serve to keep him at the top of his game – refreshed and energised. He loves his job and wants to keep things that way.

What do you have in place to sustain your energy and ensure that your love for your work remains sustainable, too? ☘

drjennybrockis.com



THE EXPERT

Dr. Jenny Brockis is a medical practitioner specialising in brain health and mental performance in the workplace. She is also the author of *Future Brain: The 12 Keys To Creating Your Own High-Performance Brain*.

What does a mental breather look like?

We're all different, so choose breathers that you like and know work best for you. Here are some to get you started:

- **Before joining a meeting, take three slow breaths.** This slows down activity in the part of the nervous system associated with the stress response. It's calming, clarifying and you're now best prepared to actively listen and respond appropriately.
- **Before answering your phone, wait for two to three seconds.** This will help you ground yourself. You'll separate your mind from what you've just been doing and focus on the conversation you're about to begin.
- **When scheduling meetings allow for a five to 10-minute breather in between.** This will help you and your exec to rest and reset (a study from Microsoft has shown how back-to-back meetings, especially Zoom calls, elevate stress and reduce your ability to pay attention).
- **Honour your boundaries.** It's reasonable to stay behind sometimes to complete a task or help – but not every day. If you expect to work an extra hour or three regularly, you will. And it will easily fill with 'stuff that must be done', becoming your norm. Productivity has been shown to take a nosedive once you've put in more than 45 to 50 hours per week.

Remember, being busy does not equate to being productive. Your new mantra is that less is more.

- **Plan regular pit stops.** A race car driver knows that to make it to the end of the race, it's essential to allow for pit stops – they could be the difference between winning and not finishing. For you? This could be refilling and drinking an extra glass of water, taking your lunch break away from your desk or getting outside for five minutes of fresh air and sunshine.
- **Go green.** You don't need a green thumb to benefit from spending time in a green space. If your office space permits, having a pot plant in the periphery of your vision has been shown to help address attention fatigue, as does having a window overlooking a green space. That 30-second glance outside the window is all it takes to restore concentration for the next couple of hours.
- **Meditate to reconnect with feeling grounded, present and calm.** There is no known minimum dose and studies have shown even five minutes will bring cognitive benefits and lower stress.



Death by meetings... Or not!

Move from calendar chaos to powerful and productive 25-minute meetings with productivity expert *Donna McGeorge*



THE EXPERT

Donna McGeorge is a speaker, author and mentor who helps people make their work work. Using a creative, practical approach, she improves workplace effectiveness while challenging thinking on leadership, productivity and virtual work. *'The First 2 Hours: Make Better Use of Your Most Valuable Time'* is published by John Wiley.

Time-poor, stressed out, overwhelmed and on the verge of 'death by meetings'... Sound familiar?

As a high-level EA, it is likely your calendar could be peppered with irrelevant or tedious back-to-back catchups whilst your mailbox is overloaded with messages screaming for attention. Every time you get a chance to breathe and catch up on some 'real work', your computer pings to remind you of yet another pointless meeting starting in five minutes.

But don't get me wrong – we need meetings. We need them at work because when they work, they are valuable. Clear actions get set, decisions are made and the whole business moves forward. What we don't need, though, are meetings that waste time, money and resources.

The solution? A 25-minute meeting. Short, sharp and productive. Gets the job done – and gets more value in less time.

Autopilot to action hero

When it comes to meetings, many of us are on autopilot. We look for excuses and reasons to blame external forces for the lack of engagement (company culture, calendars, time, nature of work, projects, etc.) and we say to ourselves: "If only the organisation would..." or "It's management's fault because..."

When we become an action hero, we give ourselves permission to take charge of the situation

and change things that don't serve us. We stop thinking about things outside of our control and focus on things we do have control over – like making meetings just 25-minutes! Action hero 25-minute meetings:

- Have a laser-like focus
- Engage participants
- Keep attendees present and on task, so increase productivity
- Leave people with a sense of accomplishment and purpose
- Save time.

Structure your 25-minute meeting with the 9Ps

SET UP

- **Purpose:** Why are we here? For every meeting you schedule (or are invited to) you should be able to finish this sentence: "At the end of this meeting it would be great if..."
- **People:** Less is best! Think about who you need and try and keep it to around five people. Your meetings will be punchy and get the job done.
- **Process:** How will we achieve our purpose?

SHOW UP

- **Preparedness:** Everyone has to have done the pre-work and be ready for the discussion.
- **Punctuality:** Irrespective of who is in the room, the meeting will start and end on time. There is no repetition or make-up for latecomers.
- **Presence:** No laptops or phones – it's 25 minutes of focused discussion. Can't make it? Send a proxy but they must be punctual, prepared and present.

SPEAK UP

- **Participate:** Start with a one-minute check in asking how people are – maybe a score out of 10? Give them a minute to be 'in' the meeting. This will help ensure they feel comfortable quickly, bring their genius to the table, share their insights, engage and ask quality questions.
- **Produce:** Use the meeting to enhance work, not prevent anyone from doing 'real work'. Make sure you achieve the purpose by staying on track and being focused on that.
- **Proceed:** At the end of the meeting, publicly share who is doing what by when. Follow through on post-meeting commitments and actions to hold people accountable.

