

Article One

Chief of Staff – Not a Hidden Asset

A Chief of Staff is often described as an unsung hero or a leader's secret weapon. While those phrases sound flattering, they actually undersell the role. A Chief of Staff is not a hidden asset operating quietly in the background; they are a strategic force multiplier, shaping how a leader thinks, decides, and executes, both organisationally and personally.

At a strategic level, a Chief of Staff brings coherence to complexity. Leaders sit at the intersection of competing priorities, incomplete information, and constant pressure. A strong Chief of Staff helps translate vision into action by structuring decision-making, aligning stakeholders, and ensuring that strategy does not dissolve in the noise of day-to-day execution. They surface trade-offs early, pressure-test assumptions, and create the operating rhythm that keeps the organization moving forward with clarity rather than chaos.

But the role goes far beyond systems and strategy. A Chief of Staff also contributes on an individual level by deeply understanding the leader themselves. How does this leader process information? Where do they tend to over-emphasise or hesitate? What drains their energy, and what sharpens it? The best Chiefs of Staff adapt their approach to the leader's strengths and blind spots, acting at times as a sounding board, at times as a challenger, and at times as a stabilizing presence when the pace or stakes are high.

This is why the role is never one-size-fits-all. A Chief of Staff for a visionary founder looks different from one supporting a scaling CEO, an aspiring CFO or a public-sector leader. Some leaders need a thought partner who sharpens strategy; others need an integrator who ensures follow-through across teams; many need both, flexed at different moments. The value of a Chief of Staff lies in their ability to tailor their impact, to the leader, the organisation, and the moment.

Ultimately, a Chief of Staff is not powerful because they operate in the shadows. They are powerful because they operate with trust, proximity, and judgement. They help leaders become more effective versions of themselves while making the organisation more focused, resilient, and aligned. That is not the work of a secret weapon, it is the work of a true strategic partner.

A Chief of Staff matters because the role multiplies a leader's impact, keeps the whole team aligned, and turns strategy into consistent execution. For a leader, especially a CEO or founder, a strong Chief of Staff is often the difference between being busy and being truly effective.