THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PROACTIVE
As a PA or EA, a lot of your day-to-day work is reactive. You likely spend the majority of your working hours problem solving: be it re-organising diaries, preparing documents for an upcoming meeting or putting together a travel itinerary. However, without the hustle and bustle of the office environment, it’s natural to see your to-do list get a bit shorter. But before you start twiddling your thumbs, it’s so important to see this as an opportunity to make yourself indispensable by being proactive!

Being proactive will not only fill your days with meaningful tasks, but also presents the opportunity to upskill yourself, take on more responsibility and show your team just how capable you are! You are the hidden heroes, after all.

We think that being proactive is one of the most beneficial things you can do at the moment, so we’ve put together a list of a few ways that you can be proactive.

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The people you support can no longer see you at your desk which means that communication is even more important than usual! It’s a good idea to organise a daily video call with your boss to discuss your to-do list and their diaries and ask what you can help with. Make sure to listen carefully to what they say as this is a great opportunity to take responsibility and action things on their behalf. Offering to do something as simple as joining their video conferences that day to take minutes is a brilliant way to help out!

Similarly, check in at the end of the day to update them on what you’ve actioned and what is still outstanding. Working remotely means that no one can overhear you on that phone call or see you sitting in that meeting, and so letting people know what you’ve accomplished, no matter how big or small the task, should be a daily priority. It’s not enough to have an ‘active’ status on Outlook throughout the day- be vocal!
As an assistant you have an insight into how the business works, and so you are ideally placed to suggest time-saving changes to help everyone work more effectively. Is there a procedure that you’ve always thought was clunky? Now is the time to iron it out! Coming up with new ideas and being entrepreneurial is the most valuable thing you can do, so get your thinking hat on!

This might sound daunting, but these don’t have to be large, company-wide changes. Think about some ideas that would really benefit all of the PAs and EAs as a team. Perhaps you want to set up a Slack group to improve communication within your team or enrol all of the assistants onto an online HR course. Similarly, you could do some research on all the different software platforms that you use on a daily basis. Are there more efficient systems out there? Are there any new systems that you would find useful? Now is the time to find out!

These changes can also be long-term projects. Perhaps you want to increase the company’s involvement in charity fundraising, roll out some new wellbeing strategies or improve the way the onboarding process works. Or, if you want to be super on trend, why not think about some ways in which your company could become more sustainable? Use this extra time to do your research and get the ball rolling!

If you do come up with an idea you want to share, make sure to send over a brief proposal to your boss. This provides evidence that you’re taking initiative and proves just how capable you are!
Your skills and knowledge are your most valuable asset! Use this to your advantage and take the opportunity to learn new things.

You might have written on your CV that you are proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel, but why not take a refresher course? We’re sure everyone could benefit by learning a few more Excel tips and tricks!

Also, we’re so fortunate that there is a wealth of online courses out there: be it HR, employment law, business administration, or even learning a new language! Spend some time each day improving your skills, even if it’s just half an hour. This time adds up, and before you know it, you’ll be able to set up even the most complex of spreadsheet formulas!
SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

This is a brilliant opportunity to think about ways in which you can improve training for new EAs and PAs in your company. Consider creating a series of “How-To” guides or record step-by-step videos for new recruits to learn from.