



STRATEGIC ROLE: 2011's PA of the Year, Anel Martin, says the role of the personal assistant has changed greatly over the years, from purely administrative to more executive in nature.

Top PA wants to develop juniors

WORKPLACE STAFF

ANEL Martin, PA to Telkom's sales and marketing managing executive, Grant Morgan, has been named South Africa's PA of the Year for 2011.

She emerged as the winner after undergoing three rounds of strenuous judging.

The award is organised by Dictum Publishers is now in its sixth year.

Martin's victory was announced last Thursday at the closing ceremony of the annual PA summit at the Indaba Hotel.

Martin said she was extremely honoured and humbled by the experience and was looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of her this year.

Her biggest aim is to be an ambassador for the profession in South Africa and to be involved in the development of the juniors in her company as well as in the profession as a whole.

Asked about her job as a PA, she explained: "The working landscape for personal assistants has changed drastically in recent times and we are more involved than ever as strategic business partners, in an ever increasingly complex way.

"We need to innovate and keep abreast of industry trends and new technology that can assist us in our role as support to the captains of commerce."

On hearing the news,

Morgan said he was impressed with Martin's achievement and congratulated her on a good effort.

The chair of the judging panel, Judy van der Merwe, says the role of the PA in a business's success cannot be overestimated.

"We all know the critical role PAs play in ensuring our captains of commerce and industry can do what they have to do, because the work of a good PA enables them – and frees them – to focus on their priorities," she says.

"It is important, therefore, to acknowledge those good PAs whose task it is to keep the executive offices running smoothly.

"It is precisely for that reason that the PA of the Year award exists – to ensure that every year we 'stop the bus' – even if for just a while – to acknowledge those PAs who, on one hand keep up the good standards, and on the other, raise the bar."

The award, now in its sixth year, has gained a respected footprint in South Africa's working landscape and each year the number of entries increase and with it the difficulty of narrowing it down to nine semi-finalists, and eventually to six finalists.

The PA of the Year and the finalists received prizes from founder, Sponsor Croxley, Brent Personnel, Bantex, Duma Travel, Parker Pens and ICAP.