How to Effectively Create Your Office Systems and Procedures

Presented by
Julie Perrine, CAP®, OM, MBTI® Certified
Founder & CEO

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Why You Need Effective Systems and Procedures

- B_____ C_____

- Quality Control: Internal / External Audits

- C_____ S_____

- Disaster Planning and Recovery

- S_____ P_____

Career Value for You!

- **Less Stress** and Hassle

- **Better Focus** and Memory

- **Increased Productivity**

- Demonstrates **Leadership** and **Initiative**

- More **Recognition**

- Annual Performance Review
    – Raises
    – Promotions
    – Job Title and Description Updates

- Resume Builder

- Professional Portfolio Samples

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What are systems?

Noun

1. *A set of things working together as parts of a mechanism or an interconnecting network.*

2. *A set of principles or procedures according to which something is done; an organized framework or method.*

- Systems helps you **find**, **do,** and **complete** things **consistently**.

- Systems are **ordered and proven processes** that **save you time, effort, and stress**.

- Systems are a set of instructions that **create structure** and **govern actions**.

- Systems make **behaviors automatic** so you don't have to think about them.

What are procedures?

Noun
1. *An established or official way of doing something.*

What are policies?

Noun

1. *A prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs.*

2. *A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives to guide and determine present and future decisions.*

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> *"Systems allow you to create an office*
> *that functions smoothly, efficiently, and effectively…*
> *no matter what happens."*
>
> ~Julie Perrine

How do you create effective systems?

Characteristics of a System

- Structure

- Behavior (_____)

- Interconnectivity (_____ and flow)

- Boundaries (_____ and _____)

What are your current systems?

- _____, Forms, Lists
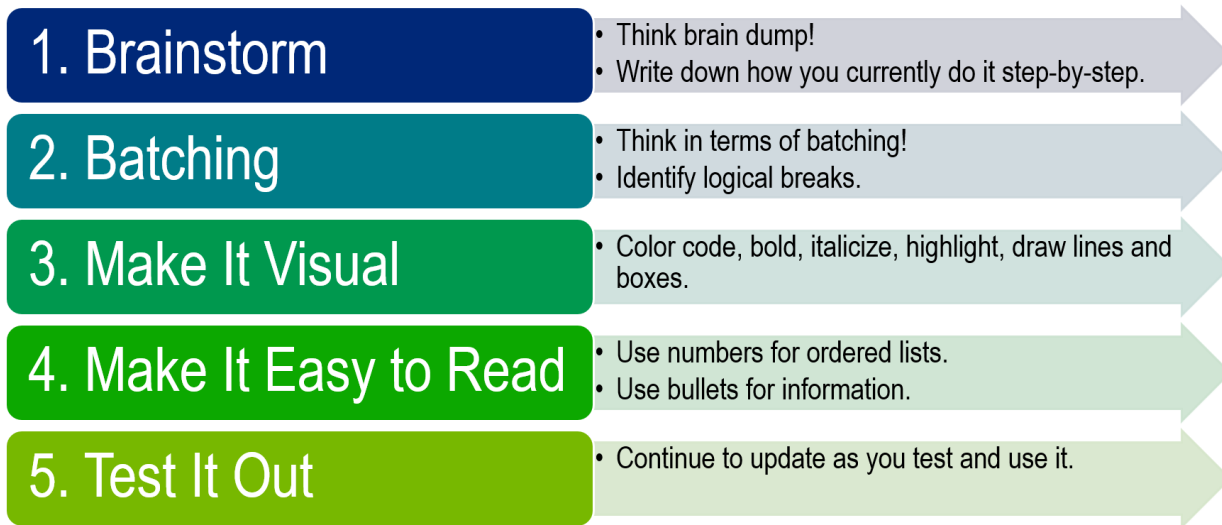
- _____

- Methods

- How you _____ _____ _____

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What types of systems do you need?

5 Core Administrative Systems	Other Systems
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

5 Steps to Mapping Out Your Office Systems

1. Brainstorm	• Think brain dump! • Write down how you currently do it step-by-step.
2. Batching	• Think in terms of batching! • Identify logical breaks.
3. Make It Visual	• Color code, bold, italicize, highlight, draw lines and boxes.
4. Make It Easy to Read	• Use numbers for ordered lists. • Use bullets for information.
5. Test It Out	• Continue to update as you test and use it.

