

How to Hire a Great Administrative Assistant

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Date : December 6, 2013

Hiring a good office assistant isn't easy. You may know what you want, but you just may not quite be sure how to get it.

This is because the role of an administrative professional has evolved over the last couple of decades. They are no longer simply "secretaries" – typing letters, taking dictation and answering phones. Today, effective office professionals wear many hats – handling job duties that would have been previously handled by managerial staffing. They need to:

- be experts in office software and online research
- track and organize projects
- handle scheduling.
- be the face of your brand.

This can make finding (and retaining) a fantastic assistant a formidable task. To conduct a successful search, you will need to know what you are looking for – both in terms of actual skills and in those (ever important) intangible qualities. Some key things to look for include:

Organization

An administrative assistant must be organized and should help others achieve the same level of organization. This is a key requirement, because chaos does not make for a smooth-running office.

Competence

Many offices flounder because the administrative assistance is simply unable to perform his/her job. At minimum, your administrative assistant needs to understand word processing as well as spreadsheet, database and scheduling software. He/she also needs to possess the communication skills necessary to communicate to others tasks that need to get done.

Time Management

Time management is also a key qualification for an office assistant, especially if you have a fast-paced work environment. Your office assistant needs to be comfortable working in such an environment and have the skills to keep up with the workload.

Cultural Fit

Administrative assistants do not work in a bubble; they work with people. Personality, interpersonal skills and desired work environment are often overlooked when interviewing and hiring an administrative assistant. Just because a person seems to be a perfect fit on paper (i.e. their resume), it does not mean that he/she will fit in well with you or your other employees.

Judgment

In many cases, administrative assistants do not work with much direction. Your assistant needs to be able to anticipate and solve issues as they arise. In addition, he/she needs to know when and what needs to be shared or held in the strictest of confidence. Due to their position, many assistants are privy to information that other people in the company do not know.

Now that you know what you are looking for, the key is to structure your interview process to identify these key qualities. Snelling can help. We locate and hire skilled administrative assistants every day for our clients. We know how to identify top candidates when you need to hire, and we have a top-notch pipeline of highly qualified temporary office workers when you need to fill a gap. Contact us today!