

The learning curve



Everyone understands the need to learn new skills and keep on top of their game but with so many training courses available which one should you choose? **MICHAEL SCANLON** looks at training courses that could benefit a PA

Today's PA

Described as the 'definitive' PA workshop, this two-day programme has something to offer everyone. The course covers all aspects of a PA's role from skills such as diplomacy and networking to dealing with stress and time-keeping. The course takes place either in London or Edinburgh but there is also an option to train a group of people at a venue of your choice.

The course is designed by successful PAs so every aspect relates to real and current working practices. As Ruth Garbutt of HSBOS says, "I still think Today's PA is the best by far, the content was all very relevant... I believe (the) course saved me at least 10 years of learning the hard way!" Many big names agree. Companies such as Virgin, Barclays and IPC Media have all sent PAs on the course recently.

The course is £899 + VAT, there is also a £50 discount for charities. If, like many PAs, you have never had any formal training or you just want to improve your all round game, there are worse places to start than Today's PA.

The expert opinion: *"Whilst the PA job Market has improved over the last 12 months, there are a significant number of candidates applying for every vacancy. Employers are looking for PAs with 'an edge'. A course such as this one can only help you in your job search and do mention any courses and specific training you have undertaken in interview."*

David Morel, Tiger Recruitment, www.tiger-recruitment.co.uk

PA Degree and more

Finally the role of PA is getting the recognition it deserves and hand in hand with that are professional qualifications for the industry. The Association of Personal Assistants (APA) is leading the way with a range of courses, diplomas and degrees aimed squarely at PAs. "I found yesterday very inspiring," commented one attendee of a training course with the APA. "I think there is a whole world of opportunities for PAs, they are able to do so much more than just manage calendars and send emails!"

The courses on offer include a PA degree - BA, Masters and Doctorate in Business for PAs; a Diploma for Personal Assistance - DiPA; PA Professional - CertPA advanced level PA skills; PA Apprentice - Beginner's guide to PA skills; and The PA as a Manager - a refresher course for experienced PAs. Prices range from £275 + VAT for APA members on the PA Apprentice course, up to £2,100 + VAT for non-members wishing to do the full Diploma in Personal Assistance.

The expert opinion: *"We often receive requests for degree qualified as a minimum standard for PAs. This course is definitely something we welcome for professional PAs. The 'PA as a manager' course would be particularly beneficial for those PAs who have reached a senior level in their career and are looking for salaries over £35,000 in order to differentiate themselves from other candidates in the market."*

Jennifer Plant, Huntress, www.huntress.co.uk

