

Administrative Assistant Handbook: What should be included?

Question: "We are trying to put together a handbook for our administrative assistant staff. From your experience, what should we include in it?" — *Cindy Miltgen*

Comments

I am working on the same project. Each of the Administrative Aides at my company work in a different program but some of their duties are the same and other different. The duties that are the same should go toward the front of the handbook. I have included a Welcome page, instructions on how to handle the phone lines, a list of departments, department heads and staff including their phone numbers. We are working on the duties that are different and listing general information for cross training purpose but detailed. This is an awesome project and I am happy to hear that I am not the only one having such a project.

If you have items you are including that I did not mention, please let me know.

Posted by: Jonnie Barkley | May 15, 2008 at 12:51 PM

We have a front desk book at my location and in it we have the job duties, employees phone extensions, emergency numbers, and much much more. We basically included any possible thing we could think of that would help someone in the event we needed to have someone fill in at a last minute notice.

Posted by: Christine | May 16, 2008 at 01:11 PM

You may want to include

Office Etiquette

Correspondence

a. Formatting Guidelines

b. Professional E-Mail Standards

Proofreading tips

Glossary of Company Terms

Microsoft word shortcuts e.g. Ctrl c = copy

Posted by: | May 16, 2008 at 01:15 PM

We had one in my previous office. It was our "Administrative Professional's Survival Guide" and it contained so much valuable information. In addition to what Jonnie listed above we also included a map of our building (it was

60,000 sq ft), internal meeting room information (meeting capacity, sample room set up, A/V equipment in the mtg room, etc), map of our local area with 'tourist spots' highlighted (to provide to guests), contact information for local hotels, restaurants, catering companies, venues, and various event related items. We also included maps & directions from airports to our regional offices located across the country and list of preferred hotels nationwide (& Canada) that we had negotiated discount pricing. It was a great tool. Hope this helps!

Posted by: Kristi | May 16, 2008 at 01:18 PM

- Useful or frequently referenced policies (requesting time off, phone coverage, reserving meeting rooms, etc.)
- Instructions for phone system
- Phone extension list
- Instructions/cheat sheet for company database, accounting software and any other unique software
- Company's branding/formatting guidelines
- Company terms and abbreviations
- Job description
- Org Chart or list of staff & departments

Posted by: Lisa | May 16, 2008 at 01:28 PM

In my handbook I also have all account information (i.e. UPS, Travel Company..etc). We also broke it up with tabs on department information. I've added everything in there that someone would need to cover the front desk and have post-its sticking out of the most important pages for accessibility.

I think policies, company information and job description aren't necessary-if someone who doesn't know that information is taking that position they should be told basic company information in order to do the minimal job effectively.

Too much stuff in a guidebook will turn most people off from browsing through it.

we also have a quick sheet of paper with extensions of everyone at our office listed by first name. On the back we have basic information for all of the company locations across the United States. This sits at the desk at all times and most of our employees have one at each of their desks as well. (we have a fairly small office and about 30 locations nationwide that we are constantly communicating with). This works really well for us.

Posted by: Liza | May 16, 2008 at 02:17 PM

Another way to help-Have the actual Admin. Assistant make it, they do everything in that handbook. Once they are done have them send it to you electronically and make any changes or additions they might have missed.

Posted by: Liza | May 16, 2008 at 02:19 PM

I have made one up for our company.

It has everything that I do for the company, including how to work different databases that I work with, who to call if something goes wrong, and different webpages and their passwords. So that if I am gone and someone has to do my job for a week. That way they will have all the information that they need in the book to do my job.

Posted by: Bert | May 16, 2008 at 02:26 PM

In our company (which is large & has locations all over the country) EVERYTHING is online on an intranet site so any info can be accessed any time by anyone. That is soooooo much less labor-intensive than trying to keep a "manual" updated.

Posted by: Egadz | May 16, 2008 at 02:39 PM

We switched from a hard copy "handbook" to an electronic Support Staff Reference Guide - that all division support staff can access from the shared drive: Some of the items we have there are: New employee orientation instructions, instructions for operating copiers, scanners, shredders, and other equipment, corporate communication style guidelines, instructions on burning multiple CDs, what services our Computer Division will perform, saving files to a jump drive for use in travel, travel guidelines for car rental and making travel arrangements, Travel expense guidelines set by Corporate Finance Department, Guidelines for using Corporate Credit Cards, plus any additional information which will be helpful to new employees. I make it a policy to go over all this during orientation, but ask them to always refer back to these electronic guidelines when in doubt.

Posted by: Adell | May 16, 2008 at 03:19 PM

Make sure you do keep a hard copy of the Support Reference Guide. Our entire system went down last weekend and we have been without immediate access contact information etc. all this week. We pulled out the directories and physical handbooks to save us from this unexpected system down period.

So please don't just depend on the shared drive. One or two copies of our actual document would have been helpful.

Posted by: Victoria | May 23, 2008 at 01:56 PM

I should also add that when it comes to finding instructions on how to operate equipment or to find parts, supplies, etc. I usually refer to the Internet. And there is plenty of useful info on how to do just about everything else, too. "Manuals" are too soon out of date to keep up with wealth of info available on the Internet. I also read REVIEWS when we are considering purchasing anything on which we have no prior experience.

Posted by: Egadz | May 23, 2008 at 02:00 PM

Would anyone be willing to share their Admin Handbook? I am banging my head in trying to put one together.

Posted by: Rosie | July 21, 2008 at 06:21 PM