



## Practice Management

18<sup>th</sup> March 2024



Yakub Abiola Hammed <sup>1</sup>

### **THE ROLES OF A PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO AN EXECUTIVE IN TODAY'S DYNAMIC COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The role of a Personal Assistant to either an A-level, B-level, or even C-level executive within an organization in today's changing commercial environment is vital to the accomplishment of business goals of any firm. Executives depend on their Personal Assistant to support them in most areas of the business, making sure their work-life is stress-free and less cumbersome.

The global commercial world has increasingly become fast paced in terms of technology adaptation, hence an executive of whichever level needs a support hand to take care of elementary duties to focus on competing favourably in the ever-changing commercial world, while adapting accordingly to power enabled tech solutions and business strategies.

#### **2. ROLES OF A PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO AN EXECUTIVE IN TODAY'S DYNAMIC COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

The roles of a Personal Assistant (PA) to an Executive in today's dynamic commercial environment are as discussed below:

##### **2.1 Innovative Management of Schedule of Business Activities of an Executive**

In today's fluid business environment, it is the role of a PA to innovatively manage an executive's schedule of business activities (while taking into

---

<sup>1</sup> Yakub Hammed Abiola, P.A to the Managing Partner, Practice Management, S. P. A. Ajibade & Co., Lagos State, Nigeria.

consideration his areas of priorities and impromptu appointments) in a manner that ensures timeliness, orderliness, and proper organization in order to timely meet deadlines of either virtual or physical business activities. This is to make sure that the executive's time is efficiently and effectively allocated and well-managed. There are varieties of innovative tools to achieve this, and examples of them are Google Calendar, Calendly, Office 365 Outlook Calendar etc. Apart from these tools, artificial intelligence (AI) tools that can also be used to innovatively manage executive's time include but not limited to the following: Clockwise, Motion, Trevor, Sidekick AI, Todoist and Scheduler AI.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, a skilled PA uses proactive strategies to anticipate potential scheduling conflicts and find solutions in advance. This might involve negotiating with stakeholders or rearranging priorities. By staying ahead of the curve, a PA ensures that their executive can focus on strategic decision-making and high-priority tasks without getting bogged down by logistical challenges.

Furthermore, a PA must be adaptable to the ever-evolving nature of business dynamics. A PA is required to be agile in adjusting schedules on short notice, accommodating last-minute changes, and leveraging technology to facilitate seamless communication and coordination across different time zones and geographical locations. With the rapid pace of globalization and digitalization, effective schedule management has become a cornerstone of executive productivity and organizational success.

## **2.2 Firm and Accurate Understanding of Business Operations of an Executive**

As the first point of contact of an executive, the PA has a duty to have a firm and accurate understanding of the executive's business operations and activities and be able to provide readily available answers to questions posed by clients, partners, co-staff, or external stakeholders who may want to get information from an executive through his/her PA.

Moreover, the PA plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication and collaboration within the organization. They serve as a liaison between the executive and other members of the organization, ensuring that information

---

<sup>2</sup> Alex McFarland (2024), '10 Best AI Scheduling Assistants (April 2024)' available at <https://unite.ai/best-ai-scheduling-assistants/> accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

flows smoothly across different departments and levels of hierarchy and ultimately contributing to the overall efficiency of the workforce.

As the circumstance may pressingly demand, the PA can be called upon to represent the executive in various internal and external meetings, where such PA is expected to articulate the executive's vision, goals, and priorities accurately. This requires not only excellent communication skills but also a keen understanding of the executive's mindset and objectives. By acting as a proxy for the executive, the PA helps to extend his/her influence and impact beyond the confines of his/her immediate responsibilities.

### **2.3 Tracking and Settlement of an Executive's Professional Subscriptions**

A PA also has the mandate of tracking his/her principal's professional and personal subscriptions to ensure timely settlement of these subscriptions. This is utmostly crucial in today's business clime as failure to track and settle these subscriptions as and when due may lead to loss of business opportunities, attract lawful/regulatory penalties/fines that will be borne or suffered by the executive.

To fulfill this responsibility effectively, the PA must maintain meticulous records of all subscriptions, including renewal dates, payment terms, and associated costs. The PA must develop robust systems and processes for monitoring and managing these obligations, leveraging technology where possible to automate routine tasks and minimize the risk of oversight or error.

### **2.4 Information Management**

The commercial space is a space where information exchange is done at a very high volume. Information exchanges in the form of emails, phone calls and other correspondences are done internally and externally in an organization. The PA is expected to effectively and efficiently manage these exchanges for an executive in a manner that ultimately takes away the stress of managing these information exchanges. It is also incumbent on the PA to maintain an organized filing and docketing system with respect to these correspondences/communications.

## **2.5 Optimization of the Digital Space for the business benefit of an Executive**

In today's global village where the world is digitally connected without borders,<sup>3</sup> it is strikingly necessary for a PA to optimally take advantage of this situation to not only project his/her principal's executive image online, but also to increase his/her visibility to attract potential business opportunities lurking in the digital space.

## **2.6 Research Support**

PAs also offer research support to an executive, thereby lessening the burdensome workload an executive gets to grapple with during his/her business activities/operations. Most often than not, executives rely on their PA to get them that research backed information that is not only authentic but can be satisfactorily relied upon to make business decisions and calls. In today's dynamic business environment, the ability to quickly analyze situations and make informed decisions is crucial to achieving business goals.

## **2.7 Project Management**

PAs can be entrusted with managing and supervising projects on behalf of his/her principal. As the business environment continues to demand an executive's scarce time, the PA can expectedly step in to fill his/her principal's gap to ensure that relevant projects stay on course - ensuring that tasks are completed on time and within the proposed budget.

## **2.8 Confidentiality and Trustworthiness**

As the name hints, PAs would often have access to personal and sensitive information of his/her principal (s/he can even be privy to some sensitive business information, it is ethically expected of the PA to treat such information with the highest level of confidentiality. Any leakage of confidential and proprietary information can prove disastrous or inimical to the personal or business success of an executive.

---

<sup>3</sup> There are about 5.35 billion people using internet globally. See, Ani Petrosyan (2024), 'Worldwide digital population 2024' available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/> accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, PAs play important roles in helping businesses navigate today's dynamic commercial environment by providing essential support to executives at any level. Their non-exhaustive but rudimentary roles discussed above are a testament to the fact that they are indispensable in today's ever changing and demanding commercial environment.

It is evident from the foregoing that in a business environment characterized by constant flux and heightened demands, the PAs remain vital linchpins in the scheme of things for an executive to achieve both professional and organizational success.

---

For further information on this article and area of law,  
please contact **Yakub Hammed Abiola** at:

S. P. A. Ajibade & Co., Lagos by  
Telephone (+234 1 472 9890), Fax (+234 1 4605092)  
Mobile (+234 705 828 2258, +234 816 403 4208)

Email: [yhammed@spaajibade.com](mailto:yhammed@spaajibade.com)

[www.spaajibade.com](http://www.spaajibade.com)