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Calendar Management

Work with your exec to create an improved calendar system

Effectively managing responsibilities and tasks while keeping organized within your own job can feel incredibly difficult when simultaneously trying to keep track of countless aspects of your executive's job. More specifically, managing both of your calendars can prove especially challenging as it can easily get confusing trying to keep track of items and not miss or skip over important meetings, tasks or events. Here are 10 ideas to consider when working on improving your calendar management:

1. Prioritize and plan ahead. Start your day by reviewing your calendar and your executive's. Identify high-priority tasks and allocate time blocks accordingly. Anticipating busy periods and

planning for them in advance can prevent last-minute chaos.

2. Sync calendars. Ensure both your and your executive's calendar are seamlessly synced. Utilize tools like Google Calendar or Microsoft Outlook to share and update schedules in real time.

3. Set clear boundaries. Establish guidelines for what can be added to your executive's calendar. Filter out unnecessary meetings and commitments that do not align with their priorities and objectives.

4. Time blocking. Allocate dedicated time blocks for specific tasks, such as email management, strategic planning or team meetings. Protect these time slots to maintain focus.

5. Color-coding. Use color-coding to differentiate between different types of events or appointments. For example, meetings can be one color, deadlines another and personal commitments another. This visual aid helps you quickly grasp the schedule at a glance.

6. Buffer time. Schedule buffer time between meetings to allow for unforeseen delays or to catch up on urgent tasks. Avoid back-to-back meetings whenever possible to prevent burnout.

7. Effective communication. Keep open lines of communication with your executive. Regularly update them on schedule changes or conflicts and provide briefings before important meetings.

8. Use technology wisely. Leverage calendar-management software to automate repetitive tasks, set reminders and streamline scheduling. Explore features like recurring events and booking links to simplify the process.

9. Delegate responsibly. If authorized, delegate calendar-management tasks to team members or assistants. Clear instructions and regular check-ins will ensure that the process runs smoothly. This may not be an option for everyone, but larger organizations with faster-paced environments might warrant such delegation.

10. Review regularly. Weekly or monthly, conduct a thorough review of both calendars. Identify areas for improvement, declutter schedules and adjust priorities based on changing needs.

1-Minute Strategies

Streamline your paper filing system. Categorize documents, use clear labels and invest in quality folders and cabinets. Consider organizing files by when they should realistically be addressed rather than their strict due date. Regularly review and purge outdated files, and

consider digitizing important documents for easy access and security. Take inventory and keep track of every file that you have both physical and digital copies of. Schedule routine maintenance to keep your filing system efficient and clutter-free.

Your boss keeps asking you to assist with personal errands and matters. Is this acceptable behavior? If your job title isn't something like "personal executive assistant" and personal favors aren't in the job description, you should not be expected to get involved with those kinds of tasks. However, you may feel more inclined to take up personal errands from an executive who you are particularly fond of. Take a minute to create a two-column list of personal tasks you would and wouldn't do for your executive, and begin acting more on the "would do" column to help make their life easier. This can strengthen your relationship with your boss and may result in being further rewarded for going above and beyond.

Career Advancement

7 steps to curating your career development

To excel in the dynamic field of administration, it's crucial to continuously develop your skills and validate your expertise. Each executive and company will have varying expectations of you. To climb in the ranks within your current organization or branch out and succeed somewhere you view as more prestigious, challenging or fulfilling, take an introspective look at what you bring to the table wherever you go. Here are some practical steps to help chart your path to success:

- 1. Identify your strengths and weaknesses.** Start by assessing your current skill set. Recognize your strengths and pinpoint areas that need improvement. This self-awareness will guide your developmental journey.
- 2. Explore relevant certifications.** Look into certifications like Certified Administrative Professional (CAP), Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) or Project Management Professional (PMP) to add credibility to your résumé and demonstrate your commitment to excellence.
- 3. Set clear goals.** Define your career goals and the skills needed to achieve them, whether they're mastering advanced software or enhancing your project-management abilities.
- 4. Online courses and workshops.** The digital age has made learning more accessible than ever. Enroll in online courses and workshops that cater to executive assistant skills. Platforms like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning and Udemy offer a plethora of options.
- 5. Networking and mentoring.** Connect with fellow executive assistants, join professional associations and seek out mentors. Networking not only helps you gain insights but also opens doors to opportunities for growth.

