



# HOW TO HIRE ALL-STAR ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS AND MAXIMIZE THEIR POTENTIAL



You want to hire administrative professionals who will work hard for your business, right? Well, gone are the days when hiring managers could simply post a quickly assembled job ad and sit back and wait for applicants to find them. Sure, you'll still be able to attract a few candidates that way, but they may not have the all-star administrative skills you're after. This hiring guide will give you the tools you need to find top-notch support staff and keep them on your team.

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## Part 1: 7 Ways to Find Great Prospects

Competition for the most skilled professionals is always strong. Companies with an organized, efficient hiring process have the best chance of attracting top talent. Does this describe your business, or do you feel like your recruiting practices need fine-tuning? These **seven hiring pointers** will help you find the best of the best:



### 1. Be specific about what you need.

It all starts with writing a [job description](#) that carefully outlines the skills, experience and personality traits you're looking for. Use this as the basis for your hiring criteria and as a starting point for the employment ad to find candidates that match your requirements.

### 2. Seek referrals.

Ask friends, family members and contacts in your professional network for prospects who might be a good fit for your open positions. To encourage employees to provide recommendations, offer incentives, such as cash rewards or gift cards, for referrals that result in a hire. You may just be a few degrees of separation from your next office superstars.



### 3. Boost your online presence.

In addition to listing job openings on your corporate website and online job boards, use social networking sites like LinkedIn and Facebook to get the word out. Since job seekers may search online to learn more about your company, make sure your website is up-to-date and a positive reflection of your firm. Pay attention to what current and former employees are saying about your company on sites like Glassdoor and Yelp. Do what you can to address both the positive and negative feedback you receive.

#### 4. Get your name out there.

Never underestimate the value of traditional recruiting methods. Continue participating in campus job fairs, professional associations and networking activities to gain wider exposure to prospective candidates. Also, empower your employees to be ambassadors for your company when they're at events. They may meet job seekers with the administrative skills your team needs while helping to increase your organization's visibility.



#### 5. Work with a specialized recruiter.

A [staffing firm](#) can help you review resumes and conduct interviews to hire workers who are suited to your needs. Recruiters have deep networks to give you access to skilled professionals you might not be able to find on your own. Hiring candidates on a [temporary or project basis](#) is a good option because it allows you to evaluate someone's skills and work style firsthand before bringing him or her onboard full time.

#### 6. Offer competitive salaries.

Be aware of what other companies in your area are paying for similar positions. By consulting the [OfficeTeam Salary Guide](#) and other industry resources, you can ensure the compensation you offer is consistent with — or a notch above — market trends.



#### 7. Be creative with perks.

A high salary isn't the only thing that grabs prospective employees' attention. In addition to standard benefits like healthcare insurance and a Registered Retirement Savings Plan, you should consider offering attractive [perks](#) like flexible schedules, tuition reimbursement, and even gym discounts and child care referral services, if you want your company to stand out.

## Part 2: Getting Candidates to Reveal Their Hidden Talents

If you want to hire all-stars, you'll first need to uncover their special talents. Are they super organized? Do they battle conflict like a pro? Can they rise to a challenge? Here are **10 questions** to help you assess strengths and weaknesses when interviewing administrative support candidates:

- ✓ 1. **What can you tell me about our company, and why do you want to work here?** Asking this question will easily reveal how enthusiastic candidates are for the position and if they have done their homework.
- ✓ 2. **What skills and strengths can you bring to this position?** Look for people who can describe how their abilities and attributes will directly benefit your company.
- ✓ 3. **How would colleagues describe your personality?** The applicant's work style should complement that of others on the team.
- ✓ 4. **What work environment brings out your best performance?** The response to this question tells you whether someone will fit into your corporate culture.
- ✓ 5. **Can you share a piece of constructive feedback you received from a manager and how you responded to it?** You'll get a sense of a candidate's willingness to admit past mistakes while sharing with you how he or she overcame them.
- ✓ 6. **What would you have changed about your last job and why?** Confident applicants will diplomatically discuss areas for improvement, as well as potential solutions.
- ✓ 7. **Can you provide an example of how you handled a workplace conflict?** This question can help you assess the interviewee's people skills and approach to resolving issues.
- ✓ 8. **What's the most interesting project you've worked on professionally?** The response will provide insight into what the candidate finds inspiring.
- ✓ 9. **How do you envision your career looking five years from now?** When you ask this, you'll find out the applicant's career objectives and how goal-oriented he or she is.
- ✓ 10. **What piece of information is not in your resume or cover letter that you think I should know?** The job seeker may provide additional details or examples that will help you in your hiring decision.

