



BRANCHING OUT

Institute of Qualified Professional Secretaries Limited
Branching Out Newsletter for IQPS East Midlands - Autumn 2004 Edition



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Branching Out.

For this edition, I wish to focus on the importance the branch places on securing valuable sponsorship from local companies and businesses in the East Midlands area. Therefore you will notice as you thumb through your package, there is a listing of the main supporters for the East Midlands Branch over the last three years. The purpose of this directory is to provide you with a useful working aid when you need the services of local companies and you will be reassured that these companies have had the IQPS endorsement.

Please support our sponsors when ordering for your company and quote IQPS East Midlands Branch in your booking. It helps the branch to maintain contact with our valuable service providers who play such an important part in delivering IQPS branch events at reasonable costs.

I certainly found the benefit of this when our September guest speaker had to pull out due to family circumstances. Fortunately the IQPS alliance we have with OfficeTeam gave me the network connection and we managed to get two replacement speakers only the day before the event.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind you of our IQPS Uncovered Event on Tuesday 30 November. At this event members will hear the background activities of IQPS, put views forward and can bring a colleague along to introduce them to IQPS.

With best wishes.

June Page MIQPS
East Midlands Branch Chairman

BRANCH REPORTS

MEETING THE MEDIA

BBC Radio Sheffield Open Centre Breakfast Meeting Friday 21 May 2004

Every Friday morning Radio Sheffield opens the centre early and hosts a breakfast club to which they invite a group of people with a shared interest or profession. As well as enjoying croissants and coffee the group takes part in the BBC Radio Sheffield breakfast programme by sharing their views on the week's news.

On Friday 21 May, it was the turn of a group of secretaries to take to the airwaves. The reason I was selected was that I teach business administration and office technology. Among the group joining me on the sofa that morning were secretaries, personal assistants and administrators from Dixons, the University of Sheffield, Corus Group and South Nottinghamshire District Council.

After being introduced to Andrew Bowman and Margaret Burgin of Radio Sheffield, we were offered coffee, croissants, toast, orange juice, fruit and yogurt, which made a welcome change from the chocolate Slim-Fast I usually gulp down before running to class. We were immediately put at our ease and began chatting animatedly about various news topics – though I would mention that we were not on air at that moment! What did we discuss? The contents of women's handbags, whether or not farming and agricultural vehicles should be allowed on the road before 9.00 am (definitely not!), the latest plot line in Coronation Street, the recent excellent OFSTED inspection results for my College and whether Sheffield Wednesday would avoid the drop zone and stay in Division 2. Posing the questions was Everard Davy, who reads the news during the Radio Sheffield breakfast show.

We all felt very relaxed and bonded well, so we did not feel as if we were putting on a performance; the whole discussion was very natural and as such, I was later told by colleagues who listened, made for good radio! Whether listeners agreed with our viewpoints, however, I am not sure.

Following the breakfast meeting, Andrew took us on a tour of the station which I found fascinating. BBC Radio Sheffield moved to its current premises on Shoreham Street in Sheffield City Centre around five years ago. We met back room staff, went to the news room, were shown how callers are dealt with (did you know that phone-in callers are selected for entertainment

value as much as anything else) and had a go at operating the decks and choosing jingles.

Finally, we left the station with a "goody bag" full of Radio Sheffield stationery and other items. I was so impressed with the tour I have recommended it as a student visit. IQPS members who would like to take a virtual tour of the studio can do so on the link:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/england/radiosheffield/station_tour.shtml

For information about the free computing courses run by BBC Radio Sheffield, visit the website or telephone 0114 267 5411.