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EXAMPLE: Board of Directors Meeting

Step 1: Brainstorm (Think brain dump!)

Write down how you currently do it step-by-step.

When you're planning a board of directors meeting, what do you do and in what order?

1) Select date ranges or options for upcoming board meeting.

2) Check with all board members' assistants on availability for the ranges or options presented.

3) Determine preferred meeting date, time, and location with board chairman based on available options for all participants.

4) Determine who needs to attend in addition to current board members.

5) Determine the agenda and who is presenting.

6) Determine what types of audio-visual equipment you need.

7) Reserve the conference room.

8) Send out the board meeting invitation to all participants.

9) Determine whether there will be a board dinner the night before or after the meeting.

10) Determine date, time, and location of the board dinner.

11) Send out the dinner invitation to all participants.

12) Determine if board members need help with travel coordination for the meeting (hotels, flights, ground transportation).

13) Coordinate travel plans for those who request them.

14) Determine catering needs for the board meeting.

15) Order the catering for the board meeting.

16) Create the board meeting agenda for the chairman's approval.

17) Gather all board materials for the board books.

18) Create and/or assemble the board books.

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Step 2: Think in Terms of Batching

Look for logical breaks in the process.

Date Selection

1) Select date ranges or options for upcoming board meeting.
2) Check with all board members' assistants on availability for the ranges or options presented.
3) Determine preferred meeting date, time, and location with board chairman based on available options for all participants.

Meeting Agenda and Attendees

4) Determine who needs to attend in addition to current board members.
5) Determine the agenda and who is presenting which topics.

Conference Room Logistics

6) Determine what types of audio-visual equipment you will need.
7) Reserve the conference room.
8) Send out the board meeting invitation to all participants.

Board Dinner Planning

9) Determine whether there will be a board dinner the night before or after the meeting.
10) Determine date, time, and location of the board dinner.
11) Send the dinner invitation to all participants.

Travel Planning

12) Determine if board members need help with travel coordination for the meeting (hotels, flights, ground transportation.)
13) Coordinate travel plans for those who request them.

Meeting Catering

14) Determine catering needs for the board meeting.
15) Order the catering for the board meeting.

Board Books

16) Create the board meeting agenda for the chairman's approval.
17) Gather all board materials for the board books.
18) Create and/or assemble the board books.

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Step 3: Make It Visual

Color code, bold, italicize, highlight, draw lines and boxes.

This step is especially helpful if you're mapping your system out on paper first. But you can certainly color code, highlight, and draw boxes around things in digital documents to draw attention to them in print, too.

<u>Date Selection</u>
  1) Select date ranges or options for upcoming board meeting.
  2) Check with all board members' assistants on availability for the ranges or options.
  3) Determine preferred meeting date, time, and location with board chairman based on available options for all participants.

<u>Meeting Agenda and Attendees</u>
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<u>Board Books</u>
  16) Create the board meeting agenda for the chairman's approval.
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Step 4: Make It Easy to Read/Scan

Use numbers for ordered lists and bullets for information.

Step 5: Test It Out

Continue to update your system as you use it.

Identifying the Procedures for Each Phase

Now, let's identify where to use forms, templates, checklists, and more detailed procedures for each batch or segment on the list.

- Date Selection
  - o **Email template** for initiating the process
  - o **Procedure** explaining the nuances of board scheduling and working with other board members' assistants to pick the date
- Meeting Agenda and Attendees
  - o **Meeting agenda template**
  - o **Meeting invite/email template**
  - o **Procedure** explaining how to determine the agenda and extra participants
- Conference Room Logistics
  - o **Procedure** for conference room reservation
- Board Dinner Planning
  - o **Board dinner planning form**
  - o **Procedure** explaining board dinner scheduling
- Travel Planning
  - o **Travel profile form** for each traveler
  - o **Travel planning form** for travel arranging
  - o **Travel itinerary template**
  - o **Procedure** explaining the nuances of board travel planning
- Meeting Catering
  - o **Catering order form**
  - o **Procedure** explaining catering preferences
- Board Books
  - o **Board book PowerPoint template**
  - o **Procedure** explaining the board packet assembly and distribution process for each board meeting.

