



### **IMA meets The Male Assistants**

You hardly ever see or hear them, but they are certainly here! In the Netherlands alone, we are counting 23.000 male management support professionals, which comes to about 15% of the profession. Some gentleman recently got together and founded The Male Assistants platform to bring the male support professional to the spotlight after being in the shadow for far too long. Recently Annemieke van Elst, Danielle Rijkes, and Tiny Klunder, National Committee members of IMA Netherlands, International Management Assistants, had an exciting conversation with Menno Spiekerman, Leon de Bruijn, and Corrie Fourie of The Male Assistants to draw attention to the male management support professionals. Below a recap of the interview.

### **Choose this profession**

The Male Assistants was recently founded to promote the profession of the male management support professional. One thing they think is important is that men who are orientating themselves on the job market can choose this profession. Still, in practice, it's hard for a man to get invited for this favored position simply because, on the one hand, the job ads are written for female candidates and depict the female version of an assistant. On the other hand, the profession is still seen as one type of woman. But diversity is essential, think, for instance, a secretariat with many women, where a male colleague can provide a breeze of fresh air.

### **Rolled in**

During the interview, it became clear that the men aren't specifically trained for the secretary profession. Still, it rolled in each in its own way – direct or indirect – and independently extended and added depth to their role.

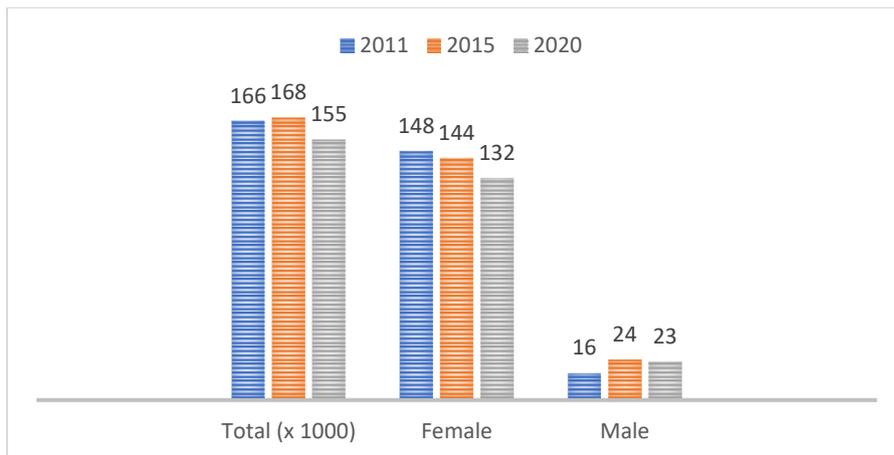
They share that genuine passion for the profession, with all its dimensions, and the fact that there's never a dull moment.

### **Statistics over the years**

From the '70s, the support profession has grown enormously: the profession has always been supportive by nature, but through the years, it got a more co-managing, initiating, and organizing character.



When the economic crisis started, alarm bells rang. The trusted secretary would disappear from the daily life of many managers. The reasons for this would be robotizing and the need for more flexibility, but this is far from reality if you look at this graph according to the latest publication of [SecretaresseNet](#).



These statistics show a slight downfall, but certainly not as much as expected.

### **World Administrators Alliance**

IMA supports the mission and vision of the World Administrators (WA) Alliance, working on a significant initiative: the skills matrix. The skills matrix considers and structures the roles, skills, and job descriptions of all support professionals worldwide and divides them into five job profiles. With these five job profiles, they aim for recognition internationally, so both governments and industries can work with these five job profiles. This will provide clarity to all roles in our profession on an international level.

Besides that, the WA Alliance also promotes diversity and inclusion for support professionals, which fits the purpose of The Male Assistants well.

### **Great profession**

The goal of founding The Male Assistants is that the ambassadors hope that organizations will present their vacancies in a gender-neutral way from now on. This great profession should get all the attention it deserves and becomes available to male support professionals.

The Male Assistants want to ask educational institutions to specifically pay attention to male support professionals or even find a more suitable title than the Dutch word for secretary; secretaries.

IMA Netherlands hopes to register soon; the first but not the last male management support professional member!