

# How many admins/executive assistants do you employ?

**Question:** I'm wondering how many admin/executive assistants other firms employ. We have 40 "managers" of different levels, with 3 Executive Assistants to support them, plus a receptionist. My own position, in addition to being the assistant to the president, the controller, and the assistant controller, includes marketing, IT assistance and office management. I feel that my company needs more admins, but I am having a difficult time convincing upper management. What is the average number of admins per manager at your company? Does your company only have admin support for upper management? -- *Cathy*

## Comments

I currently support 1 SVP and 6 of her directs. I primarily support the SVP and the rest pretty much take care of their selfs. I only have to do minor jobs for them.

In my previous position I supported 1 SVP and 16 AVP's. The AVPs were spread across the United States.

**Posted by: | August 11, 2006 at 11:32 AM**

Uh, yeah! You really need help over there. We have 3-4 managers to 1 admin max. You will not get more than 4 people at a time here. If I were to break your position down for instance, I would do it one of two ways. I would have you as Assistant to the President, controller and assistant control. Hire a marketing person. Hire and IT assistant or another IT person and hire an Office Manager. The second option would be you stay assistant to the President and Office Manager, hire an assistant to the controller, assistant controller and to IT and then hire and marketing person. So that would put 3 more positions in the mix. Some admin, but some with an education behind them in a certain field. I am sure you are doing a great job at it all, but you truly need help - - or a big fat raise!

**Posted by: Kim | August 11, 2006 at 11:37 AM**

Hi Cathy,

At our company, most of the assistants support 2 to 3 upper or mid management positions. My position supports a VP, Director and Manager for two different departments.

I must say that 4 assistants, including the receptionist, for 40 people is definitely not enough. You should talk with the other assistants and find out if their workloads are manageable. If not, you should all sit down with upper management and explain your reasoning for additional assistants. Be prepared to justify your request with specific examples.

**Posted by: Jennifer | August 11, 2006 at 11:39 AM**

I work for a state authority. I am the executive assistant to our division director and oversee all the other admins in our group. We are divided into 3 main sections and each section has a support person. Each administrative support person provides assistance to 8 -10 managers. We have a loose "pool" type structure, in which each admin is the "lead" for his/her group but we make sure we communicate regularly so we can provide back up and help for each other, especially if when we have a non-routine, big project or meeting to handle. The system works in the majority of situations. We can feel stretched, however, especially during vacation times, when there are fewer support personnel for the same number of managers.

**Posted by: Meredith | August 11, 2006 at 11:43 AM**

Hi Cathy,

At my last position at Hewlett-Packard, we had a rule of 1 assistant to every 30 people, which could include managers, technicians, etc. If a group got over 45-50 people, management would begin to consider bringing in another assistant.

In my current group at Freightliner, I am the only assistant for the President, 5 senior level managers, and the other 65 people, including 15-20 field representatives. They keep me hopping, and I'm rarely bored!

Good luck in your search for more resources!

**Posted by: Theresa | August 11, 2006 at 11:48 AM**

It really depends on the work load. We have one admin assistant to six management positions but some are more high maintenance than others. She handles the work load well and at times is searching for other projects to tackle (she is very organized and dedicated). Have you studied the work load of each assistant in order to quantify the load and justify additional positions?

**Posted by: Diane | August 11, 2006 at 11:49 AM**

I work for an extremely large corporation and support one manager and approximately 15 of his direct reports. In addition, I act as back-up to my manager's boss. All of our executive assistants only support one individual.

When I previously worked for another very large corporation, I supported one manager and 80 of his direct reports. However, most of those people were pretty self-sufficient.

In your situation, I believe you do need additional admin support. You are supporting many managers/executives who (I would assume) have quite a bit of responsibility and rely heavily on administrative assistance.

**Posted by: | August 11, 2006 at 11:52 AM**

We have the opposite situation: a Sr. Admin supports one VP and an AA supports 2 Directors. I think we're

overloaded with assistants because there is a lot of down time.

My suggestion is to review the workload for each existing assistant, review what tasks are not getting completed in a timely manner, and identify additional tasks needed by management in order to determine the need/workload and how many new assistants should be hired.

Good Luck!

**Posted by: Betty - Sr. Admin | August 11, 2006 at 11:57 AM**

I'm amazed at some of the comments - those who work for a company that understands that too many people per one assistant is illogical - count your blessings(Kim, that's you for sure!). I currently support an Assoc Director and help those that report to her (a manager and 9 other staff) in addition to my real job which is supporting a Director, his 9 direct reports (managers) and their supervisors (over 20 there) and then trickling down to 200 staff in the department.

As always, the Assoc Director and Director come first and some of the managers are more self sufficient then others but 230+ staff to support is mind boggling. But despite that, this company would never even consider hiring another admin. They see only that I support two high level staff and all the others - although I do a lot - don't really "count."

Cathy, I hope your company is one that realizes the work that the admin does is worth hiring more per manager. Good luck!

**Posted by: Sandy | August 11, 2006 at 11:59 AM**

You should conduct a phone or online survey of other companies of your size, type of business and location to get an idea of how many people and what type of people they support. Are your managers high-maintenance or low-maintenance? Your admins could support more low-maintenance managers than those who need more hand-holding. Maybe support below the very highest level should be contingent on type of work, actual workload, and level of support needed by manager. Unfortunately, admins don't "count", and it would probably be easier to hire additional managers than additional admins. But if you and the other admins who feel like you perform the appropriate and detailed analysis you may be able to convince management to hire additional admins. A suggestion: perhaps your company could hire a person to be a "floater" to be used wherever needed to help out, or maybe college student to help with phones, filing, calendaring, etc.

**Posted by: Anon | August 11, 2006 at 12:15 PM**

I support 2 partners, 2 directors, 4 managers, 3 senior associates and 2 associates. My co-admin supports 1 partner, 3 directors, 3 managers, 3 senior associates and 2 associates. We back each other up when heavy assignments overlap etc. This works quite well even though our team are quite heavy users with extensive travel and reports.

**Posted by: Kay | August 11, 2006 at 12:25 PM**

Thank you everyone for your input. It seems there are many of you who also support a large management force.

Kim - You have it made! :) Over the past 3 years, I have made suggestions much like yours, but instead of hiring those additional people, they took half my work and split it among the other 2 admins. Crazy! In follow up, it all got too much for me and I have turned in my resignation. Now of course they say they will need to hire at least 2 people to replace me. Thanks again!

**Posted by: Cathy | August 14, 2006 at 01:07 PM**

Hi Cathy,

There are a couple of us out here. I support the CIO, Divisional Vice President, and Director of ITS. There are 37 other employees in the department that I support administratively, plus other duties. It is difficult and challenging but hiring another Admin. is not one of the department's priorities. A presentation was made to the VP but nothing came of it because of employee and database transitions that are still taking place. But I believe that a non-emotional presentation demonstrating the benefits to the dept. compared to the current situation will get their attention. Wish you the best.

**Posted by: Annie | August 15, 2006 at 01:32 PM**

To Cathy: I hope you got yourself another job before resigning from this one. But even if you didn't, I wish you the best of luck for the future.

**Posted by: Anon | August 15, 2006 at 06:42 PM**

I think it all depends on how your company is set up.

I work for a credit union with 200 employees, and we only have two true admins (myself and another person, who works in HR). Except for my boss (the President), everyone is pretty much expected to take care of their own correspondence, scheduling, and other administrative tasks. In addition, we do have a part-time receptionist for our corporate office, but that's it!

**Posted by: Lisa | August 16, 2006 at 03:00 PM**