

Someone to watch over me



• Naomi Campbell, phone thrower. Photo: Reuters

You have a maid, driver, cook, bodyguard - but do you have a personal manager?

In the States, Hollywood stars and the very rich have assistants to open the mail, deal with the car insurance and to simply get the phone - even when the phone is flung at their head at high speed, as Naomi Campbell's assistant proved in court.

Now it seems the concept of personal manager is finally hitting Hong Kong. It's a buzzword at dinner parties. Everyone suddenly seems to want one. Someone has actually started the ball rolling in Hong Kong. Her name is Caroline Basham and she says she is already run off her feet, as news of her service travels by word of mouth. She says she charges a "reasonable" rate to sort out personal and confidential admin, from packing artworks for shipping to sorting out the administrative chaos for the newly divorced.

It boils down to this: rich as you are, is there someone in your life whom you trust to tackle your tax return? Can they also plan weekly menus for the helpers so they don't stuff the kids with junk food?

If any of this rings true, and you're a busy working couple with children, or a newly divorced man, maybe you need a personal manager. And personal managers can expect to be in demand - the closest thing here is a concierge service, but that's not bespoke. The personal manager trains the maid, pays your bills, reads your new white goods manual and sets up your home security system. It's all very hush-hush - who wants to admit they can't think up meals for their kids? - so I won't reveal Basham's company name. But sooner or later, if you're showing signs of admin fatigue, someone may pass her your card under the dinner table.