Get started now!

If you wait for 'the organisation' to fix meetings or get on board with 25-minute meetings and mandate their introduction, you might be waiting for a really long time. The 25-minute meeting method can be introduced by you, right now, for those meetings for which you have control – those you organise or chair, one-on-ones with your direct reports and your team meetings. ☘

donnamcgeorge.com



The new frontier of leadership

These unprecedented times need outstanding leaders who can first and foremost lead themselves so that they can flourish in a volatile environment, says *Dr Lynda Folan*



THE EXPERT

Lynda Folan is an organisational psychologist and a specialist in leadership and organisational development. As well as leading companies across the globe through transformational change, she has authored the book *Leader Resilience, The New Frontier of Leadership*.

The present economic, social, and business context is redefining what successful leadership looks like and how leaders will need to support their teams to deliver sustainable outcomes. We live in truly exceptional times and face challenges that can't be overcome with the leadership of the past.

'Old school' leadership styles are no longer effective – a new focus and a new way of leading are required. And research shows that in this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, it is no longer possible to effectively lead a team without first managing yourself and ensuring your resilience is maintained.

Who are the most effective leaders?

Great things happen when leaders deliver a transformational leadership style that engages their team and allows them to adjust to challenges. We also know that transformational leaders deliver excellent team cultures and achieve sustainable outcomes for their organisations.

But there continues to be ongoing global concern over the lack of effective leadership. The incongruence in the results comes from a lack of understanding of the attributes essential to delivering a transformational leadership style. If we are going to fix the global deficit of effective leadership, we need to shift our focus to the dispositional attributes essential for effective leadership.

Instead of teaching people how to deliver a transformational style, we need to first and foremost support them to manage themselves by maintaining their resilience. Without resilience, it is impossible to deliver a transformational leadership style to the team.

Let's change our focus

The most outstanding leaders of our time (the ones that will go down in the history books as positive role models and icons of leadership) build their resilience. They also support the people around them to enhance their resilience to bounce back from challenges and adversity.

No matter how many skills the leader is taught or how competent they think they are, resilience is a prerequisite for effectively leading a team. It is the fuel that enables effective leadership and the foundation for successful teams. So, there must be a focus on supporting leaders to get here. Organisations need to realign their strategies and build leader resilience to enhance leadership capacity.

The big shift

Now more than ever, effective leadership is critical. It is the distinguishing factor amongst highly successful companies. Show me a company delivering sustainable results, and you will be able to point to a leadership team that is the driving force of this success. Show me a company that is failing or getting in trouble, and this failure can be attributable to ineffective leadership.

In the VUCA world, it is essential that we focus on selecting and promoting people who want to lead their teams and actively develop their resilience while building the resilience of the people they lead. Resilient leadership is the driving force that carves out success for individuals, teams, and organisations. Resilience is the dispositional attribute differentiating exceptional leaders from mediocre or ineffective ones.

In simple terms, without first leading yourself, you will not be able to lead your team to success and deliver sustainable outcomes in the VUCA world. Leading yourself by maintaining your resilience is the new frontier of leadership. 🌟

inspireddevelopment.net



The secrets of persuasion from an expert in the art

After a few years working at home, have you forgotten the best ways to persuade someone in a working environment? If so, let's reset! First up, we'll start by digesting the 15 most common persuasion mistakes, fresh from *Michelle Bowden*...



THE EXPERT

Michelle is a certified speaking professional and communication skills coach who has delivered her Persuasive Presentation Skills Masterclass more than 950 times for 12,000 people. She has also authored a number of books, including *How to Persuade: The skills you need to get what you want*.

Can you think of a time when you've been faced with someone who didn't have particularly good persuasion skills? What did you think? What did it feel like?

Typically, when we come across someone who seems to struggle with persuasion (be it your manager, staff, clients, external consultants or even family and friends) most of us would never tell them they weren't very effective at being persuasive. And we certainly wouldn't highlight the fact that they might have offended us. We just don't tend to give people that type of feedback.

The alternative? We often find ourselves preferring to just ignore that person in the future and/or forgetting

the interaction ever happened.

This is because we often don't want to offend the person who turned us off or cause any unnecessary conflict. And if the interaction was with a senior manager, for example, calling out the negative behaviour might prove even more detrimental.

Unfortunately, though, this isn't good news for the person with poor persuasion skills. With approaches like the above, they'll never know the impact of their behaviour and may not realise it was ineffective or even offensive...

For that reason, it's important to flip this on its head. Let's explore the most common mistakes you might be making with your persuasion techniques to ensure you're not the one putting other people in a difficult situation... ✖

michellebowden.com.au

The 15 most common mistakes people make when attempting to persuade others

1

SHOWING PESSIMISM, OR LACKING ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION

If you're going to persuade someone of anything, you'd better be enthusiastic about the idea yourself. Excitement is contagious. But if you're flat on an idea that sends a very clear message.