Anne Louise Booth

**EFFECTIVE NETWORKING FOR SECRETARIES &
STATUTORY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES EFFECTIVE FROM
1.10.04**

Thursday 9 September

**Regus Business Park, Nottingham East Midlands Airport, Pegasus
Business Park, Castle Donington, Derbys.**

**Speakers: Karen Kennedy, Managing Director, Access2Business and
Ruth Ingman LL.M Employment Law Consultant**

The prestige Regus Centre at East Midlands Airport welcomed IQPS East Midlands Branch members and guests on Thursday 9th September to hear guest speakers Karen Kennedy and Ruth Ingman. Karen is Managing Director of Access2Business, providing networking opportunities to business members. Ruth is an independent Employment Law Consultant, currently delivering focus on the new minimum statutory procedures for discipline, dismissal and grievance procedures.

Karen opened the evening and it was clear to see that she is passionate about the power of networking. She described how she discovered the benefits of networking from her own early experience as an employee of a landscaping and garden buildings company – a thriving environment in the summer months, but long winter days with few sales prospects led Karen to try the services of a professional networking company. She soon discovered one of the benefits of networking is that exchange of useful information, (in this case legal and financial advice) can have a cost-saving benefit. Although her objective at the time was to gain more sales prospects, she managed to reassure her employers that the annual subscription fee to the networking

company was providing good value in terms of broader support to the business. By the second year of membership her employer's faith and Karen's tenacity were rewarded with a substantial order from a new customer who had chosen to place the business with whom he felt most confident i.e. the diligent networker, Karen.

Karen urged us to formulate our goals in terms of what we want to achieve through the power of networking. Most PA's and Secretaries network naturally throughout the working day by exchanging information with colleagues, although we often think of this as "doing a favour" or "receiving a favour". The key to successful networking is to formalise this habitual way of working into a professional practise, so that we can maximise our effectiveness. Karen gave us a few tips to apply whether we are networking on behalf of ourselves or on behalf of our company. Consider which of these you might usefully use:

Business Cards. Not just for the "boss"; you too will meet with suppliers, customers and other professionals in the course of your working week and using business cards will raise your profile as your company's representative.

Work closely with your diary. Decide how often and when you need to be in contact with the members of your network and schedule your diary accordingly.

Follow up the contacts you make. This can be an informal e-mail just to say you enjoyed the conversation or meeting and always record your thanks for help received.

From time to time we all attend events on behalf of our company or ourselves, just think of how many times you have gone along alone to an IQPS National Event :

- Attend your chosen networking events regularly so that your profile is reinforced with other guests.
- Attendance can be a little daunting so ask the host to introduce you to other guests. The host can also provide background information and invaluable reminders of key facts – guests' names, business locations etc.
- Attend with an open mind – you may sometimes leave feeling that you are offering more assistance than receiving but this will redress over time and you can never learn too much about other people's characters, interests and specialisms.

- Be colourful – wear something of colour or interest, even if it has to be just a colourful scarf against a dark suit, this will fulfil the objective of raising your visual profile in a room full of business-suited guests.
- Take advantage of opportunities and facilities offered by the host to raise your profile e.g. if your company is providing sponsorship, ensure it is acknowledged; to raise your own profile, volunteer your services in some way which is supportive to the event.

Karen's warm, humourous address was peppered with examples of successful networking for members of Access2Business where goals had been achieved or problems solved on the strength of members' being able to access the 'A2B' network. It transpired that our Branch Meeting was in itself an example of networking achievement – our original speaker had to cancel at short notice, our Chairman June Page MIQPS had contacted our business partners Office Team for inspiration, they had approached Karen who fortunately was able to accept. However, Karen's usual delivery would not have filled the time allocation and so she turned to her network and over a lunchtime meeting on 9th September, the day of the event, our second speaker, Ruth Ingman, volunteered to be Karen's speaking partner so that the engagement could be fulfilled. How lucky for us, the East Midlands Branch Members!

