



## Fellow Member Tony Venn

### 1. Tell us a bit about your career path so far.

Originally, I wanted to go to university to study German and Business but that didn't work out, so I started out working in factories in Telford. I was approached a year later by my old head of year who advised me to go to university, so I applied to study Computer Science and moved to Cardiff. After completing the course, I worked in a computer store for a couple of months and was offered a data entry position with an engineering firm as a short-term position.

After several months, I went from data entry on projects to point of contact and company representative at client meetings. Upon completion of the projects, I was asked if I would be interested in developing my drafting skills and become a CAD Technician with the company, I agreed.

During my role as a Draftsman, my administrative and IT skills became an advantage to the company. The IT duties were shared between myself and one other, eventually, becoming my sole responsibility; I was then relocated to the Administrative team.

After 10 years of working as a Technical Administrator, I had the opportunity to become the Office Manager. My duties grew from daily admin to being responsible for HR, Finance and Credit control, Purchasing, QA, Environmental, H&S and becoming the Investors in People Champion.

After working as an Office Manager for 5 years and spending almost 15 years with the same company, I decided it was time to move on. By chance, I came across a position with another company, who were looking for an Office Manager, I applied had 2 interviews and was successful.

### 2. Tell us a bit about your current role.

My current position is slightly different to my last, has more structure and support. I am responsible for the daily operations of the office, Credit Control, Client interface, Marketing, IT support, and on occasion drafting support. Also, ensuring the Practice maintains compliance with industry standards as well as assisting and facilitating the Management Team in developing the company.

### 3. Tell us some of your career highlights so far.

I have several career highlights, firstly, being responsible for the complete overhaul of an IT infrastructure ensuring that staff have the right tools for their jobs and maintaining the competitiveness in the local market as well as making the company attractive to prospective new employees.

Secondly, I developed a new logo for the company and implemented a marketing overhaul of all promotional materials. Being trusted and relied on to provide excellent support negating the need for any additional administrative support.

A personal highlight that I am proud of is being an approachable Office Manager. I was seen as an effective intermediary between the Management Team and Company Staff and someone who affected change for the betterment of the Practice.

#### **4. What are some of the challenges you think administrative staff face in the current workplace?**

Administrative staff have some of the hardest challenges to deal with in the workplace, primarily because they ensure the seamless running of an office/department. Others can downplay their importance and it can be taken for granted. However, without skilled Administrators, businesses would not work.

I fell into the trap of being relied upon at all times, which was well outside the conditions of my employment. My mantra was “The job comes first and duty to my employer is paramount”.

Certain types of employers will take advantage of this trait. Showing loyalty is an admirable characteristic, but be aware of not prostrating yourself to the detriment of your own career development.

#### **5. What are your thoughts on Professional Development being more relevant in this profession than before?**

In today's marketplace, if Administrators don't maintain a CPD programme, employers may seek to replace them with more experienced employees with wider, diverse and more modern skillsets.

Ensuring a strong CPD programme will certify that the Administrators have stronger positions and support networks within a local area, with an employer as well as within the marketplace.

Jobs for life no longer exist – growth and development are paramount.

#### **6. How has the IAM supported you and how do you feel the IAM could support others?**

I have found the IAM helpful over the past few years. Since the IPA, there has been online resources which cover many different aspects of administrative duties, networking events allowing people from different industries to meet and share ideas.

The concept of the forum was one I relish in as new administrators are able to seek guidance from experienced, like-minded professionals. I was fortunate to have a great mentor who encouraged me to develop the role and to embrace the different facets of the job. That's why I am where I am today.

My hope for the IAM is that it is developed and embraced by all as it is one of the best avenues for Administrators to be recognised in the marketplace and within their work environment.