2

APPEARING JUDGEMENTAL OR DISTRUSTFUL

Imagine if you were trying to convey an idea to someone only to know you'll be criticised and judged immediately afterwards? People don't like to be judged. So, instead, try to listen to other people with an open mind. When you are persuading someone it's important they don't feel judged by you. Rather, they need to feel accepted in order to listen to your point of view.

3

BEING TOO SMOOTH

While this approach may look good in the movies, it can come across as contrived or insincere in real life. Aim to be as authentic as possible. You'll be your most persuasive self when you plan your message thoroughly and rehearse until you can't get it wrong. Then allow yourself to ad-lib and even add some humour on the day.

4

PRESENTING ONE-SIDED FACTS

In today's modern world, people are more sceptical than ever. Make sure you're credible by presenting balanced logical arguments that can be backed up with facts.

10

ALLOWING YOURSELF TO BE DISTRACTED

Have you ever spoken to someone who was distracted by something other than you and your conversation with them? Bet it didn't make you feel so good. So, don't do it to others. It makes it seem like you don't care enough to stay connected to the person and what's being said.

5

DENYING, BLAMING OR JUSTIFYING POOR DECISIONS

These are all traits of a person with a 'victim mentality' and this can be a serious turn-off in an interaction. We all make mistakes and people respect those who can take responsibility.

11

HAVING INDIRECT EYE CONTACT THAT MAKES YOU APPEAR INSINCERE OR DISINTERESTED

Building rapport starts with good eye contact... But don't stare! Simply be sure to look at the person. Then relax your face and connect through your eyes.

6

DEMONSTRATING PUSHY BEHAVIOUR

While it's good to be committed and passionate, few people like being sold to. So, focus more on the other party and less on your own agenda to ensure you're not guilty of forcing your ideas on people.

12

OVERSTATING THE FACTS

While it's great to be excited about your idea, don't get into the habit of exaggerating the facts. If you are perceived to be embellishing, overstating or distorting the facts you may be seen as lacking in integrity. Always be truthful and honest.

7

TELLING TOO MANY STORIES

While personal stories are a powerful tool to communicate your ideas, too many is boring. You're trying to have a conversation – remember that it's not a one-way street.

13

FORGETTING TO ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT

People aren't mind readers and you can't persuade someone if they're confused about what you're asking for. Make ask for the thing you want a priority. You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.

8

SEEMING DESPERATE

Desperation has a vibe about it that's a real turn-off to people. And it opens you up to negotiations that may leave you feeling used and unfulfilled. Let's find the balance – do what you can to feel confident in yourself and your idea or offer but don't beg or plead.

14

TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF TOO MUCH

Only talk about yourself to the extent that it builds rapport and establishes the necessary amount of credibility. Then stop. Speaking about yourself the whole time can see the other person lose interest – fast.

9

FORGETTING SOMEONE'S NAME, OR NEVER KNOWING IT IN THE FIRST PLACE

If you're trying to persuade someone, you need to build trust and respect. But without a key fact like a name, you're not likely to get that. Care enough about your prospect or stakeholder to know the important details and get them right every time.

15

ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS

When you're trying to convey your ideas to someone else, remember that it's not an interview or an interrogation. Don't over-question (and scare off) your prospect or stakeholder.



understand whether your request is above or in line with the market.

Know their needs

Seek to understand the other people involved – their operating style, agenda, needs and what they care about. The more you know those involved, the more significant insights you’ll have into what they are likely to support or reject. When you make the request, state your wants objectively and in a way that will resonate with your boss or whoever you are negotiating with. Make sure to also explain how this will benefit the organisation.

Consider your trade-offs

Be prepared to consider the options available. What matters the most to you? What might you be willing to give up as part of the negotiation process? For example, you may be willing to trade time for money or money for more holidays.

Get on the front foot

Research shows we don’t like people who initiate negotiations for higher pay. One way to address it is to get on the front foot. Walk into the negotiation and say: “I want to say upfront that I’m going to negotiate for this pay rise, and the research shows that because I do this, you’re going to like me less when I do.” Let that sink in for a minute then move into the negotiation.

Think about the steps

How might the negotiation process unfold? What may be required to secure an agreement? Think about each of these steps in advance of the discussion. Running through possible scenarios and outcomes will enable you to respond better as issues or objections are raised during the discussion.

Don’t ask – don’t get

Often in life, we hold back expressing our needs as we worry about the other person’s reaction. When you think about it, what’s the worst thing that could happen if you ask for a pay rise? They say no. Don’t let fear hold you back. On that note, if it’s a no, find out what would need to change for their response to change. Do they need to see more contributions or have more budget? If they have no intention of ever considering a pay rise, you’ll want to assess alternative options – often the best way to get a pay rise is shifting roles.

Slow down

If you find your mind racing during the negotiation, focus on breathing and breathing deeply. This helps your nerves relax and your heart rate to slow, making it easier to reflect and respond calmly. ☺

Michellgibbings.com

Asking for a payrise?

Michelle Gibbings has all the insight you need to make sure you get what you deserve



THE EXPERT

Michelle Gibbings is a workplace expert. She is the author of ‘*Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work*’, ‘*Career Leap: How to Reinvent and Liberate your Career*’ and the new book ‘*Bad Boss: What to do if you work for one, manage one or are one*’.

