

## Quick Guide for Managers: Developing the Secretarial Role

Secretarial and administrative staff can only develop and add value to the business for the future, if their peers, the organisation's culture and their immediate managers create the right opportunities for them to do so. So here are the **top ten tips** for Managers:

1. **Talk to them!** By involving, including, empowering and trusting your secretary, she will become more proactive and motivated.
2. **Share your expertise and knowledge.** This way she will have a greater understanding of your work, your pressures and your objectives, and so be able to contribute more to the team.
3. **Ask for her thoughts** on the working practices that just aren't working efficiently: her experience and knowledge will probably save you hours of your valuable time.
4. **Introduce her to your clients and colleagues.** The more they are known and seen to be part of your team, the fewer routine requests and tasks you will have to handle.
6. **Don't ask people to contact "your secretary"** in correspondence. Use their full name! This will build relationships and trust - with your clients and with your secretary.
5. **Consider your work objectives:** what could they help you with?
9. **Find out which areas of your own role** your secretary would like to become more involved with. Work with her on these, and aim to delegate at least two new tasks a year.
7. **Ask your peers how they work** with their secretaries: you might be surprised at the range of responsibilities of other people's secretaries.
8. **Buy her a subscription** to one of the professional secretarial magazines as an "anniversary" present or simply as a thank you.
10. **If you can't work efficiently with your secretary** consider your options: do nothing, or develop them. Doing nothing is the easy option. Developing your secretary needs your commitment, your time and your energy: the rewards are well worth the investment.

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**Compiled by Des Whitehorn**

## Quick Guide for Secretaries/PAs: Developing the Secretarial Role

The secretarial role is constantly evolving and will continue to do so, especially as technology continues to provide knowledge and power at your fingertips. Keeping up to date with technology is probably the easy bit. Making yourself more valuable and less dispensable requires thought, determination and planning. So here are the **top ten tips** for Secretaries:

1. **See everything as an opportunity** rather than a threat. And don't wait or hope for things to happen - go and make them happen!
2. **Make sure you know what your key objectives** for the coming year are. If you don't have any, set some for yourself and document your progress for use in performance reviews and appraisals.
3. **Find yourself a role model** either within your own organisation or outside it. Ask them about how they work and use the tips and hints you feel will be of benefit.
4. **Join your organisation's mentoring programme**, if they have one.
5. **Volunteer!** For tasks, project teams and new responsibilities: It's the best way to develop skills and knowledge, and to get yourself seen.
6. **Join a professional organisation for secretaries.** Network with other professional secretaries and broaden your skills and knowledge base.
7. **Consider your manager's role:** which areas, tasks or responsibilities would you like to become more involved with, or take over entirely?
8. **Talk to your manager!** They can help you develop the role by delegating to you. Find out what their objectives, priorities and hurdles are. Then suggest ways in which you can help them.
9. **Always tell yourself what you can do.** Not what you can't. Passion for the role is vital if you are to develop it.
10. **Make sure you are seen.** Your image and profile are vital to your development and progression. As Mae West said "I'd rather be looked over, than overlooked".

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