

# HOW TO BE A GREAT!! ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

## By Christine M. Joseph

Let's face it... anyone can be an administrative assistant. Answer some phone calls, greet some guests and enter some data is the general feeling about this position. However, being a **great** administrative assistant requires certain qualities that can not only help the company, but help you in your career path. Strive for greatness in this role and it will roll over into other higher level positions you may attain as a result.

The main function of an administrative assistant is to facilitate the operations of an office and/or its executive(s). There is one important thing that, as an administrative assistant, you must come to understand quickly:

***You are the backbone of the office!!***

Once you understand this, you will realize the extent of your responsibilities and will approach it from a proactive perspective. Your colleagues are counting on you to do *your* best so that they can do *their* best.

So what does it take to be a great administrative assistant?

### **Be An All-Around Professional**

Being professional is an all-encompassing thing. It is a combination of your appearance, attitude and approach to things. Taking your job seriously and understanding your part in the bigger scheme of things will show your boss that you mean business. Show your smile (on your face AND in your voice), work with and respect your colleagues (not against them), dress the part and be prepared... those are *some* ways to show your professionalism. And while it is okay to have a "good time" with your colleagues, be wary of taking things over the line – professionalism should be in every transaction that takes place in your office. Remember: at any point, the boss could be walking in and watching, or a client could get the wrong impression if you are taken "off-guard".

### **Organization Is The Key**

How can you work effectively if you can't find anything? Set yourself up to win. Figure out the best and most efficient way for you to do your work. Set up your desk so that you can find everything that you need on a daily basis and if it's not a regularly used item, it doesn't belong on your desk. Create a routine or schedule of activities for yourself so that you don't miss any tasks for the day. The more organized you are, the quicker you can do your tasks!

□ **Mind The Details**

It is good to be fast, but it is equally important to be detail-oriented. That phrase is often misused and not taken seriously enough. The less errors you create, the less backtracking and fixing that has to be done after the fact. This means that more time can be spent on doing value-added activities, which is the bottom line for all businesses. So, double check that address, make sure the amount is right, re-read that e-mail you are about to send out... whatever it takes to make sure the information/data you are working with is accurately presented to the recipient.

□ **Make Yourself Indispensable**

Ever wonder why some bosses cannot function when their assistants are not around? That is because they *wholly* rely on them to assist them in their daily functions. When you get to that point, you are indispensable and have proven your reliability. You get to this point by working hard, paying attention to what is going on around you, taking advantage of opportunities to show your usefulness and most importantly, by showing initiative and following through.

□ **Be Well-Rounded In Your Skill Set**

It helps tremendously for you to be well-rounded with what you know. This puts the burden on you to keep your computer skills up, learn a new language, read about new technology and methods of doing things, etc. Improve your customer service skills on the phone and by e-mail (business-style writing)! The more you know, the more value you can bring to a company (and yourself!).