The employment market is in positive territory and whether you call it the great resignation, reshuffle or realignment, there are many opportunities – including negotiating a pay rise...

Of course, it is something most people dread but remember that when you shy away from negotiating, you are walking away from potential upsides – increased pay, more flexible working hours and other employment benefits. Knowing how to ask for what you want is critical and with some planning and strategising, asking the question doesn’t need to be complicated. Let’s get started...

Pick your timing

Most organisations have performance and pay review cycles, and it helps to know how that process works. First, ask before budgets for the new financial year are locked in. Secondly, pick a time when your boss is more likely to be receptive, rather than tired, stressed or distracted. And pick a time that works for you. Negotiating is mentally taxing, and your mind will be pushed and pulled in many directions. Going into the discussion when you are tired or stressed risks you being less equipped to manage it.

Build your case

Be clear on the value you bring to your role and how you demonstrate it. Use evidence and data to explain why you deserve a pay rise. You want to be reasonable with your request so find out the going rates in the industry. That way, you’ll



10 tips for the ultimate LinkedIn profile

With people being hired through LinkedIn every minute, it is more important than ever to have a profile that stands out. Here, *Paul Lewis* shares his insider secrets for getting noticed...



THE EXPERT

Managing director of Pitman Training, Paul is an expert when it comes to helping people improve their career prospects, securing promotions and getting back to work.

- 1 Pick the perfect picture**
First impressions matter on social media, so choosing the right picture for your LinkedIn profile goes a long way. Make sure you are dressed appropriately and that your face is clearly displayed. Add a smile too, to appear approachable and confident.
- 2 Make more of your headline**
Your headline doesn't have to just be your job title. Could you use it to say a bit more about how you see your role, why you do what you do, and what makes you tick? A good headline not only provides an overview of what you do, but it will also encourage users to click on your profile.
- 3 Back up your buzzwords**
Buzzwords on LinkedIn mean nothing unless you back them up. Just because you use terms like 'specialised', 'leadership', 'focused', 'strategic' or 'experienced' to describe yourself doesn't prove you have those qualities. Try and demonstrate your abilities throughout your profile and in your posts as well as just listing them.
- 4 Use your summary to explain why you're useful**
Many people overlook the summary when creating their LinkedIn profile. Don't make this

mistake. Your summary is the perfect opportunity for you to bring your page to life. Instead of using the space to only talk about your skills, explain why they matter and the difference you can make to people's lives. This is what makes a difference.

5 Quality networks over quantity
Having 500 connections establishes you as a networker and influencer on LinkedIn, and the more connections you have, the more likely you are to be seen by businesses. However, it's no good connecting with just anybody. It's best only to make quality connections that are relevant to you. Connect with present and past colleagues and prospective employers for the best results.

6 Show off your (relevant) skills
Adding your skills should be the easiest thing to do on LinkedIn – simply scroll through the list of skills and identify those relevant to you. Although, the keyword here is 'relevant'. While a long list of skills may look great, if you can't do something to a high standard, it's best to remove it from your list as you could be tripped up if an employer asks about it.

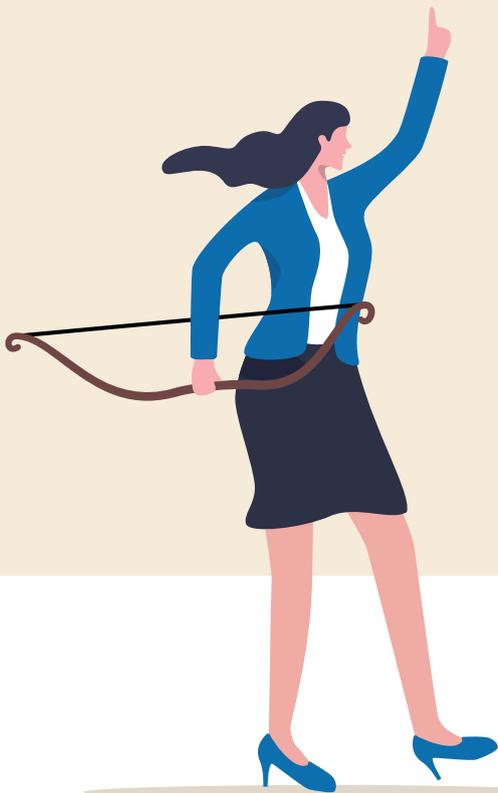
7 Take a skills assessment
A skills assessment is a voluntary online test that demonstrates your skills and displays a Verified Skills Badge on your profile. These badges can increase your employability factor when recruiters review your profile. The best thing about the skills assessments? You can retake the tests as often as you like before adding them to your profile, so they're worth the effort.

8 Request recommendations
In the same way that testimonials benefit a business, recommendations can benefit your credibility. Ask your past employers, teachers, or colleagues for recommendations to illustrate their experience of working with you.

9 Follow industry experts
The people you follow on LinkedIn will dictate what you see on your feed. So, follow other EAs to see a range of interesting and relevant content. You can then share this content to your page and add your opinion to demonstrate your expertise.

