

KAREN K. BANNISTER

Chief of Staff | Executive Operations Partner

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic operations leader and trusted right hand to founders and C-suite executives, with 20+ years turning complex, fast-moving organizations into well-run operations. Serve as advisor, sounding board, and executive proxy, owning cross-functional initiatives, shaping high-stakes decisions, and building the systems and operating cadence that free leaders to focus on what only they can do. Experience spans P&L and portfolio ownership, team leadership, board and investor-facing work, and process transformation across medtech, consulting, luxury automotive, real estate, and construction. Known for exceptional discretion, sound judgment, and the executive maturity to represent leadership with clients, boards, and vendors.

CORE COMPETENCIES & TECHNOLOGY

Core Competencies: Strategic Planning & Initiative Execution • Cross-Functional Project Leadership • Executive Decision Support & Advisory • Operating Cadence & Meeting Governance • KPI Tracking & Performance Reporting • Board & Investor Relations • Stakeholder & Vendor Management • P&L & Budget Oversight • Process Design & Workflow Optimization • Confidential Executive Support • Executive Communications & Presence • AI-Enhanced Operations

AI & Productivity Tools: ChatGPT • Claude • Gemini • Microsoft Copilot • Notion AI • Otter.ai • Wispr Flow • Gamma • Granola

Technology Platforms: Microsoft 365 (Advanced) • Google Workspace • Salesforce • HubSpot • ClickUp • Asana • Trello • Notion • Slack • Zoom • Concur

EXPERIENCE

Executive Assistant to the Founding Partner/VP of Recruiting & the President of Training Nashville, TN | 2021 - Present

Southwestern Consulting | A global sales performance and leadership coaching firm operating across the US, Europe, and South America, generating \$24M in annual revenue, and part of the Southwestern Family of Companies, one of America's oldest and most diversified private enterprises with \$106M+ in combined revenue.

- Serve as strategic right hand and executive proxy to two senior leaders, the Founding Partner/VP of Recruiting and the President of Training, across a high-growth, globally operating coaching and consulting organization.
- Built AI-driven Executive Briefs for client discovery meetings, a resource that did not previously exist, raising the average close rate from 30% to 50% and directly strengthening revenue.
- Act as trusted advisor and sounding board on high-stakes decisions, challenging assumptions and surfacing viewpoints leadership would otherwise miss; shaped client-handling strategy and informed staff retention and release decisions.
- Make client-program and customer-service decisions on the executives' behalf and resolve client escalations directly, protecting leadership focus and client relationships.
- Own the executives' \$5.5M real estate portfolio as operational lead, directing revenue optimization, vendor contracts, booking strategy, and P&L reporting across short-term rental properties and a commercial event venue.
- Reclaimed 10+ hours per week for each executive and cut operational and personal expenditures 20% by redesigning administrative and reporting processes and removing low-value work that slowed the team.
- Hold full purchasing authority across business and household operations; established travel-request parameters that reduced cost and eliminated last-minute spend.
- Ghost-write and edit the executives' published thought leadership and represent them at industry events to build networks and source qualified prospects for programs.
- Manage complex, multi-time-zone scheduling and travel across Europe and South America, and oversee highly confidential business, operational, and personal matters requiring exceptional discretion.

Founder & Principal | Independent Executive Operations & Communications Practice

CA & TN | 2019 - 2021

Independent advisory practice serving founders, executives, and leadership teams between in-house executive roles.

- Built and ran an independent advisory practice serving founders and leadership teams across real estate, medtech, financial services, and professional services.
- Advised clients on operations, workflow, and communication systems, redesigning processes to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Served as strategic communications partner, ghost-writing thought leadership, correspondence, and business communications for executives.
- Instructed clients on personal branding, executive presence, and leadership visibility to strengthen stakeholder engagement and influence; directed social media strategy and content for executive and business clients, supporting brand positioning and audience growth.

Executive Assistant

Irvine, CA | 2017 - 2019

Masimo | Publicly traded global medical technology leader in noninvasive patient monitoring, approximately \$2B in annual revenue with operations across 50+ countries.

- Supported the Chief Medical Officer, President of Worldwide Sales, and VP of Business Development on M&A due diligence, strategic planning, and executive-office coordination.
- Prepared board and investor-facing presentations, briefing materials, talking points, and executive messaging for strategic leadership meetings.
- Partnered cross-functionally with HR, operations, and executive leadership on succession-planning and leadership-continuity initiatives.
- Led the \$2M Customer Experience Center and a cross-departmental team of 10, delivering high-touch product demonstrations and VIP experiences for global delegations and strategic partners.

Manager, Administrative Support

Yorba Linda, CA | 2008 - 2017

CareFusion / BD | CareFusion (acquired by BD in 2015) was a publicly traded global medical technology company with \$3.8B+ in annual revenue; following the acquisition, BD operated as a \$12B+ Fortune 500 medical technology leader.

- Senior administrative leader for a 140,000 sq ft corporate facility supporting up to 450 staff across three divisions, accountable for operational infrastructure, vendor relationships, and administrative functions.
- Provided senior executive support to the Division President, SVP of Sales, and VP of Marketing across three distinct business units.
- Led and developed a nine-member team of administrative professionals and facilities staff, setting performance standards, workflow systems, and operating consistency across a large, multi-division environment.
- Managed budgets up to \$10M and vendor contracts spanning IT services, copiers, shipping, cleaning, certifications, safety compliance, records retention, and the building lease.
- Called and led facilities, safety, and administrative training meetings, and built administrative training programs where I identified gaps and delivered needed training.
- Regularly brought into engineering design reviews to challenge plans and represent client needs; earned executive trust to the point that the Division President deferred building and facilities decisions until they carried my approval.
- Led a full office redesign accommodating 50 additional staff, coordinating construction, logistics, and continuity, delivered within a 90-day requirement with zero operational disruption.
- Served as certified Safety Manager with full OSHA compliance, implementing training tracking and certification renewals that pre-empted lapses.
- Maintained executive-office, facilities, and administrative-team stability through CareFusion's \$12.2B acquisition by BD in 2015.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- **BS, Business Administration**, Southern New Hampshire University (Summa Cum Laude), 2019
- **AI Proficiency Certification**, Superhuman AI Academy, 2026
- **Continuing Professional Development, 2020 - Present**: active in seminars and training through ASAP, IAAP, AICI, AMA, PSRA, and executive-operations and AI-productivity platforms.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- **Author**, Close the Gap: 7 Transformational Steps to Move You from Today to Tomorrow, a leadership and professional-development guide.
- Association of Image Consultants International, Former Global VP of Business Development.
- International Association of Administrative Professionals, Former Branch Director.
- Junior League of Nashville, Former VP of Publications.
- Member: American Society for Administrative Professionals, American Marketing Association, NSLS, and Phi Theta Kappa.