

# Understanding the 'why' behind your job

“A change agent,” write the authors of *Who Took My Pen ... Again?*, “has the courage to see things that are and know they could be better, and to see things that aren’t, and work, dream, plan, and learn about them, in order to bring them into reality.”

One of the best ways to get an idea implemented is to first view the situation from your boss’s or the organization’s perspective. Is the idea feasible? Practical? Profitable?

One administrative professional, Nancy, realized that her team of legal administrative assistants knew little about the objectives of the 35 lawyers and paralegals they supported. Assistants performed transactions without understanding the “why” behind what they were doing, nor did they understand how lawyer subgroups interacted.

So Nancy envisioned and pitched a two-year speaker series for administrative assistants, called “Our Organization 101.” Once her boss approved, she created and ran the program.

The series—held in a small, informal conference room—allowed assistants to hear directly from the department vice president, managing counsel and other strategic leaders. For each speaker event, admins were tasked with preparing one question each.

Result? Assistants gained a better understanding of the business and the managers’ roles. The lines of communication opened.

After the series had finished, the firm announced a change: Administrative support roles would need to be rotated, to accommodate other in-house changes.

Thanks to the speaker series, the assistants understood exactly the “who” and “why” behind their new assignments, which made the change a lot easier.

— Adapted from *Who Took My Pen ... Again?* Joan Burge, Nancy Frazee, and Jasmine Freeman.