Ruth was formerly a Barrister and now practises as an Employment Law Consultant, taking assignments with companies who require her objective expertise. She had prepared a summary for us of the new minimum statutory requirements in cases of discipline, dismissal and grievance procedures. This statutory formalisation of procedures will come into effect from 1st October 2004 and so it was a very topical subject and one in which PA's and Secretaries are likely to have some administrative involvement. As Ruth delivered her guidance on the new procedures, many heads around the room were nodding in agreement and it appeared that the rules of common-sense and natural-justice on which the new procedures are based were not unfamiliar to the audience. Ruth had published a summary of the procedures in the current edition of 'Access 2 Business' newsletter 'Business Bites' which was handed out to the audience. Quite simply, the disciplinary and dismissal procedure can be summarised as follows:

1. A written statement must be produced to the employee specifying the allegations and inviting the employee to meet to discuss the issues raised.
2. The meeting must be held with the employee once he /she has had an opportunity to consider their response. The employee may be accompanied to the meeting (certain criteria apply to the choice of accompanying person). Once a decision has been made, the employee must be notified of the right to appeal.

3. The employee then must notify the employer if an appeal is to be lodged. The appeal meeting must be scheduled and once concluded and a decision reached, the employer must inform the employee of the final decision.

Similar common-sense provisions apply where an employee wishes to raise a grievance.

Non-compliance with the new procedures can seriously compromise a company's successful defence against a claim of unfair dismissal and so briefing for all participants in the proceedings should ensure adherence to the law in this area. Ruth's delivery on this topic to members of the East Midlands Branch illustrated again the value to PA's and Secretaries of their being well informed.

Mary Mulligan MIQPS



Sharon Severn MIQPS (back) with Karen Kennedy and Ruth Ingman

SAVE UP WITH IQPS



As National Events and Branch visits to Health Clubs can be expensive to pay in one go, the branch would like to give you the opportunity to save every month and build up the cost of paying for this gradually. All you need do is send a cheque for as little as £5 per month, made payable to IQPS East Midlands Branch and inform Karen Souster on what you are saving for and she will record the details. Should you be interested, please contact Karen Souster, Branch Treasurer, who will record and monitor payments made. (Contact details in this Newsletter)

SITUATIONS VACANT - BRANCH TREASURER, 2005/06

The East Midlands Branch urgently needs a replacement for Karen Souster as Branch Treasurer for 2005/06. 10 CPD points are on offer. For an informal chat, please contact June Page (contact details in this Newsletter).

BRANCH EVENTS - THE COSTS

As a branch we try to offer you value for money at our events and again for the third year, branch members and subscribers have seen no increase in the cost of evening events that attract CPD points. For some time there has been a two-tier pricing system and the reason for this is the cost of buffets and whether or not we can secure sponsorship. Obviously some events are likely to cost a lot more and above this pricing structure, e.g. health spa visits and full-day events.

The only increase in charges that have been made are for guests and national members not members of the East Midlands Branch.

CONGRATULATIONS

Elizabeth Kirkwood MIQPS on successfully completing the Institute of Administrative Management Advanced Diploma.

Sally Cook MIQPS and June Page MIQPS, on reaching the finals of the Executive PA Magazine Awards 2004.

IQPS TRAINING LIBRARY

Pamela Aitcheson MIQPS is currently reviewing the IQPS library series and wondered if any IQPS members have any books and tapes they would like to donate for other members to borrow. If you can help at all, please contact Pamela by email at: aitcheson@lineone.net

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Tuesday 12 October 2004 – (2 CPD points), Start 6.45. Boots, Beeston, Nottingham. Internets, intranets and extranets - how office professionals can make best use of the web.

Tuesday 30 November 2004

IQPS Uncovered - (1 CPD point), Start 6.45. Thistle Hotel, Nottingham East Midlands Airport, Derbyshire. **FREE EVENT. Registration with Karen Souster is required.**

An opportunity to bring along a colleague and hear about the operations of IQPS. Also we want to hear from our members. Open discussion and fun evening planned.

