

4<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Mr Sathnam Sanghera  
e-mail: [sathnam@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:sathnam@thetimes.co.uk)  
The Times

Dear Mr Sanghera

I read with great interest your article on Monday in relation to the Academic Research that my organisation, Global PA Network initiated.

It was interesting that you described our report as 'hysterical' when in our view it was a fair and measured assessment of the Secretarial/PA Profession in 2009. The word 'hysterical' conjures up images of overwrought, unhinged and out of control researchers which as I am sure you know is not the case at all!

We welcome the interest that your article has generated as it is our aim to raise awareness for this profession. I established my Global PA Network to support PAs and Secretaries career development and champion their upskilling through regular training and development and we were delighted that Kingston University Business School were keen to investigate the profession and work with us.

The aim of our Research was to highlight that this is a sector of the workforce whose role has transformed into the managerial responsibility that many PAs now take on. We are working in line with the recommendations of the Leitch Report 2005 which champions upskilling of the UK workforce by 2020. I believe strongly that to remain competitive in the world all areas of our workforce need regular training and development. It is a sad fact in the UK that so few employees receive regular motivational training and development of their core skills and if they did their stress levels would be lower when challenged with the recession that we are now in. In fact the Employment Skills Commission was urging in full page ads in The Times, Sunday Times and other national newspapers last Autumn for CEOs to not stop training and development of their staff during an economic downturn.

I have personally trained thousands of PAs around the world and they all look to the UK for inspiration in training and development. By creating training programmes that upskill the Secretarial/PA profession and break through the glass ceiling we are creating opportunities for the UK to be a beacon of training excellence in this workforce sector.

Your article very much focused on the trivial and menial jobs that some are still doing for their bosses. but the essence of this research is that they are talented, intelligent individuals, many with degree level qualifications whose skills could be better utilised in the workplace. In 2009 we need a work force that works better and smarter through teamwork, transparency, trust and good communication. This is the type of workforce that is going to move us out of recession into a growing economy. Why should not the Secretarial/PA profession be included in this modern way of working, when the research identifies and proves in the case studies what a multi talented set of individuals they are?

Yours sincerely

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cc: Letters to the Editor, The Times  
David Wighton, The Times