

What Your Executive Needs From You

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Throughout my career, I've supported supervisors, managers, vice presidents, and presidents in companies with 5 employees up to 2,500. Some had previous experience in working with an administrative professional, others didn't. There were challenges associated with both. The executives who were used to outstanding administrative support were typically the easiest for me...as long as they didn't expect me to be exactly like the person who had been supporting them before I arrived. I'm sure you can relate. The executives who had never had an admin – or worse yet...had a bad admin – were typically the most challenging. But with a careful assessment of each situation, listening for clues, watching for opportunities, and learning as much as I could about their previous experiences and their current expectations, I was almost always able to win them over. I felt an enormous sense of accomplishment and undeniable pride in my profession when I converted an executive over to not being able to live without his or her admin. To get them to this point, it was my job to continually train and educate them over time on the immense value a super competent, value added, actively engaged administrative professional could add to their life. This is your job, too.



Now the tables have turned, and I've become the "executive in training". I have started building a support team around me. I can tell you it's the most amazing experience of my professional career. It's not that I can't do for myself the things they are doing for me...it's the simple fact that there are 100s of things that need to be done every week. I only have so much time. They only have so much time. So we divide and conquer. I need their help to keep me on track and fill in the gaps as we move forward. In some cases, they are much better at the given task or have more training on it, so they are much more efficient than I could ever hope to be. As a result, I am learning to delegate as many of the other 100s of things as I can to my team. But it has required training and patience from my team as I learn to adapt to this new model of support and working. Your executive is likely in a similar place no matter how long they've had admin support.

I'd like to share with you what I need and expect from my team (and what your executive likely needs and expects from you) as they support me in my executive role:

- I need them to politely **remind, nudge and/or occasionally nag** me to follow up on some things. It's just the nature of the beast.
- I need them to **tell me** when they see me doing something that they know they could just as easily be doing for me instead. They're training me to delegate.
- I need them to **send me information and resources** related to the projects we're working on that they identify as key to the decisions we are making.
- I need them to **identify new technologies** or systems that we should look at to make our projects and business run more smoothly.
- I need them to **fast track my learning curve** by sharing what they've learned with me and the rest of the team about various software, social media, or technology based tools.
- I need them to **point out** when they see me doing something inefficiently because I'm simply stuck in the rut of "this is how I've always done it".
- I need them to be **power users** of the respective software specialties they each have.
- I need them to be **willing to learn** new things.
- I need them to **dig in and figure things** out on their own when we don't have an established project plan or precedent to follow.
- I need them to **question me** on things they don't understand or procedures that don't make any sense. It may be an opportunity to make things run more smoothly.
- I need them to **share their ideas** and brainstorm with me even if we aren't able to implement each and every idea they present. This openly collaborative environment becomes electric over time.
- I need them to **tell me** if one of the tasks or projects they are working on is something they absolutely hate doing. I want every member of my team working in their areas of strength the *majority* of the time so I get their BEST every time they touch my projects and as a result they love what they are working on for me, too.
- I need them to **be fully aware of who I am** – my strengths, my personality type, my communication styles, my passions, my interests – so they fully understand how and why I work and communicate the way I do.
- I need them to **share who they are** with me also...their personality types, interests, strengths, etc. so I can fully appreciate who they are.
- I need them to **be problem solvers**.
- I need them to **take the initiative** to fix things that they see need fixing...and to know when they need to ask and when they should just take care of it.
- I need them to **educate me** on their communication styles and preferences so we communicate as effectively as possible.
- I need them to **share their professional goals** with me so I can support them on their career journey just as they support me on mine.
- I need them to **hold me accountable** for doing what I say I'm going to do.

- I need them to **capture the “to do list” items** as we talk through things and then **track them** to make sure we get them done.
- I need them to **initiate the follow up** calls and emails on the “to dos” we are working on so I don’t have to remember yet another series of details.
- I need them to **understand how businesses run** so they fully understand and participate in what we are doing each and every day.
- I need them to **professionally represent me and my company** in all they do.
- I need them to **be patient with me** because just like everyone else...I’m still a work in progress.

This may seem like a lot. It is. But running a department, managing a team, and leading a company is a lot...a lot of details, a lot of moving parts, a lot of responsibility. That’s why **successful executives need outstanding administrative professionals**. I would bet that your executive may need many of these same things, too...even if they have never articulated it to you in these exact words. Even if you’ve worked together for several years, there are always things you can do to build upon the foundation you’ve laid and improve the working relationship...to become even more indispensable.

Depending upon the working relationship you have with your executive, some of these things may be easier than others. You may already be doing many of them. What else could you do? Where can you enhance or up level what you’re currently doing? Next week, I’ll share some of the specific strategies you can use to confidently take action in some of these areas so you **become the admin your executive can’t imagine his corporate life without!**

We’d love to hear from you! If you already are doing some of these things...share your strategies with us here by [commenting on this blog post](#).

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