10 Establish your expertise
Positioning yourself as a pro at your job is probably the single most valuable thing you can do when looking for employment on LinkedIn. You can establish your expertise by commenting on posts, sharing content and creating your own original content. These are simple steps that can transform your profile. ✖

pitman-training.com



Find your purpose and save your career

Lost your lustre? Reignite passion for your career by finding your purpose with the help of *Phillipa White*

Are you looking for ways to do and be more? Perhaps you want to find ways to get your business or your boss to stand for more and inspire others to do the same. But how do you do that? And what does that look like?

Well, growth and personal development don't happen inside of our comfort zones, our area of expertise or our professional bubbles. Instead, they happen in immersive experiences that push our boundaries and question our status quo, outside of the corporate world and the daily circumstances we are used to.

This probably doesn't come as a shock to you since most professionals, especially EAs, find themselves operating in a very specific field where you often don't get the opportunity to step out of your silo and others' expectations.

However, it is so important to find ways to step out of the circuit, your bubble, your comfort zone, and find your own route. How great would it be to have the chance to step out of the hierarchy so you can unlock that special magic within you? Having a clear purpose is the secret for the magic to happen.

Let me introduce you to Lauren...

In 2016 Lauren Smith spent 30 days in Mozambique working with the marine conservation organisation Marine Megafauna Foundation (MMF). Everyone at the organisation was completely dedicated to and passionate about the cause, working tirelessly to preserve ocean life and do all they could to rid the ocean and beach of plastic.

Lauren came from the communications industry in the US. She was an extremely competent

seasoned professional who was top of her game – but she was looking to be pushed in new ways.

While still fully employed at the company, she was involved with their professional development programme with The International Exchange (TIE). Her project objective was to use her knowledge to help create materials to help MMF present themselves to high-net-worth donors.

The interesting part came at the end of the programme when she wondered how on earth she could go back to the corporate world. Surely, she needed to stay in Mozambique and continue to work for the NGO, she thought. But on further reflection, she started to notice something different about herself. At first, she couldn't put her finger on it. Then it was clear. Lauren's experience awakened in her the courage and clarity to connect with something bigger than herself.

With that, she started to think differently. She realised she could use what she'd discovered about herself on the TIE programme to make a positive impact on the planet. And she could look at impacting the private sector from a systemic point of view – which could be a bigger change than simply cleaning up the plastic from one beach.

She started to feel inspired by the impact she could now create. She could start to come up with the solutions, rather than waiting for someone else. She couldn't wait to go back to work and start because she had found her purpose – her own, unique north star to guide and excite her in ways she would never have thought possible before.

The experience created the catalyst that pushed her to think differently and changed the way she tackles problems and interacts with the world.

Be clear about purpose

Meanwhile, my friend and mentor Jim Carroll told me a story the other day that really resonated. It reflected on his performance appraisals over the course of his career.

He told me that he would go into the planning director's office every year to receive the feedback. He would hear some of the good things he had done. And then some things to work on. He said he found himself skimming over the positives – instead, he would go and focus on what he needed to work on. He would then spend the rest of the year on those things that he was bad at; routines that truly lacked a personal meaning for him. A year later he would go back and hear the same things. He had the same appraisal for 15 years.

At some point he decided to stop addressing those meaningless negatives. He decided to accentuate the positives; those that would inspire and guide him in new and imaginable ways,

giving him a reason to come back to work every day generating the impact he realised he had in himself. He was a man on a mission, not just another employee.

Fundamentally, we all need to be clear about purpose. Stories like Jim's are why it's so important. We all need to be asking why am I doing this? Why am I coming into work? What do I stand for?

Purpose looks at the impact your work, your essence, can have on the world. And the reason purpose is such a current thing is that in periods of change like what we are going through now, the need for a fixed point or a north star is more important than ever.

Unleash your purpose

It's too easy in our jobs to drop into a formula and a rhythm where you feel like you are going around the block a bit. We can all feel constrained. And it's hard to know how to contribute outside of the constraints of our jobs. We know we can be and do more – but how? We all know our places in the system.

What needs to happen is you need to spend time unlocking it. Spend time on yourself and discover your essence. Once you do that, you can start to make the change you'd like to see. So, how can that happen?

It's about taking you from can, to do. Create the space for you to find your unique power to make meaningful change and an impact that is true to you. By disrupting your comfort zone, you can discover more about yourself and what your unique power is.

You have a lot of responsibility. And you have become very good at running trains along railway tracks. In many respects, that is what many jobs are. You run the train along the track because you know that track is going to the destination that it always has. But sometimes (especially in times of extreme change) we need and want to learn to lay railway – and that is hard. But that's where you need to test yourself.

So, you know how to run a train along a track. But can you put railway down? First, spend time working out who you are. What are your values? What is your cohort? What do you stand for? And where are you going to make a stand?

We are all capable of incredible things. No matter your age, background, or title. If you want to be more than you are today, to create meaningful impact... You can do it. You just have to know, you have to believe, and you have to go do.

