



# EA FACTION<sup>TM</sup>

VOL 4 | E 7



# FEATURED EA 1

## KAYZEEN KARANJAWALA



**What motivated you to pursue a career as an executive assistant?**

I have always aspired to be part of the top management's inner circle. The prospect of partnering with senior leadership is exceptionally exciting to me. This role also offers ample opportunities to collaborate with individuals across various departments and functions, both within the organization and externally, providing excellent networking opportunities.

**How was your first day as Executive Assistant?**

I spent four years working in the visa section of the British Consulate before transitioning to the role of Executive Assistant to the Head of the Department. Since it was within the same organization, I was already quite familiar with my manager. On my first day in this new role, I gained a different perspective on my manager and learned about several aspects I had not been aware of in my previous position.

**How do you prioritize and handle multiple tasks or requests from different executives?**

Upon receiving a task or request, I either address it immediately or schedule it for a specific time on my calendar. When multiple requests arrive simultaneously, I acknowledge each one to inform my manager(s) that it has been noted. I then proceed to complete, schedule, or delegate the tasks as appropriate. Once scheduled, tasks are completed as planned. For delegated tasks, I monitor their progress to ensure timely completion. It is important to get the work done even if it is not done by me, not everything has to be done by me.

**Tell me about a challenging situation you faced while supporting an executive. How did you handle it?**

Initially I found it very challenging to sort and claim travel expenses of my previous manager as he used to pay very randomly- some from an office card, some in cash and some from his personal card. This was more challenging for international and longer travels as many bills were not in place (many times missing) and the time/ date difference on the bills was confusing to me and by the time he returned many things were more confusing.

**My solution:** Every time he travelled for more than 2 days, I create a separate whatsapp group between him and me only and only to put the bills of that travel. I convinced him to put a photo of the bill in the group immediately. I then parallelly enter into my excel sheet and before he is back my sheet was ready! I just attach the bills he gives. If any missing / lost I print the photo from the whatsapp group. The group can be easily deleted post the expense filling.

**What steps do you take to stay organized and ensure you meet deadlines consistently??**

I maintain my own calendar apart from my Managers' calendar.

I follow a MAP for being organised.

- **Manage** : Organize all tasks and deadlines on my calendar
- **Adapt** : Be flexible and ready to adjust plans as needed.
- **Perform** : I Execute tasks efficiently and Review and reflect on performance to identify areas for improvement.



**What are your strategies for staying updated on industry trends and best practices in executive support?**

- ✓ I regularly read executive support magazine and office dynamics. They are amazing articles which keep me updated and motivated.
- ✓ I watch at least 1 webinar a month.
- ✓ Being a part of The EA Faction network also has helped tremendously to know of the trends and updates.

**What do you believe are the most important qualities or skills for an executive assistant to possess?**

According to me it is very crucial for an executive assistant to be a continuous learner and have a growth mindset. Skills I believe help in this role are

- ✦ People management
- ✦ Leadership skills
- ✦ Communication
- ✦ Setting healthy boundaries

**What do you enjoy most about being an executive assistant, and how do you handle the challenges that come with the role?**

According to me the EA role is the most versatile and dynamic role. It has endless opportunities for growth and development. I really enjoy working with my manager rather than working for him. I really like being a part of management meetings and discussions. What I also really like about the role is the variety of things I get to do. The role of an EA has also been very crucial for my overall development because I continuously and closely observe how the Top management functions. For the challenges faced in this role what has helped me is

- ✦ Being proactive
- ✦ Thinking ahead
- ✦ Taking initiatives
- ✦ Diplomatically problem solving.
- ✦ Reading between the lines



# Master Public Speaking

Will McTighe ©

## Framework For Public Speaking:



# S

### Structure

- **Start Strong:** Grab attention with a quote, question, or fun fact.
- **Organize:** Lay out points logically.
- **Finish Big:** End memorably.



# P

### Preparation

- **Know Your Stuff:** Research thoroughly.
- **Practice:** Rehearse until comfortable. Get feedback.
- **Visuals:** Use impactful visuals.



# E

### Engagement

- **Connect:** Use stories and humor.
- **Body Language:** Use gestures, eye contact, and move around.
- **Voice:** Vary your tone and pace.



# A

### Authenticity

- **Be Real:** Authenticity wins trust.
- **Share:** Personal stories to make your points.
- **Confidence:** Believe in your message.



# K

### Knowledge

- **Master It:** Know your topic inside out.
- **Prep for Q&A:** Have answers ready.
- **Keep Learning:** Stay updated.

