

FOREWORD

As the Chief Executive Assistant to John Chambers, Chairman and CEO of Cisco Systems, I thought I was finally performing at the top administrative skill level and at the pinnacle of my profession having worked with John in this role for over 17 years. Then I met Joan Burge, author of *Become An Inner Circle Assistant*, creator of the Star Achievement Administrative and Manager Training program and CEO of her own company, Office Dynamics. Her insights showed me that the administrative role has completely changed and that we are performing on an entirely new playing field. John Chambers has stated many times, *“When I was looking for an assistant, what people didn’t understand is that I was not looking for a senior secretary, I was looking for a true business partner, someone who makes it a point to know the business, what my priorities are and who could represent me as well as the organization in the absolute best professional light.”* These are definitely the “new” skills that are required in today’s working environment.

In her new book *Underneath It All*, her insights in to what it will take in the “new world” of the Administrative Professional are right on! Administrators will need an entirely new set of skills such as a commitment to quality performance, cognitive thinking and management of organizational goals. This book will show them how they can become masters of their career and earn a seat at the executive table.

Joan brings in to the light from the depths of business, the true value that the administrative professional has in terms of her or his relationship with their principals, their organizations and the companies that they work for. I have met many “experts” who think they have a good view of the administrative world and what it takes to be successful, however, none have actually been in the role to know the true nature of this profession. Joan Burge truly speaks from experience when she shares her philosophies and her stories. And because she has been an Executive Assistant herself, an instructor

and the CEO of her own company, she brings a wealth of knowledge from both sides of the desk. Her recent challenging personal and professional journey was the catalyst for her to write this book. The pages contained within this book chart the way for all administrators who are aspiring to a fulfilling career. I consider this book a “must read” for every administrative professional and manager who wants to rise above the average and be seen and heard in business.

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