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Systems Evaluation

- **Where do you have good systems in place?**

- **Where do you need better systems?**

- **Who has a good system in place that can coach/mentor you in developing yours?**

Working With Systems

- Accessibility is Vital!

  - ✓ Easy to review.

  - ✓ Easy to update.

  - ✓ Easy to share.

How to Fix Systems When They Break

- _____ it.

- Is it one piece that isn't working or the entire system?

- Seek _____ from others.

- Write down what would work better. Test it.

- Update your _____.

- Communicate the changes and re-train others.

Making Systems Work for You and Your Team

- Tailor them to your unique style:

  - ✓ Organization style.

  - ✓ Communication style.

  - ✓ Work style.

- Document your systems so others can use them.

- Remain flexible to updating and changing them, as needed.

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Plan of Action

1. Identify where you need to **create or improve an administrative system**.

2. **Brainstorm what the ideal system** for that item would look like.

3. **Test it**. Fine tune it.

4. **Implement your system(s).**

5. **Repeat.**

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Systems Examples and Ideas for Mapping Out Your Own Systems

- Travel Planning Systems
    - Download a free Travel Itinerary template: http://www.allthingsadmin.com/free-templates/
    - Article: An Admin's Guide to Travel Planning
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/an-admins-guide-to-travel-planning/
    - Article: Travel Planning In a Pandemic https://www.allthingsadmin.com/travel-planning-pandemic/

- Event/Meeting Planning Systems
    - Event Planning Template for Admins:
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/free-event-planning-template-for-admins-sponsored/
    - Article: Your Two-Part System for Successful Event and Meeting Planning:
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/two-part-system-successful-event-meeting-planning/

- Filing Systems
  https://allthingsadmintraining.com/the-organized-admin/resources/#whatiuse
    - Peek Inside My Filing System
    - Smead Viewables Info
    - Tickler File System
    - Digital Folder Structure Sample
    - Article: Simplify Your Filing System and Retire Your To-File Pile
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/simplify-your-filing-system-and-retire-your-to-file-pile/
    - Article: The Admin's Guide to Organizing Digital Files https://www.allthingsadmin.com/the-admins-guide-to-organizing-digital-files/
    - Article: Use Symbols to Prioritize Digital Files https://www.allthingsadmin.com/use-symbols-to-prioritize-digital-files/

- Develop a Color Coding System for use with Calendar/Project/Tasks/Files
    - Article: How to Develop a Color Code for Better Organization
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/better-organization/

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- Time and Task Management System

  o Where do you **record** requests/tasks?

  o Where do you **enter** them into your system?

  o Where do you **access** your system?

  o Where do you **track** things in your system?

  o Where do you **complete** things?

- Project Management System

  o Do a Google Search on "Using Outlook Tasks for Project Management"

  o Download Laura Stack's free Outlook Ebooks with info on Outlook Tasks setup:
    http://theproductivitypro.com/Laura/

  o Teamwork Project Management Tool (free trial): https://www.teamwork.com/partner/qa77dj13k4

  o Article: An Assistant's Guide to Project Management https://www.allthingsadmin.com/assistants-guide-project-management/

  o Article: Become a Better Project Manager with Templates and Project Plans
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/project-manager-templates-project-plans/

  o Article: Organize and Manage Projects With Tools You Already Own
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/manage-projects-tools-already-own/

- Review some sample procedures from the All Things Admin blog:

  o EZINE Procedure:
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/things-admin-e-newsletter-assembly-proofing-checklist-procedure-sample/

  o Product Assembly Procedure:
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/things-admin-product-assembly-procedure-sample/
    Online Training Procedure:
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/things-admin-online-training-setup-procedure-sample/

  o Webinar Prep Checklist:
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/things-admin-webinar-prep-checklist-procedure-sample/

  o Sales Report Procedure:
    https://www.allthingsadmin.com/all-things-admin-monthly-sales-report-procedure-sample/

