



Operating Principles of AutoPilot Assistant

1. Company decisions must conform to the Strategic Objective, Thirty Principles, and Working Procedures documents.
2. We are the highest-quality back-office outsourcing firm in the United States. We do whatever it takes to ensure the quality of service to our clients is unmatched anywhere.
3. We draw solid lines, thus providing an exact status of where things stand. Documented procedures are the main defense against gray-area problems.
4. “Get the job done.” Can the employee *do* his or her job, or is there always a complication of one kind or another? This ability to “get the job done quickly and accurately without excuses or complications” is the most valuable trait an employee can possess.
5. Employees come first. We employ people who have an innate desire to perform at 100 percent. We reward them accordingly. The natural outcome is we serve our clients well.
6. We are not fire killers. We are fire prevention specialists. We don’t manage problems; we work on system enhancement and system maintenance in order to prevent problems from happening in the first place.
7. Problems are gifts that inspire us to action. A problem prompts the act of creating or improving a system or procedure. We don’t want setbacks, but when one occurs, we think, “thank you for this wake-up call,” and take system-improvement action to prevent the setback from happening again.
8. We focus on just a few manageable services. Although we watch for new opportunities, in the end we provide “just a few services implemented in superb fashion,” rather than a complex array of average-quality offerings.



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9. We find the simplest solution. Ockham's Law, also called the Law of Economy, states, "Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity . . . the simplest solution is invariably the correct solution."

10. The money we save or waste is not Monopoly money! We are careful not to devalue the worth of a dollar just because it has to do with the business.

11. We operate the company via documented procedures and systems. "Any recurring problem can be solved with a system." We take the necessary time to create and implement systems and procedures, and in the end, it is well worth it. If there is a recurring problem, a written procedure is created in order to prevent the problem from happening again. On the other hand, we don't bog down the organization with processes and procedures that target once-in-a-while situations. Sometimes we elect to *not* create a procedure.

12. "Just *don't* do it." Eliminate the unnecessary. Many times, elimination of a system, protocol, or potential project is a very good thing. Think simplicity. Automate. Refine to the smallest amount of steps or discard altogether. Would a simple "no" save time, energy, and/or money?

13. Our documented systems, procedures, and functions are "off-the-street." This means anyone with normal intelligence can perform procedures unassisted. The real-world evidence of this is we can hire an individual "off-the-street" who has good typing skills and have him or her processing calls within three days. For this result, protocols have to be efficient, simple, and thoroughly documented.

14. Do it NOW. All actions build on "point-of-sale" theory. We don't delay an action if it can be done immediately. Just like any major retail outlet, we "update inventories and databases at the exact time the transaction takes place." There is no paperwork floating around the office after a physical transaction. We ask, "How can we perform the task NOW without creating lingering details that we must clean up later?"

15. We glean the AutoPilot Mindset from Stephen Covey's books, including *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, *First Things First*, and *The 8th Habit*. As well, we consider *Good to Great* by Jim Collins; *The E-Myth Revisited* by Michael Gerber; and *Awaken the Giant Within* by Anthony Robbins.



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16. We pattern individual organization upon Franklin-Covey theory. We use organizing mechanisms that are always at hand. We prioritize, schedule, and document. The system is always up-to-date and we use it all the time.
17. Sequence and priority are critical. We work on the most important tasks first. We spend maximum time on “non-urgent/important” tasks via Stephen Covey’s time-matrix philosophy.
18. We double-check everything before release. If a penchant for double-checking is not an innate personal habit, then it must be cultivated. Double-checking is a conscious step in every task, performed either by the individual managing the task, or someone else.
19. Our environment is spotless: clean and ordered, simple, efficient, and functional. No “rat’s nests,” literally or figuratively.
20. Employee training is structured, scheduled, and thorough. Assertive client contact is also structured, scheduled, and thorough.
21. We are deadline-obsessed. If someone in the organization says he/she will be finished with a task or project by a certain date and time, then he or she commits to finishing by that deadline (or, if legitimate delays intrude, he or she advises coworkers well in advance the deadline is impossible).
22. We maintain equipment and keep it 100 percent functional at all times. If something is not working as it should, fix it now—fix it now even if it’s not necessary to fix it now. It’s a matter of good housekeeping and of maintaining good habits. This is just the way we do things.
23. Mastery of the English language is critical. We are aware of how we sound and what we write. We do whatever we can to improve. We are patient as a coworker corrects us.
24. We study to increase our skills. A steady diet of reading and contemplation is vital to personal development. It is a matter of self-discipline.



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25. As opposed to “doing the work,” the department manager’s job is to create, monitor, and document systems (which consist of people, equipment, procedures, and maintenance schedules).

26. The CEO/GM oversees department heads and overall systems. It is the CEO/GM’s job to direct, coordinate, and monitor managers.

27. We avoid multitasking activities. When communicating with someone else, we are 100 percent present. We give full attention to the person in front of us (or to the task at hand). We focus on listening and understanding. Read the classic *Treating Type A Behavior and Your Heart* by Meyer Friedman. “Mindfulness” is paying complete attention to one thing at a time: read *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

28. When in the office, we work hard on AutoPilot business. We keep our heads down; we focus, and in turn the company pays very well. That’s “the deal.” The workweek rarely exceeds forty hours.

29. Complete means “complete.” Almost or tomorrow is not “complete.”

30. We strive for a social climate that is serious and quiet yet pleasant, serene, light, and friendly. AutoPilot is a nice place to work.