

Develop 9 traits to be more than an assistant

“It’s not a job anymore,” renowned admin trainer Lucy Brazier told a full house at last year’s Admin Pro Forum conference in Orlando; “it’s a profession. One-fifth of the world’s population work as assistants.”

But how many of them are really more than that, having become indispensable to their supervisors and their companies? In such a crowded field, how many have locked down not just job security but a career arc that’s always moving upward?

How do *you* get that?

Brazier, publisher of *Executive Secretary* magazine, went on to describe for her audience the nine characteristics that truly successful top-level assistants display:

- 1. Authority.** They convey a sense that they’re always in control and can be trusted to make good decisions without oversight. They seize responsibility rather than wait for it to come to them.
- 2. Communication skill.** Top-flight assistants never go dark and never hesitate to be honest. They leave no one to ever wonder, “Why can’t I get an answer to this?”
- 3. A sense of direction.** Sometimes admins push things forward when others aren’t willing to, and they take action to keep a boss’s priorities on course.
- 4. Respect.** They may question decisions privately, but they remain completely professional to everyone they deal with.

5. Influence. It's great to get everything done, but gaining total trust and moving up also takes speaking good ideas and having them heard.

6. Collaborative flair. Extraordinary assistants can work with anyone, in any sphere, and be happy to. Above all, they seek to quickly find a comfortable working rhythm with the people they're responsible to, and they strive to leave awkwardness and hesitation in the dust.

7. Emotional intelligence. When things go awry, they snap back into full productivity mode immediately, and the word "blame" is not in their vocabulary.

8. Leadership. Executives develop a strong sense for who's got what it takes to work independently and guide others. When they can't be at the wheel of the ship, they need to be able to trust assistants to step up and take control.

9. A track record of results. You may have valid excuses for why things didn't quite get done, or why roadblocks at work have made the job difficult. But can you find a way to bull through and succeed where others ask for forgiveness? Are you always asking yourself the key question all the best admins do: "How am I going to make this happen anyway?"

Lucy Brazier, one of the featured speakers at Admin Pro Forum each year, is CEO of Marcham Publishing, publishers of Executive Secretary magazine. Lucy runs a popular LinkedIn group for assistants, as well as #adminchat, a weekly training session provided on Twitter. She is a tireless advocate for the admin profession ... a dynamic trainer ... and a sought-after speaker who has appeared at 170 events in 25 countries over the past year.