Wednesday 1 December – Thursday 2 December 2004

Crème 2004. Manchester G-Mex. The Executive Secretary and PA Event. For your free ticket contact: www.thetimescreme.co.uk

Thursday 13 January 2005

Health Spa Visit – Eden Hall, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

Start off your New Year Resolutions and beat those winter blues with a health spa visit. Closing date for registration is 8 November.

Tuesday 18 January 2005

East Midlands Branch Committee Meeting. 6.00 pm. Rolls Royce Hucknall.

If you would like to join the committee, you are welcome to come to this meeting.

Tuesday 8 February 2005

Future Planning Meeting – (1 CPD point)

The General Store, Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham – **FREE EVENT**
Specialist teas and coffees to sample and buy.

Thursday 17 March 2005

Team Leaders and Team Players. (2 CPD points). Liz Kemp, Capita Learning Direct, www.capita-ld.co.uk.

Venue to be announced

Wednesday 27 April 2005

Office Professionals Day©

Qualifications Update - (2 CPD points) 6.45-9.00 (venue tba)

OFFICE TEAM event

Saturday 30 April 2005

Office Professionals Week© IQPS National Spring Conference, Newcastle.
(Details will be released later)

Saturday 7 May 2005

East Midlands Branch AGM – (2 CPD points) - De Vere Belton Woods Hotel,
Grantham, Lincs. AGM and Healthy Living. 11.30-5.00

After the AGM and lunch, relax and hear a presentation on Stress
Management Therapy before spending the afternoon in the Spa. For further
details, visit the web site at www.devereonline.co.uk

Friday 7 October to Sunday 9 October 2005

IQPS National Conference and AGM. Holiday Inn, Kensington Forum,
London. Hosted by Central London Branch. For further information please
contact almarks@btopenworld.com

Wednesday 19 October 2005

Office Security – (venue tba) – 6.45-9.00

Advice on personal safety in the office environment and equipment security.

Also advice on what to do for a VIP visit.

IQPS Office address

IQPS

1st Floor

6 Bridge Avenue

M Maidenhead

SL6 1RR

Tel: 01628 625007 (9am-2pm)

Email: office@iqps.org

web address

www.iqps.org

EAST MIDLANDS COMMITTEE CONTACTS



Branch email: eastmids@iqps.org

June Page MIQPS

Honorary Chairman

19 Wellin Lane

Edwalton

Nottingham NG12 4AS

Home telephone: (0115) 923 4216

Work telephone: (0115) 936 3382

Work email: jhpa@bgs.ac.uk

Sharon Severn MIQPS

Honorary Secretary

24 Viyella Mews

Hucknall

Nottinghamshire

NG15 7NP

Home telephone: 0115 9642894

Work telephone: 01332 247012

Work email: sharon.severn@rolls-royce.com

Karen Souster MIQPS

Honorary Treasurer

18 Hawkesmore Drive

Little Haywood

Stafford

ST18 0UA

Home telephone: (01889) 808378

Work telephone: 01785 221295

Work email: karen.souster@southstaffshis.nhs.uk

Home email: karen.souster@ntlworld.com

Elizabeth Kirkwood MIQPS

Vice Chairman

23 Maunleigh

Forest Town
Nottinghamshire NG19 0PP
Home telephone: (01623) 471424
Work telephone: (0115) 964 6730
Work email: lkirkwood@smpeurope.com

Ann Barnes MIQPS
Membership Secretary
9 Panton Close
Deeping Saint James
Lincs PE6 8ET
Home telephone: (01778) 380147
Work email: ann.barnes@cips.org

Derek Dhammaloka MIQPS
Newsletter Editor
2 Wimberley Close
Weston
Spalding
Lincs PE12 6WA
Home telephone: (01406 371174)
Home/Work email: derek_dhammaloka@yahoo.com

Gill Glover – (Co-opted member)
Events Officer
Fairfield Bungalow
Wellin Lane
Edwalton
Nottingham NG12 4AS
Home: (0115) 9743369
Home email: gillg.1@ntlworld.com;
Work email: gill.glover@nottsc.gov.uk

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