

Today's talented PAs need nurturing

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Managers have been urged to support their PAs and help them achieve their full potential.

By Will Stevens.

Modern PAs act as their managers' second brain and should be viewed more as management assistants, according to a new report.

A study conducted by Kingston University has revealed that those working in such roles are better educated and perform higher level tasks than their predecessors did.

However, it also revealed that PAs can often be undervalued, bullied and asked to perform inappropriate tasks.

The research found that more than a third of respondents had been required to go beyond the call of duty, with one individual asked to make curtains.

Rosemary Parr, one of the study's authors and a former PA to BT chairman Sir Christopher Bland, called on managers to recognise the potential of their PAs.

"The perception of the role is stuck in a time warp from 40 or 50 years ago when secretaries were seen as surrogate wives or housekeepers. Now they are more like management assistants," she said.

Managers and HR professionals should ensure such workers have career development plans and proper job descriptions, the study added.

Firms which do not invest in their workers in this way could see highly able employees leave for a competitor.

A recent study by Sirota Survey Intelligence revealed that cutting training can leave people feeling like a cost that needs to be controlled, rather than a valuable asset.