

Administrative Professionals' Day: Words of wisdom and favorite famous admins

In honor of Administrative Professionals' Day, we've pulled two of our favorite reflections on defining success from top admins. We also rounded up our favorite famous admins from movies and television. Make sure to tell all the admins in your workplace today - THANK YOU!

How I overcame 'Superwoman Syndrome'

I started as a junior secretary in a law firm and eventually became admin to a senior partner. In my personal life, I raised two children, helped save for their educations and sent them to good colleges. I head up projects for several organizations as well as for my church. But despite all these accomplishments, I felt that I had to accomplish even more.

How did I begin to appreciate my own accomplishments and set more realistic expectations? I started saying no. Up until then, I tended to say yes to anyone who asked me to help. Then, one day, a co-worker asked me to take over her phones while she was away for a week. Under normal circumstances, I would have said yes. This time, I explained that I had an important project to complete and I said no. And do you know, it made no difference to the woman in question. She simply asked someone else.

I began to give myself credit for the things I had accomplished. I had been a successful admin for many years, yet I realized that I still had a level of self-assurance appropriate to a junior secretary. Taking time to remember what I had already accomplished helped me overcome my drive to overachieve.

I allowed myself to act with authority. For the first time, I began to offer guidance to younger admins. To my surprise, they did not think that I was intruding. On the contrary, they saw me as a resource and began to come to me for advice and counsel. I carried this attitude over into my community activities. Rather than manning the booths at one community event for the 10th straight year, I joined the organizing committee and shared my knowledge.

To overcome the superwoman mindset, I found I had to learn to live by my own definition of success. I learned that self-esteem and balance come from within, not without. - *Anonymous*

Excel at the fundamentals

I know many seasoned executive assistants who think they do not need to focus on or pay attention to their basic skills, what is also known as the fundamentals. They feel they have been managing calendars or planning meetings forever so why pay attention. This is not smart.

For 28 years, I have been teaching assistants to pay attention to the fundamentals such as meeting planning, travel planning, calendar maintenance, organizational skills, follow-up systems, time management, and communications. Every career has certain core fundamental skills. They are the foundation on which everything else is built. I have been a professional speaker since 1990. I never take for granted the basic 'platform' skills I learned in the early days as a speaker. I pay as much attention as ever and have meticulously polished those

basics.

You must do the same. Don't ever rest on your laurels. The world is moving at a much faster pace today so you have to be more organized, manage your projects better, take control of calendars, and cross every 't' and dot every 'i' when it comes to travel planning. Executives' expectations are high today, and these are the key areas they want their assistants to excel in. They include:

- Appointment Coordination
- Manager Support
- Managing Office Technology
- Meeting Preparation and Coordination
- Office Communication
- Problem Solving
- Professional Behavior and Image
- Professional Development
- Supporting Multiple Managers
- Task and Project Management
- Time Management

At Office Dynamics, we are consistently surveying executives, managers, CEOs, human resources professionals, and organization development professionals on what skills, attitudes, and behaviors they look for in an assistant. Do you know what? The fundamentals always rise to the top. After that list, I see advanced competencies such as negotiation or persuasion skills. Over and over, time and again, there is proof that your fundamentals are critical to being successful in the administrative profession.

Also, when we conduct activities in our training classes with assistants and ask them what skills, attitudes, and behaviors are important for an assistant, 90 percent of the time they list the fundamentals.

I highly encourage you to become a rock star at the fundamentals. There are always new ways of doing things, and you can always streamline or fine-tune your current processes. Think about how you can wow people in each of the areas I listed above. - *Joan Burge, founder & CEO of Office Dynamics, is known as the pioneer of the administrative training industry. Joan is an accomplished author, professional speaker, consultant and corporate trainer.*

Great characters. Great admins.

Did you know: the origin of “Man (or Girl) Friday” comes from Robinson Crusoe? One Friday, Robinson saves a Native American from some cannibals. Crusoe names him after the day of the week and employs him as a servant.

Some other notable fictional “admins” that deserve consideration:

John H. Watson. Dr. Watson began as Sherlock Holmes’s flatmate and became his biographer and assistant (and was often victim of his ravenous ego). He is the necessary counterpart to the eccentric genius.

Miss Money Penny. In a “sanctioned” spinoff series of the James Bond novels she’s Jane, and in Skyfall she’s Eve. She’s the ultra-capable lieutenant and private secretary of M, head of MI6 and James Bond’s superior officer.

R.M. Renfield. In Bram Stoker’s novel, Renfield’s servitude to Count Dracula is compromised by his confinement in an asylum, but he remains ready for assignment! He does eventually question some of the Master’s decisions, and, unfortunately, has to step down. With all the travel and specialized lodging arrangements Dracula demands, he certainly needs some help ...

Woodstock. Snoopy’s—er, the World War I Flying Ace’s—mechanic. Woodstock differed from previous comic birds in that he could talk (sort of), and not fly particularly well. Fun fact: He was named after the music festival!

Marion Crane. Trustworthy office dynamo Marion Crane decides to run off with a bunch of cash from a sleazebag customer when her boss asks her to take it immediately to the bank. This mistake leads to other mistakes, like stopping off for a brief spell at the Bates Motel. Oh my...