6. On-the-job training. Don't underestimate the value of learning on the job. Volunteer for projects that allow you to expand your skill set and showcase your abilities.

7. Continuous learning. Stay updated with industry trends and best practices by reading books, subscribing to industry newsletters and attending conferences or webinars.

Empowering EAs

How to handle a boss who belittles you

Although your job title may suggest that you answer to your executive, your responsibilities stretch much farther. Some executives may forget or be ignorant of the fact that you have duties beyond catering to them. It is also not uncommon to work for an executive who feels above everyone else and talks down to others. These individuals can make it especially challenging to be an administrative assistant as their words and actions may feel like bullying. While organizations should make a greater effort to replace these types of bosses, they are a reality in the workplace and sometimes you must speak up for yourself. Here are some ways to respond if you feel that your executive is belittling you at work.

Expectations. As an administrative assistant, you have access to your executive's calendar and the ability to easily schedule a meeting to discuss your concerns. Book an appointment titled "Expectations" and allow an appropriate amount of time to express what is to be expected from one another. Making time for a more formal conversation about your situation may also help reveal areas for growth. Your executive may not know that you need help learning software, or you may not know about the immense stress they are under. Work together to find a comfortable relationship with your expectations for one another.

Pat, slap, pat. These conversations can be difficult and daunting, especially if your executive has been particularly problematic, but it is important to remember that you hold value—skills that can be taken to another company, if necessary. To avoid sounding aggressive and ease up tensions, try the pat, slap, pat method:

- **Pat:** Start the conversation with kind words about positive aspects of your experience at the organization and with them: "I've learned a lot here and it's been a pleasure working alongside you."
- **Slap:** Be direct in expressing your concerns and the areas you hope to see improvement in, offering dedication to your work if conditions are made better: "I'm noticing a disconnect and miscommunication within our working relationship, and in order for me to do the best that I can, I want to know what we can do to improve this."

- **Pat:** Reiterate your opening thoughts about the positives of working there and conclude with how you want to be able to continue to support them, but that you're also hoping you've come to an understanding: "Again, I really enjoy it here and I'd love to keep assisting you however I can. Are we on the same page now?"

Leave the floor open for a dialogue and come to a final understanding of the changes that will be made, but don't tolerate ignorance. If your executive plans to continue treating you poorly, you may want to consider taking your expertise to an executive who deserves it.

Consult others. Depending on your company size, there may be multiple pathways you can take if consulting your advisor directly isn't effective. If your organization has an HR department or person, consult them on the situation and express your concerns in an honest and clear manner, stating the importance of having it dealt with. Alternatively, if your executive has a boss or higher-up, consider going to them with your complaints.

Apply elsewhere. Unfortunately, not everybody gets along, regardless of how much effort is put in by one or both parties. Sometimes there is nobody else within the company able or willing to help resolve the situation. If you feel that you've worked endlessly to repair your relationship with your executive but continue to feel belittled, underappreciated and disrespected, it's time to search for new opportunities. Utilize sites like LinkedIn, Monster, USAJobs, Indeed and ZipRecruiter to search for new positions before leaving your current organization. When applying, check Glassdoor to see what others have to say about the company and its employees, and look at LinkedIn profiles for executives you may work for.

Office Tech in Brief

by Melissa Esquibel, MCT Alumni, MOS-Expert

Reminders for recipients

Allow Microsoft Outlook to set a reminder for your email recipient of a task due before you send the email. While replying, forwarding or composing a new message in Outlook 365 desktop, click on the follow-up flag icon (red flag) on the Message tab in the Tags group. In the bottom half of the dialog box that appears, you can check the box to set the reminder for your recipient. For best results, set the reminder up at least a day before the due date, which you can set in the same dialog box.

