

# A Day in the Life of a Law Office Administrator

A gleaming and placid surface.  
That is the tableau that confronts the visitor to a law office.  
All is calm, ordered, sensible.

Even the denizens of the law office view only partially the machinery at work behind the ferns and the marble coasters put out for clients. They may peer beyond the decorative law books, the incomprehensible artwork on loan. But they see through a screen only darkly, their gaze mercifully obstructed.

What are they missing? Whose hand is at work on that machinery?  
Who calms the waves beneath the placid surface?

Meet the law office administrator, on one of her all-too-common days.



## 5:30 a.m.

Cell phone rings. Dig for phone and dump contents of purse on the floor. Retrieve and answer. Office building security service advises that the police are on the scene. (Make my day.) Ice machine pump failed and water flooded lower suite, setting off security alarm. I promise to be there as soon as I can.

Rush to bedroom ... scan closet. Forget what the magazines say. Only men dress for success. Women dress for stress!

## 6:00 a.m.

I take a last glance in the mirror.

*Mental note:* Take dog in to be groomed ASAP.

Grab packages from prior evening's office shopping run—overflowing bags from Home Depot, Target and Toys-R-Us (don't ask). Rush out the door looking like a bag lady who was just crowned Trash Day Queen.

*Mental note:* Do not park car under tree overnight again. Windshield indicates that some low-flying elephants must have invaded the neighborhood during the evening. Is there a bird on the face of the earth THAT BIG?

## 6:25 a.m.

Wheels hit the pavement of the parking lot. Security guard waves me down with damage status: soggy carpet, gloppy ceiling tiles and tidal wave of floating furniture. Enter building and survey damage. Assess the situation ... Yes, I have to agree that *gloppy* is the right word.

## 6:45 a.m.

Head for my office to deposit packages and check messages. 72 e-mails await reply. All are obviously from 72 of my nearest and dearest acquaintances. Scan them in order of importance. The one advising that I can make \$100,000 a year as a Dumpster diver sounds quite enticing today.

## 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Boss arrives on scene. Asks why I have a plunger sitting on my desk (a conversation starter!). Inform him that the toilets are also backed up this morning. Additional plumbing help is on the way.

When I was hired for this job, I don't recall the title of Chief Engineer of the Plunge and Flush Patrol being mentioned, but I guess that falls under "and other duties as assigned."

## 10:00 a.m.

Field phone calls from vendors. Assure staff member that NOTHING would surprise me, but fly one by me anyway. Remind maintenance crew that the lake and geyser in front of the building are not part of our planned landscaping. Yell at the guy backing up the boat that this is private property.

## Noon

Breakfast never happened, and it's already noon. I'm getting lightheaded and giddy with glee from all of the morning's excitement. I head to the employee break room to pilfer the refrigerator for any leftover meeting food.

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I open the refrigerator door and survey the contents. It's obvious that we are either harboring someone's science project or preparing to save the world on National Penicillin Day. I close the refrigerator and head for the snack machine. Ah, today let's go gourmet. Fritos and Twinkies it is.

## 3:00 p.m.

Staff member calls advising of rumor that a tenant on lower floor is raising wild animals. I grab a whip and chair and head downstairs. I cautiously open door and enter suite, expecting a rhino charge or lion attack. Find administrator sitting calmly in her office. Explain the rumor. Administrator leads me to a cardboard box containing a two-week-old motherless kitten. Put down whip and chair and apologetically slither out the door.

## 4:30 p.m.

Appointment pop-up appears on computer screen to remind me that I committed to attend a charity fundraiser this evening. Scan my attire and wonder if they will stop me at the door and make me show identification and an invitation. Grab blazer from back of the door. Rummage through desk drawer to find matching pair of high heels stashed for just such an occasion. Write an IOU to my self-respect and head out into the evening.

## 5:30 p.m.

Wish the security guard a "Good Evening." Hop in my car and hope there's enough fuel to get me to my destination.

*Mental note:* Rebalance portfolio and invest in some gas futures.

On the drive to the reception, my mind wanders as I review my choice of occupation. My college goal was to become an educator. How far have I drifted from my original dream? I always believed that teaching would be rewarding and that molding the minds of young children would be a lofty goal.

Lawyers, on the other hand, are intellectually stimulating and have offered me many challenging opportunities. (They have also been known to run with scissors and quite often don't play well with others.) BUT ... at least they don't barf on my shoes! Of course, there was that one time after the holiday meeting ...

## 6:00 p.m.

Arrive at reception. Enter room of strangers engaging in polite conversation.

Every event is the same. After covering the generic topic of weather, attendees always move on to my most dreaded topic of all time: "AND WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?" I try to ward off a full-blown panic attack and duck away from anyone wishing to engage me in conversation. If I smile and pretend I'm rushing to the restroom, I can dodge all chit-chat and end up at my nirvana: the hors d'oeuvre table!

Deftly maneuvering around the wrapped asparagus (Do people really eat that stuff?), the little green trees and the diced whatchamacallits, I find my savior ... CARROT STICKS! Unable to control my greed, I grab a handful and back away from the table, hovering in the corner and plotting my plan. If anyone, and I mean ANYONE, dares to approach me with that dreaded question, I am prepared. A carrot stick carefully stuck up each of my nostrils will ward off even the bravest of cocktail conversationalists.

*Mental note:* Select slimmer carrot sticks in the future.

Now if I can just load up my plate and stuff my mouth full, I'll be home-free.

## 7:00 p.m.

My one hour of show-up-and-mingle time mercifully comes to an end. I head to my car with the carrot sticks still in place. As I pull out of the parking lot, I look both ways and slowly remove them from my nose. I don't want to be pulled over and have to explain that one to the officer.

## 7:30 p.m.

I arrive home and park under the elephant tree again. I exit the car and set aside all thoughts of my long day. As I head toward the house, I think about that break room refrigerator, whose steam-cleaning clearly has been lodged on my list of chores. Besides that, I can only dream of what tomorrow holds ...

*You yourself may know a law office administrator. Stop by her or his office, have a chat, learn a little about their day. Of course, when you reach out to greet her, be sure she does not hold a plunger in her hand. There are some things with which you do NOT want to become familiar.* 