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# Everyone's a Big Shot -- Just Check Out Their Titles

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Last month, bosses across America observed "Administrative Professionals Day" by taking their administrative professionals out to lunch. Some bought their "administrative assistants" flower arrangements.

You see, we no longer dare call these people "secretaries." "I'm not a secretary," one woman here at VOA huffed one day. Her proper title, she'll have you know, is "admin officer." You see, the word "secretary" is just too servile for these sensitive times. People aren't "salesmen" any more. Lest they suffer low self-esteem, they're "sales associates" or "account executives."

These high-falutin' (fancy) titles are called "euphemisms." They're names created to soften or puff up one's status or function. Just as companies don't fire people (they "downsize" ), we have invented all sorts exceptionally dignified job titles.

Custodians don't empty our wastebaskets. Members of the "building-services staff" do. "Attorneys," not mere lawyers, represent us after "law-enforcement officers" -- not police and certainly not "cops" -- arrest us. Hard-hat oil workers in Iraq are "civilian contractors." If we can't come up with a lofty-enough title for you, we make you a "coordinator" of this or that so it looks spiffy on a business card.

Writer Michele McInerney at the [Kansas City Business Journal](#) has found the perfect example. Mere painters don't paint your house any longer, she discovered. "Liquid recoating specialists" do the job.

Wait till the "team leaders" who took America's "administrative professionals" out to lunch last month hear about that one!