Send polls in an email

It is now easier than ever to add polls to email messages in Outlook 365 desktop or Outlook Online. In the desktop app, on the Insert tab, in the Include group (far left), you'll see the Poll icon. On the right in the task pane, you'll be able to specify the question and the selection of

answers. The recipient will see the question and a link to the Microsoft form with the answer selections. In Outlook Online, add the poll from the Insert tab, clicking the more button (...) and selecting Polls. You can access results from the same link.

Quick Parts in Outlook

Many have discovered Quick Parts in Microsoft Word to quickly include reusable blocks of text and objects. But did you know that you can do the same in Outlook? Let's say you often use a 501(c)(3) paragraph to define your organization as a non-profit in email messages. Type it once. Select it. Then click the Insert tab. In the Text group, click the Quick Parts button, then Save Selection to the Quick Part Gallery. Give it an easy-to-spot name. Now you can click on Quick Parts and find it any time you need it.

Expert Insight

Quiet hiring: Admin professional trend of 2023

by Bonnie Low-Kramen

The Great Resignation of 2020 led to massive and chaotic hiring in 2021. As burnout, stress and mental health issues increased to red-alert levels due to poor onboarding and inadequate training, quiet quitting took hold in 2022.

What's happening in 2023? Quiet hiring.

Quiet hiring is about filling open positions with staff who are *already on the payroll* rather than hiring from outside the company. Job descriptions have already been in a disorganized transition starting in 2021, coined "the Year of the Job Description."

Leaders and HR recruiters have discovered that many of their current staff possess not-so-obvious talents and skills that can be leveraged for current projects. Despite having to pay current staff additional compensation for the additional work, quietly hiring them still costs far less than having to hire externally.

Executive assistants are prime targets for quiet hiring. In addition to already possessing excellent organizational, communication and scheduling skills, many administrative professionals also can flex the following skills.

1. Tech support. Support IT with varied technology skills, including AI, and the ability to teach these skills to others.

2. All aboard! Support HR with interviewing and onboarding abilities.

3. Leading teams. More support to HR with the ability to lead teams and supervise others utilizing high EQ.

4. Project management. Support leadership with project-management and event-planning abilities.

One vivid example of quiet hiring is the C-suite executive assistant who noticed that the onboarding system at her company was inefficient for both remote employees and in-person staff. She offered a proposal for a revised onboarding plan to the HR team, including the fact that she would be the project leader, with a revised salary to go along with the plan. Her plan was happily accepted by the overloaded HR team.

Another example is the EA to the CEO who received support to get her MS Office certifications during the pandemic when her workload was suddenly reduced. After she achieved her goal, she offered to lead 30-minute virtual “lunch and learns” to teach others the time-saving tips that she learned. The sessions were such a success that she received extra compensation for each one because the ROI was evident instantly. These “lunch and learns” injected the virtual staff with new energy and enthusiasm for learning.

The advantages of quiet hiring

1. Improve staff retention by making jobs more interesting for current staff.
2. Higher engagement, energy and productivity on the team, resulting in a positive ROI.
3. Retain the current staff's institutional knowledge as culture carriers.
4. Improve staff morale from the leaders' actions around the “promoting from within” culture.
5. Improve mental health and employee satisfaction as the new responsibilities combat loneliness and isolation from staff needing to interact with new people.
6. Easier talent acquisition from current staff encouraging others to apply for projects and positions.

The post-pandemic workplace has resulted in HR taking a close and fresh look at the current staff, specifically the executive assistants, to quietly hire them. EAs are encouraged to come forward to discuss skills that they would like to utilize. It is a win/win situation for companies, especially when compensation for the assistants is adjusted to recognize their new responsibilities.

Who knows what trend 2024 will bring?