## Part 3: How to Maximize the Talent of Your Current Staff

While you may be focused on filling vacancies on your team, don't overlook the potential of your existing staff. As business needs and the workplace constantly evolve, administrative professionals are lending a hand in areas that often are outside of their traditional job descriptions.

To stay competitive, you need to be aware of these changing roles and make sure your employees have the training and support they require.

In a recent survey conducted by OfficeTeam and the International Association of Administrative Professionals® (IAAP®) as part of the [Office of the Future](#) research project, we asked support staff where they feel they're being underutilized. Only 43 per cent of those surveyed said their current manager takes advantage of their full range of skills, revealing tremendous untapped potential.

### Are you utilizing your administrative professionals' full abilities?

43%  
of support staff said  
their full range of  
skills are being used

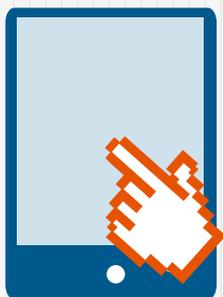
50%  
said they have skills that  
are not being tapped

7%  
feel completely  
underutilized



Source: OfficeTeam and IAAP survey of 2,290 administrative professionals in the United States and Canada

We've identified **five areas** for keeping your administrative support staff engaged:

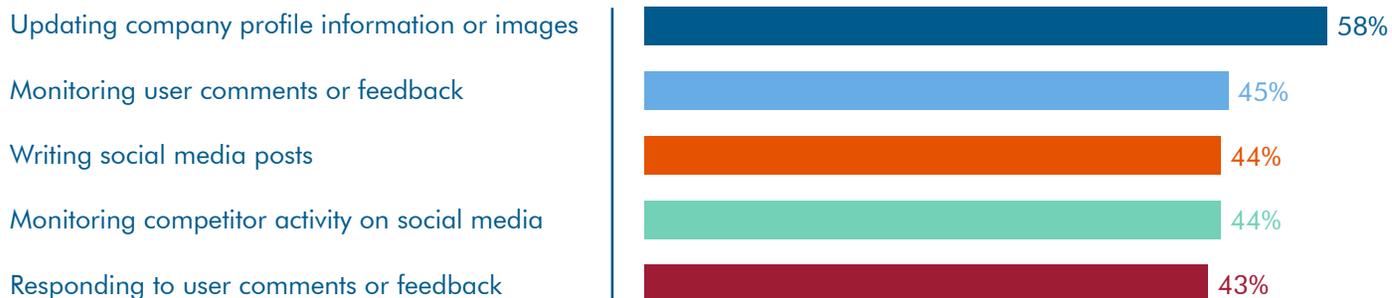


## 1. Let them tackle tech.

Making the most of technology investments is a high priority for companies. Of the support professionals we surveyed, 49 per cent said their supervisors have asked for assistance with technology training and support. Another 46 per cent of survey respondents stated they would like to be involved in this area. Today's admins are [tech-savvy](#). In fact, our survey revealed that most administrative staff (79 per cent) collaborate with the IT department at least once a week. Would your administrative professionals benefit from being empowered to take on more tech-related tasks?

## 2. Ask them for social support.

Managers we surveyed said they've enlisted the help of administrative professionals with social media in the following ways:



Source: OfficeTeam survey of 610 senior managers in the United States and Canada

Meanwhile, only 21 per cent of administrative workers said their manager has asked for their assistance with social media. With the growing reliance on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest as business tools, and the ever-expanding number of social channels to manage, employers may be wise to tap their administrative staff for help in this area.

### 3. Enlist their event-planning expertise.

Seventy-eight per cent of administrative professionals we surveyed said their manager has asked them to assist with [event planning](#). Today's administrative pros are pitching in to plan morale-boosting events like office celebrations, award programs and team-building activities. They're also playing a role in organizing mission-critical corporate on- and off-site gatherings, client functions, virtual meetings and conferences.



### 4. Set their sights on social responsibility.

Is [social responsibility](#) not a priority for your company? Well, it could make you more attractive to socially conscious job seekers — especially millennials and [Generation Z](#), the fastest-growing segments of the workforce. Of those administrative workers surveyed, 42 per cent said they would like to assist with social responsibility programs, and roughly the same percentage said their manager has tapped them for this type of task. If you want to improve your social standing, consider looking to your administrative team for help. Specific duties may include organizing:

