

START HERE

Start Here

Read this first. It takes ten minutes, and it will make your first week calmer.

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Breathe. You were hired for a reason.

If you are holding this toolkit, you are probably about to start a new job as a secretary, an administrative assistant or an executive assistant. Or you have already started, and it already feels like a mess. Nobody told you where anything is, your boss is busy, everyone has their own routine, and you are trying very hard not to look lost.

That feeling is normal. It is not a sign that you are in the wrong job. It is what the first weeks feel like for almost everyone.

I spent 26 years supporting senior leaders in four different countries. Every new office had its own rules, its own people and its own way of doing things, and nobody ever handed me a manual. So I learned to prepare: how to look, what to carry, what to ask, what to say, and what to keep to myself. This toolkit is that preparation, written down for you, together with the advice that career experts and experienced assistants agree on.

You do not need to know everything on your first day. You need to know three things: where to write it down, who to ask, and what to do next. The next 30 days give you exactly that, one small step at a time.

Go slowly. Observe before you change anything. Ask instead of guessing. Write everything down. By Day 30 you will have a notebook full of answers, a boss who trusts you, and your own manual for the job.

From one assistant to another.

Your toolkit, file by file

Start with the 30-Day Plan. It tells you each day which tool to open, so you never have to read everything at once.

00 Start Here

This guide. How the toolkit works, and your 30-day tracker.

01 The 30-Day Plan

One page per day: what to do, what to say, and a calm thought for the day.

02 First Impression Kit

What to wear, what to carry, and how Day 1 will feel, hour by hour.

03 Introduction Scripts

Your 30-second introduction, the "less information" rule, and polite answers to personal questions.

04 The Boss Profile

The questions for your first meeting with your boss, and a profile you fill in.

05 Who's Who Map

Who really gets things done, and how each person likes to be contacted.

06 My Desk Manual

Your own manual: systems, tasks, files and procedures. It becomes your handover file.

07 Calendar & Daily Brief Kit

Read your boss's calendar, agree the rules, and send a daily brief and a Friday update.

08 Phone & Gatekeeping Scripts

Ten scripts for the calls that make new assistants nervous.

09 The Meeting Kit

Agendas, minutes in three styles, an action tracker and a fully worked example.

10 Conversations You Will Need

Every conversation of your first 30 days, with the first words to say.

11 Confidence at Work

Proven techniques for nerves, affirmations, and a quick-break guide for hard moments.

12 When Your Mind Goes Blank

30 response cards: the words to say and what to do next when your mind goes blank.

Plus, included free: **Admin Email Library**, 57 ready-to-send emails for scheduling, chasing, saying no politely and more.

Ten minutes a day is enough

- 1 **Tonight, read Day 0** in the 30-Day Plan and pack your bag with the First Impression Kit.
- 2 **Each morning, open that day's page.** It takes about ten minutes. Each page tells you what to do, what to say, and which tool to use.
- 3 **Tick the day in your tracker** (next page) and write one thing you learned. Small ticks add up to real confidence.
- 4 **When a moment feels hard,** open Confidence at Work and pick a 1-minute technique. Then go back to the plan.

Three promises to yourself

- ☐ **I will observe before I change anything.** The first weeks are for learning how things are done here.
- ☐ **I will ask instead of guessing.** A good question takes ten seconds. A wrong guess can take a week to fix.
- ☐ **I will write it down.** My notebook is my memory, my proof and, later, my manual.

Already in the middle of your first month?

Start from the day that matches where you are. If you have not yet had a proper conversation with your boss about how they like to work, do **Day 4 (Meet your boss)** this week, whatever day it is. It makes everything else easier.

CALM MOMENT

Before you turn the page, breathe in through your nose, take a second small breath in on top of it, then breathe out slowly through your mouth. Do it three times. You will learn why this works in Confidence at Work.

YOUR TRACKER

30 days, one tick at a time

Tick each day when you finish its page. Green squares are weekends: rest, review and reset.

0 The night before	1 Arrive and observe	2 Your space and systems	3 Learn the people	4 Meet your boss	5 Your first Friday	6-7 Weekend reset
8 Read the calendar	9 Calendar rules	10 The phone	11 The daily brief	12 Follow-ups	13-14 Weekend reset	15 The meeting map
16 The agenda	17 Taking minutes	18 Actions and follow-up	19 Feedback Friday	20-21 Weekend reset	22 Travel basics	23 Hosting a visitor
24 Write your procedures	25 Build your allies	26 Prepare your review	27-28 Weekend reset	29 Your 30-day review	30 You did it	

MY THREE GOALS FOR THIS MONTH

WHO I CAN ASK FOR HELP

A few honest notes

- ☐ **Never write passwords in this toolkit or in any document.** Your Desk Manual records where a system is and who gives access, never the password itself.
- ☐ **Keep confidential things confidential.** Some of what you will learn about your boss and the organization is private. Your notes stay with you and stay professional.
- ☐ **Adapt everything to your workplace.** Every office is different. If your boss or your company has its own way, their way wins. Use these pages as a starting point, not a rule book.
- ☐ **This toolkit is practical guidance, not legal, HR or medical advice.** For questions about your contract, benefits or health, ask HR or a professional.
- ☐ **The research mentioned in these pages** is summarized in plain words, with the source named, so you can look it up if you want to know more.

FROM 26 YEARS AT THE DESK

On my first day in every new place, I promised myself one thing: to leave that evening knowing a little more than I did in the morning. Not everything. Just a little more. That is enough. Do that thirty times and you will be the person others come to with questions.