## 8 Ways to Improve Your Public Speaking:



1

### Strategic Storytelling

Use storytelling techniques - PETAL, Conflict, Nested Loops, False Starts, etc.



2

### Practice Regularly, Edit Ruthlessly

Join clubs like Toastmasters. Trim unnecessary content.



3

### Video Yourself

Find a space with good lighting. Buy a good mic and use your phone on a tripod



4

### Use Powerful Pauses

Consciously insert pauses where you naturally take breathes.



5

### Do Voice Exercises

Practice vocal exercises like tongue trills, and diaphragmatic laughter before your speech.



6

### Master Body Language

Stand tall, make eye contact, use open gestures and STOP fidgeting.



7

### Know Your Audience

Learn to tailor your speech delivery and content to the audience (e.g. intent, profession, age, gender).



8

### Learn From Great Speakers

Watch TED Talks and notable speeches. Experiment with elements of their styles.



#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# EVERYTHING IS FIGURE OUTABLE



Marie Forleo

"This book will change lives!" —ELIZABETH GILBERT, *Author of Big Magic*

## MINDMAP

Everything is Figureoutable  
Marie Forleo

### Introduction

Marie Forleo  
Everything is Figureoutable

### Figureoutable Origin

"I stood there for a second, watching her work her magic. Finally, I asked, 'Hey, Mom, how do you know how to do so many different things that you've never done before, without anyone showing you how to do it?'"

Macgyver Mom

### Dear Belief

"When you change a belief, you change everything."  
The Magic of Belief

### Can't/Won't

"Let's start by looking at your language and two common words that blur your ability to be honest with yourself. Those two four-letter words are 'can't' and 'won't.' Think about how often people say some version of the following:"  
Turning your 'can't' into 'won't' is the power of language

42%

"An oft-cited study done by Dr. Gal Matthews, a psychology professor at Dominican University of California, shows that you're 42 percent more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down."  
Do you really want to achieve your goals?

"In the comfort zone, which is where most of us spend way too much time, life feels safe. Even if things are stressful, at least you feel secure. Even if things are



JUNE 2030

"Everything is Figureoutable" by Marie Forleo emphasizes the power of belief, resilience, and proactive problem-solving. The book encourages adopting a mindset that any challenge can be overcome with determination, creativity, and consistent action. Forleo highlights the importance of breaking down goals, overcoming limiting beliefs, and viewing failures as learning opportunities. She stresses the significance of writing down goals and asking for help when needed.



**BOOK REVIEW**  
by Diana Cuntinho

This book will serve as a guide to help readers cultivate a proactive, resilient mindset and take actionable steps toward their goals. Build a supportive network within your organization to rely on for advice and assistance when needed. If you are preparing for a high-stakes board meeting and are unsure about the technical details of a report, seek help from a colleague who has expertise in that area. This ensures the information presented is accurate and reliable. Identify key areas where you lack expertise and proactively reach out to knowledgeable colleagues or mentors for guidance.

Suppose you set a goal to reduce the time taken to organize meetings by 20%. Track your current time, identify areas for improvement, implement changes, and measure the impact over time. Regularly reviewing these metrics can keep you motivated and on track.

If you aim to become proficient in new scheduling software, break down this goal into smaller tasks, such as completing an online course, practicing daily, and implementing the tool in your daily tasks. This structured approach helps you stay focused and make steady progress.

Improve presentation skills.

Action Plan: Enroll in a public speaking course, practice regularly by presenting during team meetings, and seek feedback from colleagues.

Enhance email management to save 30 minutes daily.

Action Plan: Implement an email sorting system, use filters and labels, and set specific times for checking emails.

Build stronger relationships with key stakeholders.

Action Plan: Schedule regular check-ins, personalize communications, and actively participate in relevant meetings and events.

Tracking: Keep a log of interactions and note any changes in the quality of relationships and collaboration.

Instead of saying "improve office organization," specify "reduce office supply costs by 15% within six months by auditing current usage and finding more cost-effective suppliers."

If your executive is focusing on a major project, set a goal to streamline project communication and coordination to support this initiative. Focus on the most impactful goals that align with both your career aspirations and the needs of your executive. If a new, high-priority task arises, reassess your current goals and adjust deadlines or strategies to accommodate this new responsibility.

By adopting these strategies, executive assistants can enhance their productivity, manage their workload more effectively, and support their executives more efficiently. This proactive and resilient approach will not only improve your performance but also contribute significantly to your career advancement.