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- Explore OneNote from Microsoft Office at www.OneNote.com

  - OneNote Administrative Procedures Toolkit Video Demo:

    https://www.allthingsadmintraining.com/administrative-procedures-toolkit-onenote-edition/

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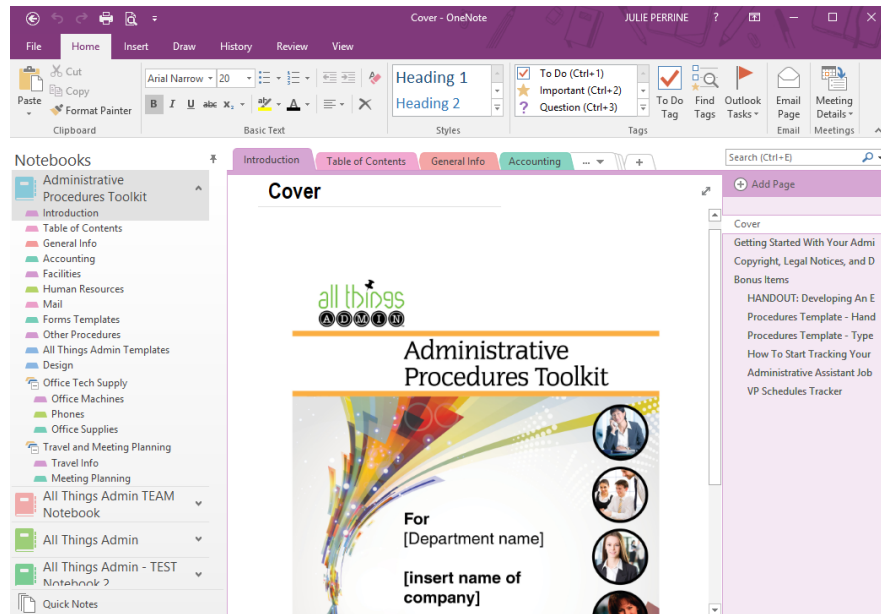
Getting Started With Procedures Development

- o **Not Recommended**

- o **Recommended**

Step 1: Assemble the Right Tools for the Job

- **Sturdy 3-ring "D" binder that is about 1 1/2" to 2" wide.**

  Recommended:
    - Avery Extra Wide EZD 1.5" Binder # 01319
    - Avery Ultralast 1.5" One-Touch Binder #79738

  [Note: Julie Perrine International, LLC has been an Avery compensated affiliate and influencer. We've used and recommended Avery brand products for years, though, and that's why we work directly with them today to create brand awareness for the outstanding product they offer.]

- **Create a fun, yet professional, cover and spine.**
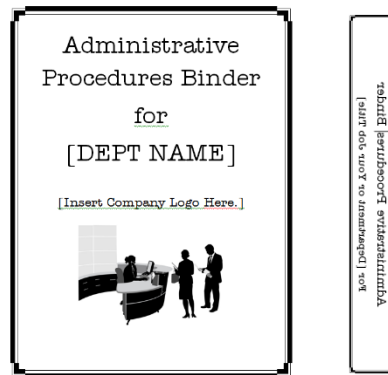
- **Tabbed dividers –** 2 sets of 8-tab dividers.

  Recommended:
    - Avery Protect 'N Tab Tabbed Sheet Protectors – 8 Tab Sets # 74161
    - Avery Clear Label Index Maker Clear Pocket Dividers – 8 Tab Sets #75501

- **Heavy duty sheet protectors.**

  Recommended:
    - Avery Heavy Weight Presentation Sheet Protectors - #74400
    - Avery 3-hole Punched Corner Lock Plastic Sleeves - #72269

- **Create a permanent home for your binder on your desk.**

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Step 2: Start Tracking Your Tasks for a Few Days

TEMPLATE also available at http://www.allthingsadmin.com/free-templates/

Here are a few ideas on where to begin:

   ☐   **Create a list of your specific job responsibilities** and how often you handle them (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually).

   ☐   **Create a list for each manager you specifically support** and identify the types of recurring meetings, events, or items that you handle for them (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually).

