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## Admin Careers

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# Find Your Admin Niche

by Margot Carmichael Lester  
Monster Contributing Writer



The average person will spend well over 2,000 hours at work each year. "Ideally they're doing something they really enjoy," says Heather Mayfield, vice president of training and operations for staffing firm [Snelling](#) in Dallas.

What? This doesn't sound like you? You can find an admin job you enjoy by finding your niche -- that one place in the working world where your vocation and avocation meet. The trick is choosing among your many options.

"Once an admin has paid their dues and gained the experience to go along with their skills, they should consider not only what they are doing day to day but where they are doing it," Mayfield says. "To spark your thinking, ask yourself 'What would I do if I knew I couldn't fail?'"

### Look Back to See Forward

"Many people start a process of trial and error around what they would like to do in the future, whereas they could truly use past positive experiences as the guiding force," explains Gaby Corá, author of [Leading Under Pressure](#).

"If I enjoy resolving problems, puzzles and complex mystery stories, and if this makes me feel great, chances are, I will probably enjoy work-related activities that require similar skills," she points out. "If I enjoy reading history and literature, chances are, I will probably enjoy work activities that demand reading plenty of material. On the other end, if I truly enjoy outdoor activities, I will probably not enjoy being behind a desk all day long."

### Follow Your Values

One reason we feel unfulfilled at our admin work is that we're not serving our values and beliefs, notes Hallee Fischer-Wright, coauthor of [Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization](#).

"Your [core values](#) are qualities without which life is not worth living -- things like family, loyalty, truth and learning," she says. "They create the framework for finding your career, working with your peers and guiding your success and satisfaction."

### Check Out Your Potential Coworkers

One often overlooked component related to job satisfaction is the group of employees we spend each day alongside. "Check out who you will be working with as carefully as what you will be doing," counsels Neil Gussman, who found his niche as spokesman for the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia.

"Are your future coworkers bright, happy and highly motivated? If they are not, apply somewhere else," he advises. "In the long run, you will be happier in the company of people who love their work than with coworkers who hate their jobs. I left the highest-paying job in my life a happy man, because I was out of an organization full of finger-pointing and backstabbing."

### Seek Professional Help

If you're interested in trying several options on for size, enlist a staffing agency or headhunter to help you explore more opportunities faster. The average recruiter conducts 15 to 20 interviews per week working with a hundred or more companies over the course of a year, so they know of admin openings that allow you to test drive to find the best fit.

"Working temporary or temp-to-hire allows you an inside look at an industry, company, position or even manager before making a long-term commitment to a career decision," Mayfield says. "A company like Snelling works with the premier employers in a geographic area so you can look behind the doors of various top-rank companies to see which environment suits you the best."

### Give Yourself Permission

"There are times in our lives when we might choose to work for money or for security or benefits," says Betty Shotton, a consultant/coach with the Berkana Consulting Group, a leadership-development firm in Black Mountain, North Carolina. "This is OK as long as you don't make a lifetime out of it."

"We see the ravages of unsatisfying work -- so many people whose spirits are gradually dulled by the trade-offs of money and security as opposed to a life that provides challenge, personal creativity, growth and contribution," Shotton continues. "We can seek meaningful work -- work that fuels our passion and challenges us to wake up looking forward to the day ahead at the office."

And that's entirely doable. Good admins are always in demand, meaning the right job for you is out there.

*For more information and tips to help you advance your administrative career, see all our advice for admin professionals.*

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