# FEATURED EA - 2

## Suhasini Subramanian Iyer



### What motivated you to pursue a career as an executive assistant?

I am passionate about making a positive impact on those around me and challenging the status quo to achieve it. I believe that a role as an Executive Assistant aligns perfectly with my abilities and skills. Assisting senior management provides unique exposure to the core operations and foundation of the business, offering a broad scope for learning. It reveals how leaders advance their careers, the distinctive actions they take, and the pathways they pursue to achieve their dreams and success. This learning and exposure to knowledge are what motivated me to pursue a career as an Executive Assistant.

### How was your first day as Executive Assistant?

My first day at work was amazing, warm, and welcoming. I was assigned to assist two executives: the Chairman and the Managing Director. I received a welcome kit with some thoughtful goodies and had the opportunity to meet all my colleagues, who I would be working with on my journey. I discussed my Key Result Areas (KRAs) with both of my bosses and talked about the work patterns and their expectations from me as an Executive Assistant. I also set my own expectations on day one, which helped me achieve a smooth and balanced work life.

### How do you prioritize and handle multiple tasks or requests from different executives?

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to assist multiple executives, which has helped me grow as a multitasker. I always maintain an Excel sheet for my action plans, using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) analysis to prioritize tasks. In this system, Red indicates maximum priority, Amber represents medium priority, and Green allows some additional time to complete the task.

This approach ensures that I complete all tasks within their given deadlines according to their priority levels. It has been invaluable in managing and completing numerous tasks assigned by different executives simultaneously. This method has not only supported me in handling diverse responsibilities but also distinguished me during interviews with various organizations, setting me apart from other applicants.



**Tell me about a challenging situation you faced while supporting an executive. How did you handle it?**

One of the biggest challenges I faced was when both of my bosses, who worked in interconnected departments, had high-priority tasks and were attending the same meeting. Each had their own set of meeting agendas to present and PowerPoint presentations to share. In this situation, I took a step back, stayed calm, analyzed the situation, identified the issues, and resolved them by prioritizing based on their order of presentation. I communicated with both bosses to assure them that their presentations would be on their laptops 15 minutes before they were due to present, and I made sure to fulfill this commitment.

It was a significant day for me, filled with anxiety, pressure, and restlessness. Despite these challenges, I learned how to overcome negative emotions through self-trust and confidence in my abilities. This experience taught me how to manage stress and set a new personal benchmark for future performance, motivating me to strive for excellence.

**What steps do you take to stay organized and ensure you meet deadlines consistently?**

I always prefer to complete my task list before ending my day. However, as I mentioned earlier, I maintain an action plan or task list in Excel with priority stages. I understand that not all tasks can be completed on the same day; some require follow-ups, and others need more time. To manage this effectively, I maintain a digital diary or task list, use Google Calendar, prioritize, and time my tasks. Reviewing the task list at the beginning and end of each day ensures that no tasks are missed.

**What are your strategies for staying updated on industry trends and best practices in executive support?**

I recommend following your industry on platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Stay informed about competitors and, most importantly, engage with your team members to learn concepts you might not know. Discuss industry or organizational topics to gain valuable knowledge.

**What do you believe are the most important qualities or skills for an executive assistant to possess?**

Possibility thinking attitude, positivity, perseverance, interactivity, proactivity, organization, quickness, resilience, calmness, composure, confidence, and teamwork.

**What do you enjoy most about being an executive assistant, and how do you handle the challenges that come with the role?**

The best part of being an EA is the opportunity to connect with diverse people, which continually enhances my management skills. When facing challenges in my role, I pause, analyze, identify the bottleneck, and work towards resolving it.





# CHENNAI EA FACTION CATCHUP







DO EXECUTIVES

# INVOLVE

EAs in Key Business activities?

Avoidant  
10%

Engaged  
11%

Passive  
43.6%

Informed  
21.8%

Involved  
13.6%

 POLL



I chose the phrase “passively involved in key decisions” because, as an Executive Assistant, I support senior-level executives by gathering information, arranging meetings, and facilitating communication between stakeholders. This passive involvement allows me to understand the overall organizational strategy and priorities, making it easier for me to align my work with them. Additionally, my experience across various firm sizes and sectors has provided insights trusted by my superiors, enabling me to offer relevant contributions in key decision-making forums, even though I am not a primary decision-maker.

**Dhiren Jain**

Typically, business decisions are made by subject matter experts. If relevant, my opinion is also taken into account.