Administrative Assistant Job Responsibilities						
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	As Needed
General Administrative						
Meeting / Travel / Event Planning						
Attends meetings (specifically list them out…)						
Participates on committees (specifically list them out…)						
Other Responsibilities						

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Executive (or Project) Name # 1

Meetings / Committees / Commitments

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly
			Board of Directors Meetings	
8:30 AM Team Status Mtg.	**Tuesday** - Weekly Staff Mtg.	**4th Wednesday** - Committee Mtg.		**Summer** - President's Retreat
	Thursday - Weekly Scorecard Review Mtg.	**Board Executive Committee Mtgs.**		**June** - All Employee Picnic
	Wednesday - **Noon:** Rotary Mtg.			

Name:

Meetings / Committees / Commitments

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly

Name:

Meetings / Committees / Commitments

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly

Activity: "First 15 Minutes" of Your Workday

Think about the first 15 minutes of your workday. List all of the things you do once you arrive at the office to get your day started.

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

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Step 3: Pick Your Top Five Procedures and Document Them

How to Document Good Procedures:

- **Use a template for consistency.**

  - ✓ **IMPORTANT: A handwritten procedure is still a documented procedure!**

- **Think COMMANDS, not sentences.**

- Go through each task or process step by step (in detail).

  - ✓ Be specific without being wordy.

- **Number steps** that must be done in a specific order.

- **Use bullets** for non-order specific instructions.

- **Provide screen shots** where helpful.

- Have another person **try them out.**

https://www.allthingsadmin.com/7-tips-for-creating-effective-administrative-procedures/
[INFOGRAPHIC]

**Go through this process for your top five,
then pick another five and keep building from there.**

Where do you start?

☐　5 Most _____ Procedures

☐　5 _____ Procedures

☐　Identify the first FIVE procedures you are going to document next week when you return to the office.

  ❑ _____

  ❑ _____

  ❑ _____

  ❑ _____

  ❑ _____

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Activity: Create Your First Procedure

PROCEDURE NAME:	
CATEGORY:	
DESCRIPTION:	
CREATED BY:	
DATE:	
PROCEDURE DETAILS:	
WEBSITE:	
LOGIN:	
PASSWORD:	

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Julie Perrine, CAP®, OM, MBTI® Certified, Founder and CEO

Step 4: What You Should Include in Your Admin Binder (and what NOT to include)

- **What processes or procedures are documented for your position that you can include?**

  - ☐ Ask Co-workers and Other Admins
  - ☐ Accounting Department
  - ☐ Travel Planning Provider
  - ☐ Mail Room
  - ☐ Marketing Department
  - ☐ I.T. Department
  - ☐ H.R. Department
  - ☐ Facilities
  - ☐ External Vendors/Suppliers
  - ☐ Search Online

- **How to handle basic office operations.**

- **What information/resources do you refer to on a regular basis?**

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- **What events, board meeting dates, or recurring committee meetings did you need to be aware of for planning purposes?**
    - ☐ Who is invited?
    - ☐ What is their contact information?
    - ☐ Who sends the invite? From whose calendar?
    - ☐ Where is the meeting held?
    - ☐ What technology is involved?
    - ☐ Who creates the agenda?
    - ☐ How are materials distributed?
    - ☐ Is food provided? From where?

- **Phone, computer, video conferencing system user guides.**

- **What types of checklists, forms, or templates might be helpful?**

    - ☐ Daily or Weekly Checklists
    - ☐ Daily Start-up or Shut-Down Checklists
    - ☐ Accounting Forms
    - ☐ HR Forms and Checklists for New Hires, Terminations, Employee Setup
    - ☐ Event or Meeting Planning Forms and Checklists
    - ☐ Travel Planning Forms and Checklists

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- **Disaster recovery information. If disaster strikes, will you be ready?**

  ☐ www.ready.gov
  ☐ https://flash.org/readybusiness/
  ☐ www.PrepareMyBusiness.org
  ☐ Pandemic Return-to-Work Plan Resources:
      https://www.allthingsadmin.com/covid-19-return-to-work-plan/

Teaming up with others to create your procedures documentation

- **Ask!**

- **Be willing to collaborate.**

- **Sell the benefits.**

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What NOT to include…and how to handle that vital information:

- **Highly Confidential Information**
  This is all information that most admins have and/or maintain for the executives and teams they support. The key here is NOT to have it openly accessible to anyone walking by your desk who could pick up your administrative procedures binder.