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books, *Be the Ultimate Assistant and Staff Matters*. For 25 years, she worked as the personal assistant to Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis.

Remember these items when planning your next company event

In your role, you may often find yourself planning both small and large events for your organization or a group of employees. Before diving into the planning process, assess the size of the event and the amount of time and effort needed. It is important to know early on whether you'll need help from peers to ensure that you don't become too overwhelmed and forget something important.

Next, consider the items on the following checklist to create your own thorough plan for approaching your next event:

Budget. Identify and categorize anticipated expenses (e.g., speaker fees, entertainment, meals, beverages) and sources of income (e.g., registration fees, contributions, other financing).

Content. Outline event programs, select speakers and presenters, plan entertainment and develop a tentative agenda.

Venue. If the event is off-site, establish a venue contact person and check for tax-exempt eligibility. Specify meeting room requirements (e.g., space, lighting, amenities), prepare for any accessibility accommodations and create plans for transportation. Proactively inquire about any concurrent events at the venue or in the area to avoid overlap.

Dining. Decide between in-house or external catering and gather caterer contact details. Choose menus, keeping special dietary requirements in mind, and evaluate potential costs. If the event is large enough, consider implementing a ticket system for meals and beverages, and hire additional service personnel.

Supplies. Create an inventory of basic supplies needed, such as decorations, plates, napkins, tablecloths, glasses or cups and name tags.

Set-up. Ensure that presentations are prepared in advance and inquire with speakers about any additional materials needed. Plan table arrangements and come equipped with extra cables and any other tech necessary for the occasion.

Security. Outline any security concerns or considerations for the given location and prepare a medical emergency protocol to follow if needed. Gather and share information about the local police, fire departments and hospitals with attendees.

Organization Techniques

8 ways to organize contacts with ease

Networking and maintaining connections are vital to the success of many businesses, but master contact lists can be daunting to create and stressful to manage. Thankfully, nowadays there are far more options to develop, customize and organize a list than relying on handwritten files in a physical cabinet. Here are some digital tools and software that can be incredibly useful for creating and managing a master contact list as an administrative professional:

1. Microsoft Excel. Excel is a versatile spreadsheet software that allows you to create and organize contact lists easily. You can use it to create tables, sort and filter data, and apply formatting to make your contact list organized and visually appealing.

2. Google Sheets. Google Sheets is a cloud-based spreadsheet software that offers many of the same features as Excel, but with further collaborative options. It's a great choice for creating and sharing contact lists with colleagues, as multiple users can edit the same document simultaneously.

3. Microsoft Outlook. For email management and contact organization, Microsoft Outlook is a powerful tool. It offers a built-in contact management feature that allows you to store, categorize and search for contacts efficiently, as well as other organization options that you may find useful.

4. Customer relationship management (CRM) software. CRMs like Salesforce, HubSpot or Pipedrive are robust solutions for managing contacts, customer information and interactions, and offer advanced features for relationship tracking and communication.

5. Email marketing platforms. If you frequently engage with a large contact list for email campaigns or newsletters, consider platforms like Mailchimp or Constant Contact. These tools enable you to manage, segment and communicate with your contacts effectively.

6. Cloud-based contact apps. Apps like Google Contacts or Apple's iCloud Contacts provide convenient cloud storage for your contacts, ensuring you can access them from various devices.

7. Business card scanners. Mobile apps like CamCard or Evernote allow you to scan and digitize business cards, automatically adding contacts to your digital address book.

8. Secure data-storage solutions. If you're dealing with sensitive contact information, consider secure cloud-storage solutions like Dropbox Business or Box, which provide encryption and access controls to protect your data.

Choose the tool or combination of tools that best suits your specific needs and preferences. Many of these options offer free trials or basic versions, allowing you to explore their features before committing to a paid plan.

Tech Help Desk

Tech Help—From Microsoft to Google

by Melissa Esquibel, MCT Alumni, MOS-Expert

Q. We've just migrated to Google Workspace from Microsoft 365. I'm really missing PowerPoint. Is there something I can use that will replace all the cool animations, transitions and video features I've been used to using?