I wonder what the world would look like if everyone recognized their own potential, and then acted upon it... ✖

theinternationalexchange.co.uk



THE EXPERT

Philippa is founder and CEO of The International Exchange (TIE), a comfort zone disruptor. Following a successful career in advertising, she has created a unique programme that exposes people to global challenges to ignite their humanity, ingenuity, and purpose and launched TIE in 2006

BOOK REVIEWS

Top titles to supercharge your personal and professional development



The book review pages are written for you, by you

Who are the best people to deem whether the latest business book will boost your professional and personal development as a high-level assistant? Fellow EAs, of course!

Each issue, we'll feature a book or two, complete with an informative and insightful review by one of your peers. You'll also get a sneak peek of the newest titles available for review.

Like one of the 'sneak peek' titles?

Great! E-mail Claire at editor@executivepa.com, stating the title you wish to review and why, as well as a line or two about you, your role and your experience.

Want to be on the reader panel?

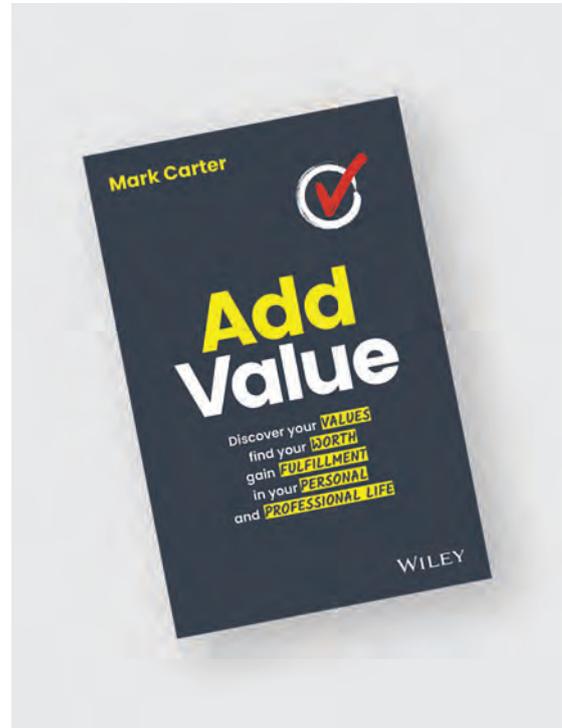
Alternatively, if you'd like a regular e-mail with all contribution opportunities, including book reviews, e-mail Claire at editor@executivepa.com with a few sentences about you, your role and your experience.

Here's how it works:

- You'll get a digital or hard copy of the book and a how-to for the review.
- Post-reading, you'll write a short review. Your writing doesn't need to be of a professional standard – that's the editor's job. On that note, you can contact Claire for any questions along the way.
- Submit your review and before you know it, you'll see your words on these very pages.

Please note: Regrettably, we can only have one reviewer per title but we hugely appreciate your interest and will always keep you on file for further review opportunities.

READY FOR REVIEW

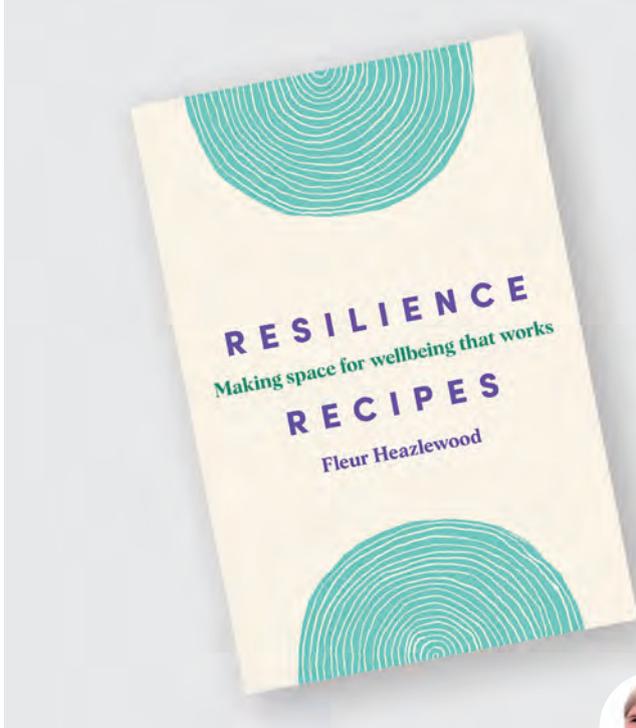


Add value

by Mark Carter

Learn how to realise and expand your full potential in your career, identify your personal values for success at work and beyond, stop compromising your authentic value, contribute value through philanthropy for social impact and focus on strong, personal human connections in a digital age. Add Value promises a unique and insightful read for anyone with the curiosity and energy to invest in themselves in order to thrive, today and into the future.

“Add Value promises a unique and insightful read for anyone with the curiosity and energy to invest in themselves in order to thrive, today and into the future.”



“Reading this book has helped me finally realise that I don’t have to be perfect. Mistakes happen and it’s all a learning curve.”