- **Passwords**
  - ✓ Know your corporate policies on sharing this information.

  - ✓ You may need to write some of this down depending on the type of password information you're documenting. Keep it in a separate file in a locked drawer if you must document it.

  - ✓ Consider keeping one password-protected spreadsheet saved on your computer in a shared area where both you and your executive can access the information. Then all you and your executive need to remember is ONE password.

  - ✓ Use a "base password" with a unique ending related to each site or login you use. For additional security, change your "base password" at least once a year.

    For example: Let's say my base password for all of my passwords is "AdminsRock11". For each specific site I use a unique ending related to that site such as the first 4 letters of the website.

    > For Gevalia.com, my password would be: AdminsRock11geva.
    > In your documentation, you could simply put this for the password: basegeva.

  - ✓ Consult with your employer on best practices for your documentation of confidential information.

- **Credit Card Information**

- **Personal I.D. / Government I.D. / Passport Numbers / Driver's License**

- **Dates of Birth**

- **Ideas for maintaining confidential information:**

  - ✓ Keep a brightly colored file folder for each executive or team you support that is labeled – "Admin Info for Executive Name" or "Executive Name – Admin Info".

  - ✓ Place this file at the back of a file drawer that is locked when you're out, your area is unattended or after hours.

  - ✓ Make sure your executive (or the appropriate person) has a key and knows how to access this information if you are out of the office.

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Step 5: Organizing Your Procedures Binder for Ongoing Use and Success

How to Organize Your Administrative Procedures Binder

☐ **Break it into Sections.**

Potential Sections to Include in Your Admin Binder:

☐ General Info
☐ Department Specific Info
☐ Accounting Info
☐ Facilities Info
☐ Human Resources (HR) Info
☐ Mail Info
☐ Meeting / Event Planning Info
☐ Office Supplies Info
☐ Office Machines Info
☐ Phone Info
☐ Projects Info
☐ Travel Info
☐ Forms / Templates Info
☐ Other Procedures Info
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

☐ **Create a Table of Contents and tabbed section dividers.**

TIP: **Use numbered tabs** instead of named tabs. This makes reorganizing your binder much easier down the road.

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☐   **Create a task reminder for updating and revising your procedures.**

  ✓ Write notes in your binder on the pages that need updates as you realize them.

  ✓ If you have time to update it on the spot, do it. If you don't, come back and do it when you see you have several pages with marks or post-its with additional information.

  ✓ Review it on a monthly or quarterly basis depending on how busy your office is and how many changes occur from week to week or month to month.

  ✓ Add a reminder to your Outlook Calendar or Tasks so you don't forget.

  Tips to make updating or revising this binder easier:

  ☐   **Setup a shared OneNote notebook or SharePoint site or a shared internal online folder**.

  ☐   **Create an electronic folder called "Admin Procedures Binder"**. Create a desktop shortcut to this folder for easy access.

  ☐   **Add the document path and file name to the footer** of each document before you print it.

  ☐   **Do not store multiple copies of the same file in multiple online folder locations**.

☐   **Share the materials with those who cover for you.**

☐   **Present the materials to your executive or manager.**

Prepare to Shine as the Procedures Pro®!

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My Procedures Development Plan of Action

Step 1: Assemble the Right Tools for the Job.

☐ **Assemble the tools needed:**
   - ❑ **1 Binder** – Avery, Extra Wide EZD 1.5", White View Binder (AVE01319)
   - ❑ **Tabbed Dividers** (2 sets) – Avery Protect N Tab Tabbed Sheet Protectors, 8 tab set (AVE74161) or Avery Clear Label Index Maker Clear Pocket Dividers – 8 Tab Sets #75501
   - ❑ **Sheet Protectors** (15-20)

☐ **Create a Binder Cover and Spine.**

☐ **Create a general Table of Contents.**

☐ **Create a permanent home** for your Admin Binder on your desk within arm's reach of where you primarily sit/work.

