Feeling left out of the loop at work

What should you do when no one seems to fill you in on what’s going on in the office? Admin Sandra writes about the problem on our Admin Forum: “I constantly feel like I’m left out of the loop!” she says.

“When I need further information on anything, I have to dig for it! How can I get management to pay attention to me? If I ask questions, I get the ‘don’t bother me’ looks or I’m told to come back later. I need help.”

She’s not alone. Other administrative pros weighed in to say how they navigate the same challenge:

1. **Join the conversations that matter.** One executive assistant, Patty, says when she realized she needed more information, “I offered to attend weekly meetings to take minutes for the team.”

Recently, as an assistant who supports five departments, she used her performance review to make the tactic explicit: One stated goal is to attend at least one meeting per quarter.

Sitting in on meetings has had other benefits, as well. “I understand my role a lot more,” she says.

Admin Susan recommends volunteering to create action items after meetings, showing who needs to follow up on what and by when. Doing so has made her “instrumental in following up to make sure things actually get done,” she says, and more aware than anyone about what’s going on.

2. **Put your needs into an “if, then” form.** In other words, if you don’t get the information you need, what’s the likely outcome? Will important work run behind? Will the quality of the work suffer?

“Sometimes you have to let deadlines slip by,” says Jeana, who finds information-gathering to be a constant struggle.

Her top strategy is to send an email listing items or information needed for each project, what the status is for each project, along with a deadline. For some projects, a weekly status call is effective.

“You can’t take it personally,” she says. Instead, focus on being persistent.

3. **Find an alternative route to the information.** If management is too busy to keep you in the loop, says admin Lynne, who else might have the information you need?

If not, she says, set aside time to talk about the situation with your boss. She echoes Jeana’s advice, “Let him know that having to spend time digging up information costs the company money and wastes your time, which could be better spent on other projects,” she says.

Propose a solution, whether it’s a weekly status call or attending a key recurring meeting. You’ve got a job to do. And you need information in order to do it well.