CATHRYN SMITH

Resilience Recipes

by Fleur Heazlewood

“**Having gone through** what we’ve all gone through over the past two years, I’ve found myself facing new challenges that, maybe, I’m not really prepared for. The idea of a book with answers to some of my most pressing problems really appealed to me. After all, as an EA, your work life and home life can merge – surely solving some of the stresses in my personal life could only help in my professional life?

Resilience Recipes starts out with a simple wellbeing assessment test. Then it heads into strategies and exercises to help you manage stressful situations and take back control of potentially overwhelming areas in your life.

These are simple and practical tasks (sometimes that’s all you can take, isn’t it?) and because the author breaks them down into manageable chunks, you never feel like you can’t achieve any of them. Plus, you don’t have to do them all, or even in order – just pick and choose based on how you’re feeling.

My main takeaway was that we need to take more time

for ourselves. Work can be so overwhelming and role of an EA – largely focused around looking after others – means we don’t always look after ourselves. But we should and we need to. I’m definitely going to be taking more time for myself... And stopping working 24/7.

I’ve also realised I don’t need to be in control all the time, which was very enlightening! And, in relation, reading this book has helped me finally realise that I don’t have to be perfect. Mistakes happen and it’s all a learning curve.

I would definitely recommend Resilience Recipes to anyone – but especially EAs. After reading, I absolutely feel more in control and far less overwhelmed with everything. But whether you’re struggling with stress and wellbeing or not, I think everyone can get something out of the exercises within the book.

Oh, and one thing to make clear from the start is that this isn’t a recipe book, so don’t be expecting the perfect lasagne recipe!”

Cathryn Smith is a PA and admin team leader at WSP

CAREER

Professional development tips for executive-level PAs

THE FINAL WORD FROM A CHIEF OF STAFF



JO JONES

My best bosses

Let me introduce you to two extraordinary people... Mike Stratton, director at Wellcome Sanger Institute and Kate Shasha, chief of staff and director of strategy at Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. They don't know one another but have two things in common. Firstly, they both know me and secondly, they are two of the most amazing bosses.

EAs, I'm sure I'm not alone here when I say that when you take on a new role you never really can tell what your new boss is going to be like?

His 'right hand' in the truest sense

I knew of Mike from when I was a temp. He was so inspiring that I announced to my then line manager: "I'm going to work for him one day". A year later, I was being interviewed to be his EA. He asked whether I was up for the challenge of managing his time (which he's terrible at) and I accepted the challenge. I went on to support him 24/7 for more than eight years and what a ride! I suppose it took about a year for Mike to truly trust me. Let's not forget that 24/7 meant that I supported him personally and professionally, so I had access to his bank accounts and keys to his home. When the trust was built, the role took off.

Mike treated me as a peer and I was his 'right hand' in the truest sense. He trusted me with his life, quite literally. In turn, he churned out work at a pace and volume like nothing I had ever encountered, and I had two choices – sink or swim. I swam, every day. Supporting someone like Mike is almost indescribable; he has a unique approach to work and is truly amazing. He always approached our day with good grace, dignity, charm and humour, and always said 'thank you'.

Like cogs in a machine

My current boss, Kate, has such a special talent of line management that she could make a fortune tutoring those less desirable managers (we all know a few, right?) in how to succeed.

Kate is, without fail, always a million steps ahead of everyone. She retains such vast knowledge, never forgets anything and keeps the entire organisation on track and to task – but does it in a way that you want to be like her, work hard for her and achieve everything. Kate does not keep all of this to herself – she's encouraging, nurturing, wants you to do well and be the best you can be. This style of line management is not only motivating but it gives me the confidence to take a leap just to see what I am capable of.

Kate and I haven't worked together as long as Mike and I did – in fact we've just turned two years old! She is, without a shadow of a doubt, my trusted partner. We feed off one another and are in sync so much so it's like cogs in a machine where one cannot survive without the other. It's wonderfully weird.