Step 2: Start Tracking Your Tasks for a Few Days.

☐ **Download and/or print the "Administrative Job Duties" tracking form** (or place it electronically on your PC desktop) to begin tracking your daily, weekly, monthly, annual tasks for both yourself and those you support. (Download template at www.AllThingsAdmin.com/free-templates)

☐ **Print 30 double-sided, 3-hole punched, BLANK procedures forms** to start hand-writing your daily procedures on. Place them in a brightly colored file folder which is easily accessible from where you sit at your desk. (Download template at www.AllThingsAdmin.com/free-templates)

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Step 3: Pick Your Top 5 Procedures. Repeat.

📁 Identify the first FIVE procedures you are going to document next week when you return to the office.

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

Procedures Ideas to Get You Started:
❑ Start the Day / End of the Day Checklists
❑ How to Make the Coffee
❑ Executives Regular Recurring Meetings
❑ How to Forward / Un-forward Phones
❑ How to Check Voice Mail

Step 4: Identify What Else to Include.

📁 Check with ALL internal departments to see if they have procedures already documented that you can use:

❑ **Accounting** (expense reports, check requests, etc.)

❑ **Facilities** (how to get new keys, parking permits, maintenance requests, etc.)

❑ **Human Resources** (new hire checklists, termination checklists, employee handbook, etc.)

❑ **I.T.** (user guides for phones, voice mail, video conferencing equipment, conference bridge lines, etc.)

❑ **Mail Room** (internal mail procedures, USPS procedures, FedEx or UPS account and shipping info, etc.)

❑ **Marketing** (corporate logo use guidelines, business card ordering, etc.)

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❑ **Travel** (online booking tool procedures, after hours info, etc.)

❑ _____

❑ _____

Procedures Ideas to Get You Started:

❑ Sorting/distributing the incoming mail and shipping packages – UPS/FedEx /USPS

❑ Office Supply Ordering

❑ New Employee Checklists

❑ Travel Itinerary & Travel Planning Details

❑ Event Planning Checklists

❑ Meeting & Agenda Prep Checklists

Brainstorm about procedures you should create for these general categories:

Basic Office Operations

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

Information You Refer to Regularly

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

Events / Meetings

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

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☐ **Technology You Use**

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

☐ **Department or Manager Specific Details**

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

☐ **Checklists / Forms / Templates**

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

   ○ _____

Step 5: Organize Your Binder for Ongoing Use.

☐ **Finalize the tabbed sections** you need to include in your procedures binder.

☐ **Update your table of contents** to reflect the order of the materials in your procedures binder.

☐ **Add a recurring reminder to your calendar** or tasks to update this binder on at least a quarterly basis.

☐ **Pat yourself on the back for all of the progress you've made on your administrative procedures project! Congratulations!**

☐ **Send Julie Perrine and her team an email sharing your awesome accomplishment!** Email us at AdminSuccess@AllThingsAdmin.com.

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Additional Resources

- **Free Templates**: http://www.allthingsadmin.com/free-templates/

- **Procedures Tools and Training**: https://www.allthingsadmintraining.com/procedures

- **Save $50** on the Administrative Procedures Toolkit OneNote Version with **Coupon Code: ONENOTE50**
  https://www.allthingsadmintraining.com/administrative-procedures-toolkit-onenote-edition/

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Additional Resources

- *The Innovative Admin*

- *The Organized Admin*

- *Become a Procedures Pro*

- *Prove Your Skills! With a Powerful Professional Portfolio* (coming in August 2022)
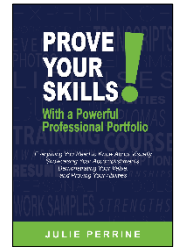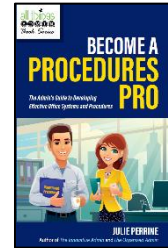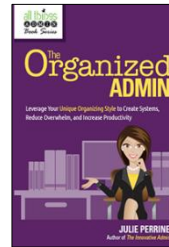
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https://www.facebook.com/groups/allthingsadmininnovationlab

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