

Hi, i really hope you can help. I have worked for a large investment bank as a team secretary for 4 years, which i enjoy but would ideally like to progress into a more senior PA role. Various PA positions have come up in mine and other departments over the last six months which i apply for, only to be told that they are looking for people with PA experience... So, my question is, how do i get around this? I suppose i could always apply for PA roles in other companies, but i really love working here and don't want to move. Any advice appreciated!

The problem you are experiencing is commonplace within larger organisations and I can understand your frustration. Employees are bracketed by the type of job they are doing and these are then broken down into categories, for instance within the secretarial/administrational market, Receptionist, Team Secretary, PA etc. It is difficult to make the move from one job title to another because of the way each job's competencies are individually categorised, even though it makes sense that someone with good Team Secretary experience should naturally progress into a PA role, as in most small to medium sized companies.

The problem has been exacerbated by recent market conditions, where there is no shortage of experienced PAs applying for positions from within larger organisations and externally. These candidates will usually be given precedent over a Team Secretary looking to move into a PA role.

In answer to your question, the move you are seeking to achieve is not impossible, but my advice would be to keep reapplying. As we come out of recession, your Employer will need to explore other avenues as the pool of good quality PA dries up as they inevitably take on more staff. If you do this, it may well be wise to strengthen your case by seeking assistance from your Boss who will understand that you want to progress within your career, especially if it is an internal move you are after. He/She could put a word in to the appropriate people as to your "PA" capabilities.

Your other option is to apply for PA roles outside of your place of employment, either directly or through an agency. It sounds that your experience justifies a move upwards and you will certainly be eligible for PA positions. Should you wish to return to Investment Banking in the future, then you can do with PA experience under your belt.

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