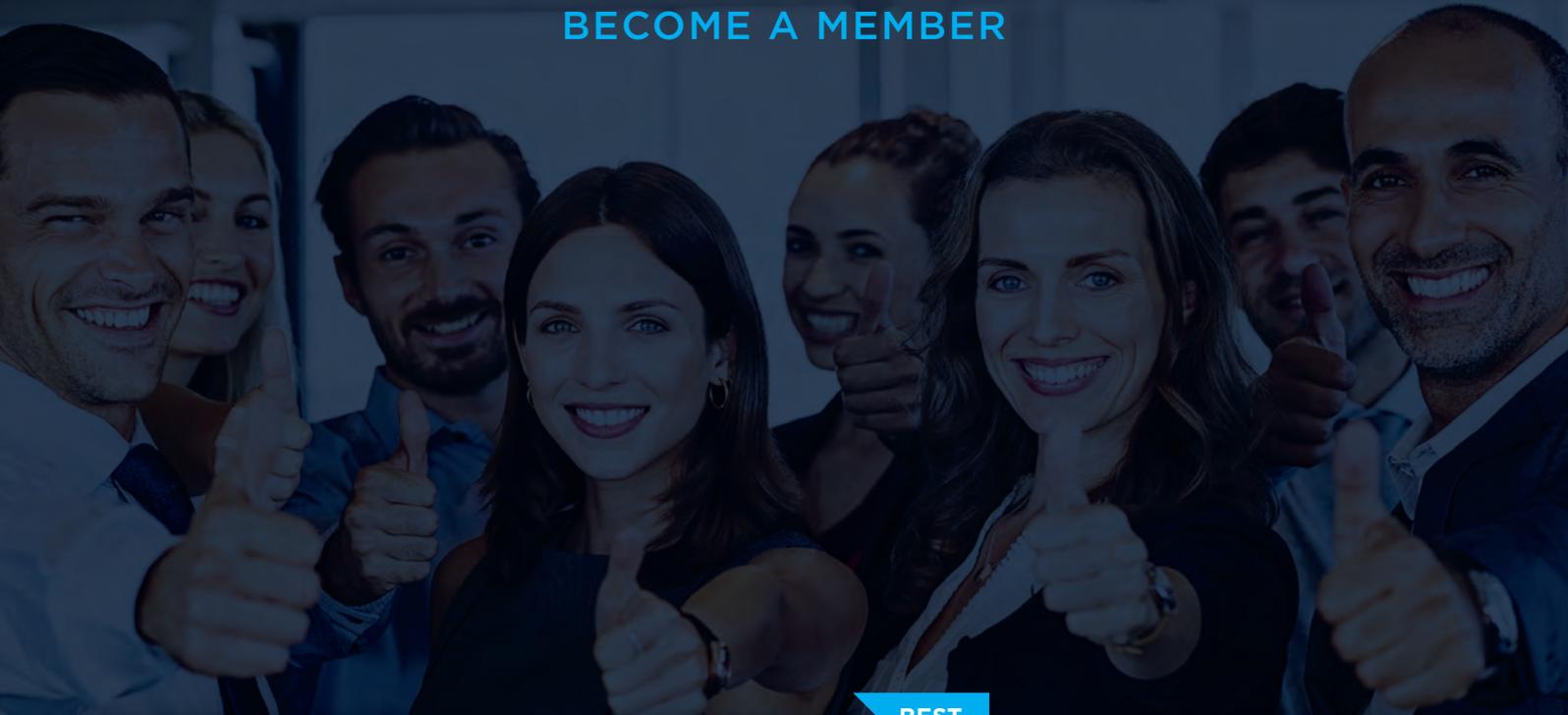
As you'll know being in the EA or chief of staff role you have so many fingers in so many pies and there is so much to learn. Kate's stewardship of our organisation is a sight to behold. Her conduct makes me want to do better – I want to be the ambassador she is and I have the best teacher.

With both Kate and Mike, I'm now their friend, sounding board, peer and trusted advisor. I thank my lucky stars every day that I was fortunate to be part of Mike's world and I am now hitched to Kate's. I can't wait to see where it takes me. ✖

Jo Jones is deputy chief of staff at Institute and Faculty of Actuaries

Unlock opportunity with Executive PA Media

BECOME A MEMBER



BEST

Sign up for updates

Free

Valuable updates to your inbox

- ✓ Tailored news
- ✓ Special offers
- ✓ Event news
- ✓ Editor's picks

Become a full member

\$167 a year

Receive these exclusive benefits

- ✓ Discounts on training
- ✓ Discounts on events
- ✓ Executive PA magazine
- ✓ Access the Members Only page
- ✓ Special offers & content
- ✓ Priority invitation to famil trips
- ✓ Write book reviews in Executive PA

Corporate memberships

Join as a group and save

- ✓ Discounted rate for 5+ people
- ✓ Registrations for 10+ receive a free table at the Executive PA Awards
- ✓ Includes full member benefits

EXECUTIVE PA
— MEDIA —

www.executivepa.com.au

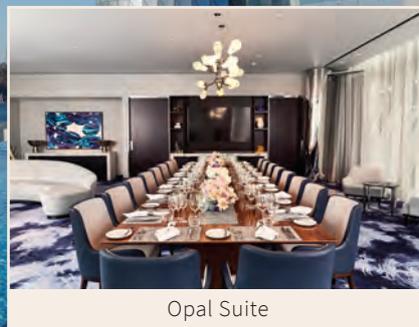
Take your next corporate event to new heights at Crown Sydney.

From the luminous Pearl Ballroom to the intimate Opal Suite, each space within Crown Sydney offers an exquisite setting with state-of-the-art technology and expansive views of Sydney Harbour.

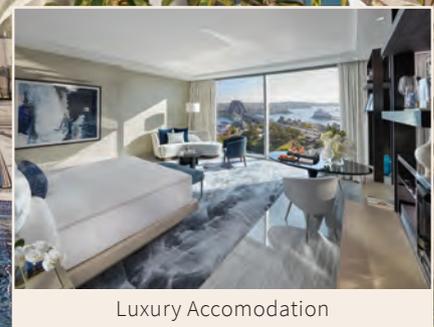
Enquire now: crowsydney.com.au/events



Luminous Ballrooms



Opal Suite



Luxury Accomodation

