
Profile

EDUARDO SOUZA

Secretary at the Association of Secretaries and Secretaries of State of São Paulo, Brazil

Can we start with a little background information? Where are you from and what is your current role?

I was born in Porteirinha, a small city in the state of Minas Gerais. I lived for some years in other cities of the state (Divinópolis, Montes Claros e Viçosa) and for four years in Amapá (north of Brazil). I now live in São Paulo and work as Assistant to Isabel Baptista, President of São Paulo's Association of Secretaries (SINSESP).

What is your background?

I graduated in Secretariat (Technical Course) from the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial – SENAC Minas Gerais (Brazil) (2009) and in Executive Secretariat from the Federal University of Amapá (UNIFAP/Brazil) (2015). I'm currently taking post-graduate studies in Methodology of the Teaching of Portuguese and Foreign Language at Centro Universitário Internacional UNINTER (Brazil).

In 2012, I was awarded an annual scientific initiation scholarship from Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico – CNPq. In January 2013, from more than 30 candidates, I was chosen to receive a three-week scholarship at the University of Salamanca (Spain). After that, I attended Academic Mobility ANDIFES in the Federal University of Viçosa (Brazil) (2013-2014).

While I was studying at UNIFAP/Brazil I was Strategic Adviser and CEO of ELITE Junior Company of the Executive Secretariat. I interned in the organizations Embrapa Amapá, Fecomercio Amapá, Amapá Government and Federal Public Prosecutor (Attorney of the Republic in Amapá).

I also participate in the following groups: Core Strategies, Management and Organizational Studies (NEGEO/UNIFAP/Brazil) and the Interdisciplinary Research Group in Secretariat (GPISEC/Federal University of Sergipe/Brazil). I am an associate with the Brazilian Association of Research in Secretariat (ABPSEC). I have scientific papers and several texts published in national and international newspapers/journals. My research interests are Organizational Studies, Foreign Languages and Secretariat.

How did you become an Assistant?

I always liked to help people. In a certain way, to be an Assistant, you need to like administration and assessing. After finishing a secretariat course at high school level, I decided to graduate in Executive Secretariat – then I became, according to the Brazilian legislation, a Secretary.

You are best known as Assistant to Isabel Baptista. How did this come about and how has it changed your working life?

My contact with Isabel began in 2009, when I was still living in Minas Gerais. After moving to Amapá, I had the opportunity to organize some events and I invited her to be a speaker. That happened in 2011, 2012 and 2014. When I graduated in January 2015, she invited me to work for SINSESP and I could not refuse this proposal.

In São Paulo my life has changed completely. In Amapá there are 500,000 people, and in São Paulo there are about 12 million. It is a drastic change but I can't complain. We have an excellent work environment and I get along with Isabel. I like the busy life that São Paulo offers.

As Assistant to Isabel, you are very involved in the organization of the biannual COINS Congress. Tell us a bit about the Congress and how you feel it has impacted on your role.

COINS, an event managed by Isabel, started in 2011. It is a Congress whose larger objectives are to promote networking and technical training, discuss current problems of the secretariat profession in Brazil, and to know the particularities of other countries. Professionals from the following countries have taken part: South Africa, Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the United States, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

My role at COINS is to promote the approach among participants, speakers and the organizing committee. That can happen physically as well as virtually. I have participated directly or indirectly in the organization of this event since the first one. Every year I notice new experiences and have new responsibilities. I like that challenge.

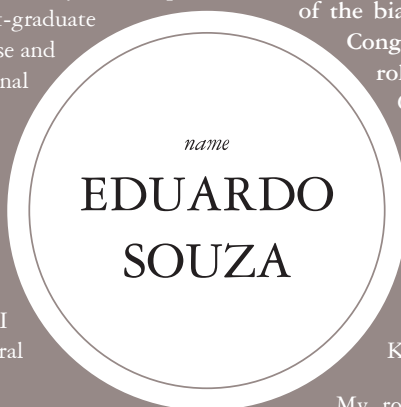
You are a great advocate of social media. What advice would you give an Assistant who doesn't see the value in using it?

Social media has the basic function of connecting people. If you use social media for your networking you are going to get good results, for sure. I take part in several (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), and it is always important to monitor them. This way you don't lose the focus: to meet new people and develop relationships (personal and professional).

It's always good to remember: if you are using social media professionally, avoid posting about your personal life.

What are the main changes you have seen in the time you have been an Assistant?

Secretarial careers demand lots of discipline, discretion and behaviour intelligence, and, of course, lots of technical competence. It's natural that you develop these skills throughout your career but it's not easy. The organizational environment is changing fast. The flow of information





Eduardo Souza, Lucy Brazier (CEO, Marcham Publishing), Isabel Baptista (SINSESP - Sindicato do Secretariado), Regina Rezende (English for Secretaries)

and the emotions of the people we assist demand constant care. I think this is a daily challenge.

What inspires and motivates you?

Innovative ideas are usually a good ingredient for my inspiration. It's always interesting to think outside the box and use innovation to answer old problems – it motivates me when I have to face a new challenge.

What advice would you give someone just starting out as an Assistant?

My career as an Assistant has just begun. I've been in this profession for only seven years, and I still have lots to learn. However, if someone is joining it now, I have to say you are beginning in a beautiful profession.

We say in Brazil that to be a Secretary/Assistant you have to discover if you have positive answers to the following questions: do you want to

work with people who take the decisions in organizations? Do you want to have visibility, importance and status? Do you want to have a good salary and chances to develop a career? Do you think it is motivating to work with people and information?

In any profession, you need to like what you do. This way, you will be successful and have lots of opportunities.

So what's next for Eduardo Souza? Where do you want to be in five years' time?

Beyond developing my career as a Secretary/Assistant, working in a multinational company, I would like to invest in a teaching career. I intend to take my Masters and Doctorate degrees, and work in a State or Federal University.