**Honey Roy**

In my organization, I am sometimes involved in basic or trivial business decisions. It’s common for individuals in organizations to be engaged in both minor and significant matters as part of the decision-making process. While these tasks may seem minor, they can still contribute to the overall success of the business. It’s important to approach each task with diligence and professionalism, as even small decisions can impact the organization as a whole. Additionally, being involved in various aspects of the business provides valuable insights and helps in understanding the bigger picture.

**Puja Singh**

I opted for option 1 because I work in an aerospace and defense manufacturing company where all business decisions are made solely by our CMD. Our department focuses on identifying market opportunities and referring them to the corporate office, which makes the final decisions.

**Koyyana Bhavani**

Typically, CXOs consider an EA’s inputs for administrative tasks and client coordination, but not for financial decision-making. In smaller organizations like mine, I am involved in most decision-making processes except for financial matters.

**Mahavir Kothari**

I chose option 5 for several reasons. I have worked as an EA for the past four years and have always been passionate and ambitious about my role. However, recently things have become quite challenging. Despite my hard work and continuous efforts, my executive does not seem to appreciate my contributions, or perhaps something is preventing me from doing my best and making my work visible.

**Nidhi Nagpal**

I have recently joined a new organization, where I report to the MD-CEO but also support the entire leadership team. This organization, which has traditionally operated with a very old-fashioned culture, is now striving to modernize its culture and technology to align with current trends. Due to my experience working with corporate environments, I am involved in several areas where my input is valued, such as setting up meeting invitations, managing the expense portal, and providing suggestions for hiring travel vendors. I am pleased with this involvement, as it offers me the opportunity to understand my superiors better and fosters improved collaboration with them.

**Heena Malekar**

I opted for the option “I am actively involved in key business decisions.” Although I joined my current organization, Covalent Engineering & Projects Pvt. Ltd., as an EA to the CMD recently, I have never felt like I am working at a new company. I have felt at home from day one, and everyone, including my boss, has been very welcoming.

My boss is supportive, has a calm and poised personality, and is very approachable. I never have to think twice before talking to him. He is like a mentor—a friendly person with whom I can discuss both professional and personal topics.

### **Sandhya Iyer**

Since I have supported the Site Leader for a long time, I know that many key decisions have been made by my leader. Therefore, we have the authority to make decisions on behalf of our leaders in a few key aspects of the business.

We mirror our business leaders, thus we do take key decisions, especially if my leader is unavailable due to workshops, business travel, offsite meetings, personal leave, etc. However, these decisions should strictly pertain to our business unit.

### **Sarika Kalia**

In my current organization, I am involved in key business decisions, such as:

- Calling clients for business meetings.
- Sharing business presentations.
- Finalizing orders under the supervision of MD.
- Finalizing payment terms and issuing agreements.

### **Kanakath Radhika**

In my organization, I chose to be "Involved passively in key decisions" instead of actively participating.

In my 20 years of diverse work experience, Executive Assistants (EAs) are typically seen as gatekeepers proficient in calendar management, filing, reservations, meeting minutes, note-taking, and follow-ups. While they may be present in business discussions, their opinions are often disregarded. Some leaders dismiss their input, stating EAs' opinions are insignificant, or simply ignore them.

However, in my recent startup role, I am given equal opportunity to actively participate in critical meetings, share my insights, and manage tasks according to my judgment. My CEO explicitly encouraged me to maintain my work style and assured support whenever needed.

### **Rohini Dilip Negi**





Involvement in basic decisions helps us understand the finer aspects of the process. While these decisions may seem small, they lay the foundation for larger strategic decisions within the company.

### Vishnu Nair

An Executive Assistant's role often centers around fundamental tasks, seen as administrative and facilitative rather than critical. This perception diminishes the respect accorded to the role, despite its crucial role in operational efficiency.

Despite handling sensitive information and contributing insights, our involvement in business matters, like meeting minutes and reports, is often overlooked. This limits our potential contributions and impacts morale negatively.

It's vital to reassess the role's significance and integrate it more strategically into the organization's initiatives. Addressing these issues can foster a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment.

Executive Assistants play a pivotal role in the company's success, yet their contributions frequently go unnoticed. They deserve recognition and respect for their essential work.

### Diana Coutinho

I chose option no. 1 because I am not involved in many decisions made by management. My role primarily focuses on secretarial tasks such as booking tickets and coordinating seminars. Occasionally, I am also involved in making decisions or selecting vendors for administrative tasks.

### Kirandeep Kaur



# EAs empower Businesses



**COME AND GROW WITH US AT** <sup>TM</sup>



# **EA FACTION**

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