Introduction

This paper provides benchmark data on the relationships of the number of administrative professionals to the number of total employees, the number of executives that administrative professionals support and related information. We conducted a survey of members of the New England Compensation Consortium (NECC) in June 2009, and supplemented this report with both data from another survey conducted by the International Association of Administrative Professionals, and a report on administrative professionals from the Bureau of Labor statistics.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 4.2 million administrative assistants in jobs in 2006, making it one of the largest occupations in the U.S. economy. A majority of secretaries and administrative assistants are employed in service providing industries with the minority working for firms engaged in manufacturing or construction. Employment of executive secretaries and administrative assistants is projected to grow faster than average for all occupations between 2006 and 2016. Growing industries—such as administrative and support services; health care and social assistance; and professional, scientific, and technical services—will continue to generate the most new jobs. ¹

New England Compensation Consortium Survey Results

Twelve organizations responded to the special survey sent to over 200 NECC members. The following is the data associated with the questions asked.

How many total full time equivalent employees are there in your organization?

- Average: 6,199
- Median: 3,309
- 25th: 1,421
- 75th: 7,059
- High: 23,656
- Low: 461

How many full time equivalent Administrative Assistants, Executive Assistants, Secretaries, etc. are there in your organization?

- Average: 156
- Median: 118
- 25th: 24
- 75th: 262

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Indicate your last fiscal year's revenue or operating revenue if not-for profit.

- Average $4,069,000,000
- Median $1,189,000,000
- 25th $658,000,000
- 75th $1,870,000,000
- High $23,000,000,000
- Low $350,000,000

How would you describe your organization's practice for staffing Administrative Assistants to individuals, departments, locations or functional areas?
The following are selected comments received from several of the participating organizations with editing if needed to maintain the organizational confidentiality:

- "Our practice is not based on a certain number or ratio; it's based on need and appropriateness of the position. Not every department has an administrative assistant and we challenge our managers on looking at all positions to see if it’s possible to do things different and consolidate when appropriate."
- "Requests for administrative professionals are reviewed on a case by case basis. Most of vice presidents have administrative assistants, but not all. If they do, they generally have responsibility for the whole department. A couple of the larger departments have more than one assistant."
- "There is no consistent practice at our organization. All senior management, most vice presidents, and some director-level managers have administrative professionals. Administrative professionals for those below the vice president level tend to be used more broadly for group support."
- "Department heads and key staff typically have administrative assistants."
- "Administrative professional jobs are difficult to count because they have evolved into hybrid jobs with both administrative and other responsibilities under a different title, e.g., Human Resources Assistant."
- "Culture and technology have a significant impact on the number of administrative professionals. If the senior positions are not technologically savvy, then they tend to have more need for administrative professionals."
- “There are no standard practices currently - typically offices by major location have an office coordinator in them coordinating and supporting all workers in that area (processing HR paperwork, finance reimbursements, time reporting, etc.)”

International Association of Administrative Professionals

In February 2005, a total of 15,000 members of the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) were randomly selected and asked to participate in a benchmarking survey designed to gather current data on job titles, key responsibilities, average salaries, job satisfaction, technology usage, training needs, other key issues relating to today’s
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assistant remains a fast growing occupation in administrative and support services; health care and social assistance; and professional, scientific, and technical services.