A. It's true that Google Slides, while being a serviceable presentation deck tool, is not the multiuse, multimedia, multifeatured powerhouse that PowerPoint is. While its other apps have progressed nicely toward the advanced feature set of Microsoft (and in some cases surpassed it), Slides has consistently fallen behind for advanced feature users of Microsoft PowerPoint.

A couple of tools that may meet your needs are [Prezi](#) and [Canva](#). Canva?! Yes, Canva. In [this video](#), you can see that most of the tools you're used to having in PowerPoint are available in Canva. It would just be a matter of learning the placement of tools, which Canva has endeavored to make intuitive. The same goes for Prezi, though Prezi makes use of a different style of presentation animation that some consider to be more dynamic. Basic licenses of both apps are free and, as expected, the more you pay, the richer the features set.

Q. Now that we're using Google Docs, how am I supposed to create a document with multiple page headers and footers? Can you even do that in Docs?

A. Yes, you can! Google snuck this one in on us a few years ago, and it works pretty much the way it works in Microsoft Word. On the Insert drop-down menu in Google Docs, near the bottom, you'll see Breaks. Click that and you can choose continuous or next page section breaks. Now you can double-click into either the page header or footer and vary the text between sections by unlinking them, and restart page numbers in a different format by section.

Just as you would in Microsoft Word, first insert section breaks where you need them. Then unlink them where you wish to create different headers, footers or page-numbering schemes. Next, add those elements. Be careful, because doing this in the wrong order can cause unneeded frustration.

Tricky Situations

Thriving with a chaotic boss

No two executive assistants have the same experience with their job because of just how much the boss dictates how things operate in this line of work. In the world of administrative support, one skill stands out as indispensable: the ability to work effectively with all types of supervisors, even those who may seem chaotic. Navigating this topic can be challenging, but it is crucial to be prepared to effectively work for executives who others may consider difficult to work for, rather than being blindsided.

You may still have your own style and approach to the role, and as mentioned in “How to handle a boss who belittles you,” you also have more responsibilities than just attending to your executive. This does not mean you can be ignorant of the way they function, though, and with time, you need to establish an understanding of how your executive goes about daily tasks, receives messages, remains organized and communicates ideas. To get a better grasp on these items, first analyze how chaotic they are, as this often reflects directly on the way they go about their job. Here are some ways to do so and how to respond if you find that your boss does seem to be all over the place.

Telltale signs of chaotic behavior

How can you tell if your boss is a chaotic operator?

Lack of clear priorities. Chaotic bosses often struggle to establish clear priorities, leading to frequent shifts in focus and a sense of disarray in their work.

Procrastination and last-minute rushes. They may be prone to procrastination, often leaving tasks until the 11th hour, causing undue stress and uncertainty to not only themselves but anyone else involved.

Disorganized communication. Chaotic executives might have difficulty in conveying expectations clearly, resulting in misunderstandings or frequent changes in directives. They may also use varying and inconsistent methods to communicate, making it difficult to ensure they received your messages.

Inconsistent decision-making. Their decision-making process may seem erratic, making it challenging to anticipate their choices. The role of an EA often involves finding rhythm and flow for your work, making this an extreme upset in the process and a very noticeable sign of chaos.

Overcommitment. Chaotic bosses tend to agree to too many commitments at once, leading to an overwhelming workload for both of you, which can have massive impacts on other aspects

of your jobs.

Tips for working with a chaotic executive

Though the situation may not be ideal, there are plenty of things you can do to try to better handle the chaos in your workplace. Here are seven strategies to keep in mind:

1. Stay organized. Your role becomes even more critical in a chaotic work environment. Keep meticulous records, create detailed schedules and establish clear systems for tracking tasks and deadlines.

2. Effective communication. Regularly check in with your boss to clarify expectations. Be proactive in seeking feedback and updates on their priorities. Document conversations and send follow-up emails to confirm agreements.

