

The history of the WASummit, part 1

2018 is the most amazing opportunity for international discussions on the many issues and questions that affect all administrative and office professionals around the world.



Eth Lloyd,
globally recognised
authority on the role
of the Assistant.

So what is the World Administrators' Summit (WASummit)? What does it do, who goes to it and what does it mean to me?

Over the next few issues of this amazing magazine, I will provide you with the history of the WASummit so that you have a context for it. I will provide information on how the summit is organised, what happens at the WASummit, who attends and how you can contribute.

PART 1 - HISTORY WORLD ADMINISTRATORS' SUMMIT

In 1992 Professional Secretaries International (now International Association of Administrative Professionals - IAAP) hosted a meeting that brought together the leaders of the various associations throughout the world to participate in an international summit to discuss global issues affecting secretarial staff.

The first two International Secretarial Summits were hosted in the United States in Portland and then New York. Since then they have been hosted in South Africa, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, New Zealand again and in 2015 Papua New Guinea.

Summits have been held approximately every three years since 1992 and at each summit a bid has been put forward for hosting the following summit.

In 2015 New Zealand was the only country to put forward a bid. They graciously allowed an approach to be made to the northern hemisphere to seek a bid. IMA provided a bid for 2018 which was accepted and New Zealand's bid stands for 2021.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

A Purpose Statement was developed in 1992 which was:

To bring together representatives from secretaries', administrative professionals' and management assistants' associations throughout the world for the purpose of sharing ideas and information, and establishing action plans to positively impact on issues and concerns facing the profession.

At the 2006 International Secretarial Summit, Gold Coast Australia, the delegates reviewed the purpose statement and name of the summit, along with how these summits should be conducted in the future. The reviewed purpose statement read:

A global meeting of office professional associations for the purpose of developing and maintaining action plans, which will guide and influence Associations, to positively develop the profession.

At the 8th International Office Professionals Summit in Auckland, New Zealand in 2011, delegates further discussed the purpose of the summits and revised the purpose statement to:

A global meeting of administrative and office professionals and Associations; to guide, influence, and positively develop the profession.

SUMMIT NAME

The original name was International Secretarial Summit. However, the change of associations names around the world indicated that secretarial was both too restrictive and not being used as commonly as previously.



Illustration: naum

At the 2006 International Secretarial Summit a new name was voted on by all present – International Office Professionals’ Summit. However, it was later realised that it should have been only delegates who voted, so at the International Office Professionals’ Summit, Auckland, New Zealand 2011 delegates again discussed the name. Delegates also discussed the future of these summits - in particular, whether they should continue to be held, what value there is in holding the summits and what do associations want to do internationally.

Following this discussion, delegates agreed that the summits would continue and furthermore, the new name for future summits will be:

“World Administrators’ Summit”

The name was again discussed at the 2015 World Summit, however the change suggested (Global Administrative Professionals’ Summit) was later rejected by the Advisory Council and so the name stays the same for the 2018 WASummit and into the future.

WORLD ACTION PLAN (ADMINISTRA)

Goals and objectives must inform and shape the way associations set day-to-day priorities and make business decisions. The objectives and strategies therefore set ambitious, but realistic milestones for progress towards the long-term realisation of goals, and these objectives and strategies form the world action plan.

For the 2006 International Secretarial Summit, Australia purchased the naming rights to a new star in the heavens and had it named “Administra” in honour of all Administrative and Office Professionals

throughout the world. Those present in 2006 on the Gold Coast, Australia voted on and agreed that this was an appropriate name for our world action plan which was then titled Administra. Administra provides a suggested framework for associations to accomplish and organise their priorities. Administra will spark the energy and commitment of connected associations and provides the opportunity for collegiality and co-operation.

Administra is a set of guidelines; it is not a set of rules. As noted above, these guidelines are for the use of all associations throughout the world to help in developing their own strategic or business plans. Deviations from Administra will occur, so this plan should be discussed and updated to reflect any new direction at the next summit. Identifying and understanding any deviation comes from monitoring and evaluating associations’ own plans against Administra.

In 2006 it was felt that monitoring and evaluating Administra is as important as identifying the objectives and strategies. A major advantage of monitoring and evaluation is that associations can learn a great deal about their own associations, and how to lead, manage and improve their own activities and status, implementing those aspects of Administra they feel would benefit their association. Another advantage is to ensure that Administra is helpful to associations throughout the world in developing their own strategic or business plans.

Administra has therefore been reviewed at all summits since 2006 (except 2009). At the 2015 WASummit the delegates called for a deeper review of Administra to incorporate the individual administrative and office professional rather than the single focus on associations. This review will be carried out during the intervening years between the 2015 and 2018 summits.

WORLD ADMINISTRATORS' SUMMIT - ADVISORY COUNCIL

The WASummit Advisory Council was originally established (2005) to encourage Associations to actively participate in setting down an "agenda" and to promote the summit to their own associations' members and office/administrative professionals around the world.

The role of the Advisory Council was discussed at the 2006 International Secretarial Summit, and because the Advisory Council had been so successful, it was agreed by the delegates that the Advisory Council become a permanent committee and have overall responsibility for all future summits.

To keep the size of the Advisory Council manageable the world was divided into regions. Do note that the make-up of the regions is open to discussion at each summit as the world is a constantly changing place.

The Advisory Council was made up of representatives (2 per region) from the regions as set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) (the most current ToR is on the website <http://www.worldadministrators-summit.com/>) and had two Co-Chairmen. The Co-Chairmen were one from each of the immediate past summit and the next summit to provide continuity in running the event.

For the 2015 WASummit the Advisory Council Co-Chairmen were confirmed by their countries/organisations as: from the previous summit 2011 in New Zealand - Eth Lloyd and for the next summit 2015 in Papua New Guinea - Weka Avosa.

Taking actions forward between summits has been ad hoc with, occasionally, either an interested person individually or the previous host country providing a report and from 2006 updating Administrators, immediately after the event. This often led to topics being discussed and then the same topics being re-discussed at the next summit, with no

progress in actions during the intervening years between summits. Unfortunately, therefore, this make-up of the Advisory Council meant it focussed on the next event and left little room for taking actions from the previous event forward in preparation for the next summit.

"In 2015 the WASummit will get the organization of supporting and guiding the host country"

At the 2015 WASummit delegates requested that the Advisory Council be restructured to enable it to focus on completing actions/tasks from the summit, as well as supporting and guiding the host country in the organisation of WASummits.

"The next article in this series will describe the future of the WASummit and start to outline the role you, as an individual administrative/office professional, can play and what benefits your participation will provide to the profession." Eth Lloyd