



# BIZ \$ TALK WITH JOSEPHINE KWAN

Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals' President Josephine Kwan tells us about the evolving roles in the administrative industry and how they are working with the Labour Movement.

Story and Photo by **Jonathan Tan**

“**T**hough administrative professionals carry a similar title, it could mean different job scopes and even different salary ranges, depending on the company and industry,” said Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals’ (SAAP) President Josephine Kwan.

With some 30 years of experience in the industry, she shared that professionals are now often required to possess additional competencies to do higher-level work. This could mean roles that straddle both administration, project management and even human resource management.

“The requirements go beyond coordination and include scheduling meetings and making travel arrangements for the executives and directors they are attached to. Technology and the internet have transformed the role of administrative professionals,” she said.

### UPSKILLING FOR PROGRESS

Progression through the ranks can see junior administrative professionals going into specialised areas such as human resource, finance and marketing. With adequate working experience and educational qualifications, these professionals can even take on management positions as office or administration managers.

There are also others who apply their acquired knowledge of business and operations to eventually start their own businesses.

Critical to career development, though, is being adaptable to changes and continuously upgrading and improving yourself, said Josephine, who is currently reading a diploma in people management.

She lists time management as an essential skill to pick up for administrative professionals to do well in their roles. Besides that, both written and verbal communication skills are important as report and minutes writing are key aspects of the job.

Given the increasingly digital work environment, Josephine highlighted that administrative professionals need to embrace changes to take advantage of the benefits of technology.

“There are various software and mobile applications that enable us to effectively and efficiently manage our workload and improve productivity,” she said.

### WORKING WITH THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

“While we do have training programmes for our members, we also tap on partners like NTUC U

Associate because of the wide range of training and development courses available through its networks,” said Josephine.

The association also organises regular networking events where members can come together to share their views to better understand the work landscape and how to improve.

SAAP is supporting NTUC’s new PIVOT programme (*see page 8 for story*). Josephine and a fellow SAAP management council member have come forward to volunteer their time as mentors.

“It is our call of duty to lend a helping hand by way of emotional support and sharing of adequate skills advice to individuals keen on exploring new career opportunities in the administrative profession,” she said.

Josephine revealed that SAAP is looking into an Administrative Professional Development Programme for the administrative profession.

“With feedback from our members, focus groups and employers, we plan to introduce the programme with bite-sized modules that will be developed with partners like NTUC U Associate.

“Not limited to administrative professionals, the programme will also enable those interested in joining the profession to have a better idea of what is involved,” she shared.

### INSIDER'S GUIDE

#### Singapore Association of Administrative Professionals (SAAP)

**Established:** 1971

**Why:** To support the development and enhance the status of administrative professionals in Singapore.

**Became an NTUC U Associate in:** February 2016

**Did You Know:** A non-profit organisation run by volunteers, SAAP was formerly known as the Singapore Association of Personal & Executive Secretaries. The association’s name was changed in 2005 to reflect the changing role of secretaries over the years with increased responsibility and authority in key areas of administrative management.

**i** For more information, visit [www.saap.org.sg](http://www.saap.org.sg).