3. Flexibility. Be prepared for unexpected changes and adapt quickly. Develop a flexible mindset that allows you to pivot when needed without becoming overwhelmed. Expect inconsistency and learn how to properly handle it.

4. Prioritize and delegate. If your boss tends to overcommit, help them by prioritizing tasks and suggesting which ones can be delegated or postponed. Use your organizational skills to ensure critical tasks are addressed promptly.

5. Set boundaries. While being flexible is essential, it's also crucial to establish boundaries to maintain your own well-being. Politely communicate your limits and work hours to prevent burnout.

6. Anticipate needs. Though difficult, try to foresee potential challenges or bottlenecks in projects and address them before they become major issues. This proactive approach can also help you earn more trust and appreciation from your boss.

7. Self-care. Working for a chaotic boss can be demanding. Prioritize self-care to stay resilient and maintain your own productivity.

Finding a more fitting boss

Chaotic bosses can create an extremely fast-paced and constantly shifting environment. While it is important to be able to effectively operate in high-stress and less-than-optimal situations as an EA, it does not mean that you must be comfortable with every day being that way.

Additionally, some executives who act this way tend to come across as strictly rude and unappreciative. If you work to better understand the unpredictable nature of your boss and utilize the tips above but still find it deeply challenging to constantly work with those conditions or feel consistently disrespected, consider starting a tailored job search to find new

employment. Use these strategies to improve the chances of having a more harmonious match with your next executive:

- **Research executives.** Research past just the organization you are considering working for and look directly at the executive you will be working under. Ask for names in interviews, scout company websites and use LinkedIn.
- **Look for cues.** When looking at job descriptions and in interviews, keep an eye out for descriptions that emphasize clear communication, well-defined processes and a balanced workload.
- **Try networking.** You should always have a goal of expanding your web of quality connections, as it can greatly assist in career progression. Network with others in the field who can introduce you to potential employers who align with your preferences.

Tech Savvy

It's time to define an AI policy for your organization

By Melissa Esquibel, MCT Alumni, MOS-Expert

AI tools like ChatGPT are capturing the imaginations of information workers everywhere. Where it might have previously taken hours to research and report on various industry-related topics, it is now possible, with the help of AI, to do it in a few minutes. What else are people using ChatGPT and ChatGPT-like tools for?

- Résumés
- Cover letters
- Biographic profiles
- White papers
- Essays
- Term papers
- Articles

Is some of that making you a little nervous? Perhaps it should. While there's no doubt that AI tools can more efficiently distill gigabytes of existing information and present it to you framed as you've requested, you don't really know whether the information being presented to you is the work of an individual or primarily the work of a bot. We'll be discussing the ethics of this for decades, I imagine.

While I don't think AI is bad and that only original works of writing created with a chisel and

hammer in stone should be considered authentic, each organization must determine how it can be used legally and ethically, and the consequences of non-compliance. How would the organization prefer its employees to engage with it to produce a work product? Should it require third parties to disclose whether AI was employed in the generation of submissions or purchased products or services? What standards should be demanded from AI tools it will authorize its own employees to use?

Administrative professionals are lauding their improved efficiency using these tools and may perhaps be at the forefront of AI users and beneficiaries. For that reason, you can encourage your organization to adopt solid policies and practices around AI and model compliance in your everyday work.

What are the experts saying? According to the [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) (NIST), “Characteristics of trustworthy AI systems include: valid and reliable, safe, secure and resilient, accountable and transparent, explainable and interpretable, privacy-enhanced, and fair with harmful bias managed.”

The task may seem daunting, but experts have already started to weigh in on how to accomplish it. For example, the Corporate Governance Institute has drafted [“Ten steps to creating an AI policy”](#) and included a recommendation for a template. Consider looking at a variety of templates to see which best suits your organization and usage.

There are two main tendencies with any new technology: embrace or avoid. The likely right answer lies in the middle, an answer arrived at through careful research, consideration, wide stakeholder engagement and good governance.