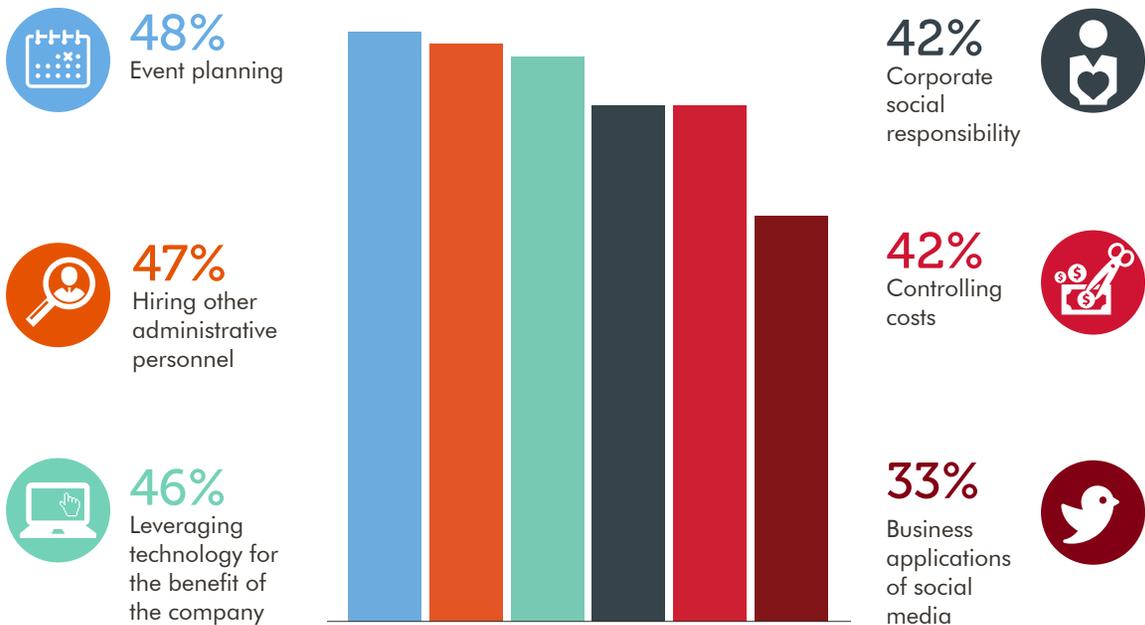
- **Volunteer activities** (e.g., food or clothing drives, community service projects)
- **Fundraising for nonprofits** (e.g., charity runs/walks/bike rides, matching gifts programs)
- **Environmental or "green" initiatives** (e.g., group beach cleanups, recycling programs)

### 5. Get help with hiring.

When bringing new employees on board, administrative professionals can lend a hand. Forty-seven per cent of support staff would like to pitch in with [hiring](#) other administrative personnel. And many already have experience with interviewing applicants and screening resumes. Companies are also relying on administrative workers' feedback on prospective employees. In fact, 88 per cent of managers we surveyed said they value their assistant's opinion about the job candidates they interview.



## Administrative professionals would like to assist in the following areas at their companies:



## According to our survey, administrative professionals would also like to help with:

- Budgeting, purchasing and contracts
- Business development
- Customer service
- Development of corporate policies and procedures
- Employee benefits and perks
- Employee onboarding
- Employee recognition
- Investor relations
- Marketing and public relations
- Mentor programs
- Office safety
- Program management
- Staff training and development
- Strategic planning
- Website and collateral design

Source: OfficeTeam and IAAP survey of 2,290 administrative professionals in the United States and Canada. Top responses shown.

### About OfficeTeam

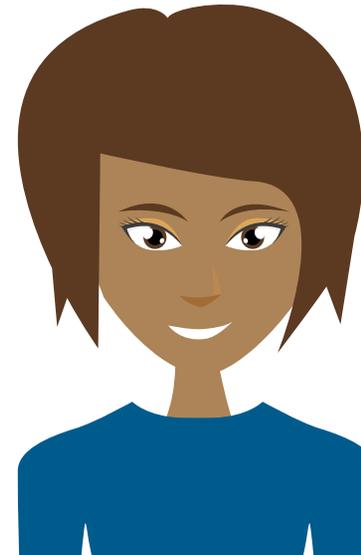
OfficeTeam, a Robert Half company, is the world's leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled office and administrative support professionals, ranging from executive and administrative assistants to receptionists and customer service representatives. OfficeTeam has more than 300 offices worldwide, and offers hiring and management resources at [officeteam.ca](http://officeteam.ca).

### About IAAP

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) is the world's largest association for administrative support staff. IAAP also offers the Certified Administrative Professional (CAP), the only certification for those working in office support professions. With 29 branches and 140 local area networks, the organization helps its members connect, learn, lead and excel. For more information, visit [iaap-hq.org](http://iaap-hq.org).

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administrative professionals