

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

ADDRESS BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE HAZEL MANNING MINISTER OF EDUCATION

IN CELEBRATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY 2007

“ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS – THE POWER OF A POSITIVE IMAGE”

WEDNESDAY APRIL 25TH 2007

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- Mrs Angella Jack, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education
- Mrs Marlene Juman-Redhead and Mrs Marlene Felix, Deputy Permanent Secretaries
- Mr Peter O'Neil, Chief Education Officer
- Honoured Administrative Professionals from the Ministry of Education
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

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It gives me great joy and immense pleasure to be here with you today as we gather to recognize and celebrate **Administrative Professionals Day 2007**.

Over the years, Administrative Professionals Week has become one of the largest workplace observances. The event is celebrated worldwide, bringing together millions of people for community events, educational seminars and individual corporate activities, recognizing support staff with gifts of appreciation.

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This year, the National Association of Administrative Professionals of Trinidad and Tobago has adopted the theme: *Administrative Professionals... the Power of a Positive Image.*

We at the Ministry of Education want our administrative professionals to project positive images -positive images of self and of the MINISTRY. We therefore decided that one of the best ways to observe **Administrative Professionals Week**, which runs from April 22nd - 28th 2007, was to provide registration for a Professional Development Seminar to build on your technical, interpersonal and business skills. I am pleased to let you know that The Business Development Company Limited through an Administrative Professional Conference is currently facilitating this seminar for all Administrative Professionals from our Ministry.

The Seminar is aimed at:

- Developing critical skills to become a Value-Added Employee
- Managing Family and Work Life effectively
- Improving a Personal and Corporate Image
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- Thinking, Acting and Responding Like a Manager
- Projecting Confidence, Self-Control and Vigour in attempting all tasks

I have noted with interest that the agenda covers:

- * Moving up the Corporate Ladder
- * Becoming a Value-Added Employee
- * Managing Your Boss
- * Healthy Lifestyles
- * Stress and Time Management – *Creating balance and meaning in your life*
- * Projecting Confidence and Authority
- * Etiquette and Personal Image Consulting

Overall, it is a well-designed seminar aimed at enhancing your existing skills and image.

I am proud to say that the first training session for our staff was conducted yesterday by the Business

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Development Company Ltd. The rollout of the remaining sessions for the entire Administrative Professionals workforce will follow during the months of April and May 2007.

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) in its by-laws, defines Administrative Professionals as individuals who are responsible for administrative tasks and coordination of information in support of an office-related environment and who are dedicated to furthering their personal and professional growth in their chosen profession.

An unknown author once said, "As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold".

Nowadays, it is no longer about the boss keeping you busy with trivial tasks. Today's Administrative Professional is a hub of information and communication in the office.

You now:

- Plan meetings and special events
- Participate on project teams

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- Work closely with suppliers
- Create presentations
- Supervise and orient other staff
- Maintain Multiple Schedules and Calendars
- Handle Correspondence (with voice-mail, e-mail and regular postal mail)
- Maintain computer files, directories and databases. Your job now requires that you display outstanding interpersonal communication skills, project management knowledge, mastery of integrated office software applications and top-notch organizational abilities.

So as we celebrate today, let us also reflect on the role and contribution of an Administrative Professional.

Pearl S. Buck said, *“The secret of joy in work is contained in one word – Excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it”*.

Over the past year, you have heard me talk about the journey to Excellence. The word Excellence has become a mantra of our Ministry and yet so many of us are unsure as to its meaning.

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I like to think of Excellence as a habit. A habit you develop when you repeatedly and consistently strive to do your best. Excellence is about dedicating yourself to a life of continuous improvement.

It is about being happy with what you have accomplished, but always recognizing that better can be done.

It is about learning from your mistakes but never letting them suffocate the true champion inside of you.

It is about steadily traveling towards the horizon, even though you are aware that it will keep moving.

It is about weaving these fundamental beliefs into the very core of your character, your personality and your spirit. Moreover, it is about inspiring others to begin their own journeys to excellence.

As we reflect on your work this week, ask yourself, *“Am I a Value Added Employee who focuses on Excellence in all aspects of work and life?”*

What do I focus on when at work? Do you think, *“What can I give today?”* Or are you the type of employee that thinks, *“What can I get?”*

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Are you the type of employee that selfishly believes “*Management does not do enough for me...for us!*” My question though not original is “*What are you doing for Management?*”

All of us who have dedicated our lives to serving the public know that progress can be slow and often frustrating. Those of us who work in education may not see the tangible impact at a personal level, but every time you work at placing teachers in schools, you ensure that the Nation’s children benefit better from their education.

Every time, you assist in the planning of the school system, building or repairing schools, every time you ensure payments to our clients are prompt you help to move the work forward.

Over the last year, your input has helped the Ministry of Education:-

- Deshift 8 Junior Secondary schools
- Construct Early Childhood Centres
- Assist with psycho-social support for students
- Conduct Research on behalf of our Ministry

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You give and you get! We ask you to give your best so that we as a people can get the best possible education system. If you become so focused on what you think you are not getting, that overshadows everything and you lose perspective, above all you lose hope. You can change this! During this coming year, I am asking you to adopt attitudes of hope and develop attitudes of excellence. Become a “value-added” employee. Rather than focus on company weaknesses, build your strengths. Use that strength and power to become “value-added”. Be pro-active in your own life!

Balance your work and family life which are both central to our being. Manage your time by setting priorities that move you toward your goals. Set realistic goals and expectations. Make positive choices in the areas of physical fitness, stress, work, relationships and nutrition. Above all, stay close to your God.

See the workplace as a setting for personal growth and transformation. Treat your job as your life’s work. This quest is called *“walking around spirituality”*.

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When you behave and interact with co-workers and customers in such a way that you enrich yourself and all those you meet, you will be more fulfilled. So let today and this Administrative Professionals Week mark the first steps on your journey to Excellence. Stay focused, believe in yourself and together let us strive for Excellence in the workplace.

In addition, of course, next to Excellence is **the appreciation of it** and we truly appreciate you all. Not just today but everyday.

I thank you all and extend Best Wishes throughout this day. May God continuously guide and bless you and may your journey to Excellence continue to be rewarding.

Please give yourselves a round of applause for a job well done!