Melissa Esquibel's book 101 Ways to Supercharge Your Productivity is available from [Amazon.com](#).

How to assess and improve your emotional intelligence with your executive

In today's professional landscape, emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a critical skill, but this hasn't always been the case. Though many have naturally developed this muscle over the years, you are likely to come across individuals who do not yet have EI in their repertoire, even bosses. As an administrative professional, you can play a pivotal role in fostering EI in your executive, but only if you have a firm understanding of the skill yourself. Here's how you and your boss can assess your emotional intelligence levels and act to improve.

Emotional intelligence quiz

The skill of emotional intelligence is measured in terms of how well you handle yourself in certain situations at work that call for self-awareness, impulse control, empathy and compatibility

with others. Because of this stark difference from concepts like job knowledge or pure intelligence, you need new ways to assess your EI skills.

Have both you and your boss take the following quiz to establish a rough idea of how well you each apply your emotional intelligence at work. Rate yourself from 1 through 4 on each statement, with 4 representing strong agreement and 1 meaning strong disagreement. Be honest, and after completing the quick assessment, ask a couple of unbiased colleagues to truthfully rate you and your executive as well.

- I usually stay composed and positive, even in trying moments.
- I can think clearly and stay focused on the task at hand under pressure.
- I am able to admit my own mistakes.
- I usually or always meet commitments.
- I hold myself accountable for meeting my goals.
- I'm organized and careful in my work.
- I regularly seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources.
- I'm good at generating new ideas.
- I can smoothly handle multiple demands and changing priorities.
- I'm results-oriented and am driven to meet my objectives.
- I like to set challenging goals and reach them.
- I'm always trying to learn how to improve, including asking advice from people younger than I am.
- I readily make sacrifices to meet an important organizational goal.
- I seek out ways to further the goals of the organization and enlist others to help me.
- I pursue goals beyond what's required of me.
- Obstacles and setbacks may delay me, but they don't stop me.
- I seek fresh perspectives, even if that means trying something totally new.
- My distressing emotions don't often get the best of me at work.
- I can change tactics quickly when circumstances change.
- I usually don't attribute setbacks to a personal flaw (mine or someone else's).
- I operate from an expectation of success rather than a fear of failure.

Scoring and acting on results

Add up your scores and take note of which of the following ranges you and your executive fall in from your individual assessments:

- **70 to 80:** You have an extremely high EQ (emotional intelligence quotient).
- **58 to 69:** Your EQ is above average for today's workplace.
- **Below 58:** You have some work to do.

Next, look for differences in how you rated yourselves and how others in the office rated you.

You and your boss should both take note of areas in which you may have developed a low-emotional-intelligence mental habit. Once you're aware of the trouble spots, begin forming fresh habits in place of your newly recognized poor ones. Try taking advantage of these strategies to reinforce growth:

Find someone to keep you in check. Pick a colleague you frequently interact with and ask them to challenge you to continue developing your EI by keeping tabs on your growth. Use their feedback to pinpoint areas in which you have improved and spots that could use more attention. If your boss hopes to have a similar system, consider offering some of your time to be the one to help follow their progress.

Utilize breathing techniques. Emotional intelligence is not just about understanding emotions; it's also about managing them effectively. Breathing exercises can help calm the mind and create space for rational thinking. "I can't overstate the importance of learning to breathe well," says Patty McDonough Kennedy, founder of SpeakWell. "Slowing down, directing and focusing your breath have huge positive effects on our cardiovascular, endocrine and brain systems including the amygdala—the part of our brain that processes emotions—and the cerebral cortex that resonates reasoning."

Schedule meetings with your executive to speak about EI. Avoid leaving the discussion as an afterthought to be brought up at the end of another meeting, and instead be intentional with your efforts. Encourage a vulnerable and safe environment for sharing experiences to work towards forming new habits for expressing emotional intelligence in a profound way as a leader.

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