



EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SEARCH & CONSULTING

## 20 Traits of Successful Executive Support Professionals

1. **The Ability to "Walk in the Executive's Shoes:"** The Merriam-Webster definition of *empathy* is *"the capacity for understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having these fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner."*
2. **Pro-active Focus:** Constantly riding and staying ahead of the breaking wave. Having the skill and art of anticipating and planning for possible contingencies; saving time, money and/or "face" by always going above and beyond.
3. **Strategically-Driven Time Management:** Minute-to-minute awareness of current priorities, business mission, and strategies of both executive and the company so that projects, tasks, and time are managed strategically.
4. **Commitment to Lifelong Learning:** Self-directed accountability for ongoing training and learning. This includes latest technology, as well as information about relevant issues with people, places, companies, current events, and best practices.
5. **Key Intuition:** Intuition supports the ability to read people and become a trusted partner who can accurately counsel his/her executive about people and circumstances. Intuition allows one to know the next best step to take.

6. **Strong Listening Skills:** Listening with an open mind – without judgment or preconceived ideas – is critical for the depth of understanding needed in senior executive support.
7. **Exceptional Organizational Skills:** Have the ability to manage and have rapid access to a high volume of information pertaining to email, individuals and client, events, projects, tasks, and preferences.
8. **Interpersonal and Relationship Management Skills:** Creating, managing, and sustaining relationships at all levels of the organization. Be the executive’s critical “eyes and ears” and the “face” of the executive office.
9. **Well-Developed Sense of Humor:** The ability to laugh at the absurdities of unexpected and uncontrollable situations generates creativity and solutions to sometimes seemingly insolvable challenges. Humor reflects the ability to distance oneself from taking things personally while maintaining a high level of functioning.
10. **High Energy:** Impressive energy and the ability to both sprint and run marathon “workload races.” Self-care is critical to maintaining energy levels; so make time for exercise, quiet time, and getting enough sleep.
11. **Global Awareness and Knowledge of Cultural Differences:** Understand cultural differences and business practices around the globe; even small companies can be in global business, so this knowledge has become critical to organizations of all sizes.
12. **Self-assurance and confidence:** Earned trust and confidence are needed in order to be able to “manage up,” “push back,” and question when necessary. As a partner in thought and vision, new and varied perspectives can be invaluable contributions.
13. **Skilled Management of Details:** Schedules, tasks, projects, and information are managed from a thorough understanding of the executive’s and the organization’s business strategy.

14. **Emotional Intelligence:** A high “Emotional IQ” (*EQ*) is critical. There is no time for drama at this level. The primary need is for gracious and professional behavior, regardless of any pressures, demands, changes, and misunderstandings.
15. **Self-Management Ability:** The ability to manage oneself and move forward with self-directed planning and execution. Consistently asking relevant questions enables accurate assessment and execution of projects and support.
16. **Resourceful and Well-Connected:** Functioning at a “solutions-oriented” level with creativity and resourcefulness. Having a wide scope of resources through connection with other top assistants, Internet group opportunities, the business community, and individual network of contacts.
17. **Focused Multi-Tasking:** Talented multi-taskers stop and focus entirely on the most pressing of issues and tasks while knowing exactly what other matters still need attention.
18. **Thriving on Change:** A strong comfort level with constant change requires discipline, resiliency, and flexibility. Constant rescheduling, reorganizing, changing and re-doing are managed with patience.
19. **Adept Communicator:** Possess careful, gracious, and concise verbal and written communication skills. Be thoughtful and skillful about what people say and how it is being said and respond accordingly. Be conscious of the impact of both written and verbal communication.
20. **Commitment to Growth and Increased Self-Awareness:** “High EQ” has become an expression for the self-reliant ability to change and develop as a human being.