How Chiefs of Staff get hired in 2027

For the people already doing the job, with or without the title.

INSIDE

PART 1 What the market looks like right now

PART 2 The four ways people actually land the job

PART 3 The five things founders are really hiring for

PART 4 How to build your proof before you apply

PART 5 Your next 30 days, week by week

Five parts, each with a step you can take this week.

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shaleaofficial.com

START HERE

You're already doing the job.

You run the meetings, chase the follow-ups and fix what breaks. Then a posting asks for Chief of Staff experience you were never given the title for, and a recruiter skims right past you.

The usual hiring process wasn't built for this job. Roles get written a dozen different ways, plenty never get posted, and founders fill the seat with people they already trust.

So the people who get hired don't wait on job boards alone. They lead with proof, get introduced and pitch the founder before the role exists. This guide shows you how to do all three.

How to use this guide

- Read one part a day. Each one takes about ten minutes.
- Do the step at the end of each part before you move on.
- Keep one doc open as you go. By Part 5 it holds everything you need to apply.

WHAT'S INSIDE

PART 1	What the market looks like right now	03
PART 2	The four ways people actually land the job	05
PART 3	The five things founders are really hiring for	07
PART 4	How to build your proof before you apply	08
PART 5	Your next 30 days, week by week	10
LAST	One more thing	11

PART 1 FROM MY JOB BOARD, NOVEMBER 2026

What the market looks like right now

Every week I pick Chief of Staff roles for my job board. These are the 13 I picked between November 3 and 13, 2026, and what they had in common.

13
ROLES PICKED

10 of 13
REMOTE

7 of 13
TITLED CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE CEO

7 of 13
POSTED PAY

$65K to $266K
POSTED PAY, JUNIOR TO SENIOR

4 of 13
AT HEALTH COMPANIES

Beyond my board

$160K
Median base pay for a Chief of Staff, from the Chief of Staff Network's 2025 survey of 450+ Chiefs of Staff, most of them in the US.

Nearly 2 in 3
Chiefs of Staff appointed from inside their own company, from McKinsey's study of about 250 Chiefs of Staff.

More than 3 in 4
Outside hires in that same study who came from a different industry.

2.3 years
Median time in the seat in that study. Seats open up often.

What it means for you

Remote widened the field. Ten of the 13 were remote, so you're up against people in every time zone. A résumé that reads like everyone else's gets lost. Proof stands out.

Pay is all over the map. Posted pay ran from $65K for a junior seat to $265,650 at the top, and only 7 of the 13 posted it at all. Ask for the range in the first conversation, and ask who the role reports to.

Most seats sit right next to the CEO. Seven of the 13 were titled Chief of Staff to the CEO. When the job is that close to the founder, trust comes first and the résumé comes second.

Healthcare is hiring. Four of the 13 were health companies. If you've worked in or around healthcare, lead with it.

Put it together and the message is clear. Most seats get filled from the inside, and when founders look outside, they look past industry. Where you've been matters less than what you can show.

YOUR STEP THIS WEEK

Pick three roles from the job board and read them side by side. Highlight the words that repeat. That's what this market is buying, and it's what your proof needs to say.

See this week's jobs at shaleaofficial.com/jobs

PART 2

The four ways people actually land the job

There's no single door into this job. There are four, and most people only knock on one of them. Here's how each one works and who it fits.

WAY 1

Grow into it where you are.

This is the most common way in. Nearly two in three Chiefs of Staff are appointed from inside their own company. If you're the ops lead, executive assistant or HR lead who already runs the meetings, chases the follow-ups and fixes what breaks, the job already exists. The title doesn't yet.

How to make the move. For two weeks, write down every decision, fire and follow-up you handle for the founder. Then ask for 30 minutes. Show the list, name what you'd own and how you'd measure it, and ask to make it official.

Fits you if you already work closely with a founder or CEO.

The Pitch Kit has the scripts for that conversation at shaleaofficial.com/pitch-kit

WAY 2

Apply with proof, not a résumé.

Posted roles get flooded. The applications that get a call lead with outcomes, not duties. Three results with numbers and a short plan for the first 90 days will do more than a polished list of everything you've ever touched.

How to make the move. Apply to fewer roles with more care. For each one, send your proof from Part 4 and a one-page plan written for that company.

Fits you if you're changing companies, or even industries. More than three in four outside hires in McKinsey's study came from a different industry.

WAY 3 Get introduced.

Founders hire people they trust, and they trust people they've heard about. Investors, operators, former bosses and other founders make the introductions that matter.

How to make the move. List 20 people who know founders. Send each one a short note and make it easy to forward.

A NOTE YOU CAN SEND TODAY

Hi [name], I'm looking for a Chief of Staff seat with a founder whose business is growing faster than its systems. I'm the person who [your one-line proof]. Do you know one founder who could use that? I can send a short blurb you can forward.

Fits you if you have a network, even a small one. One warm intro can do more than a stack of cold applications.

WAY 4 Pitch a founder who needs one.

Plenty of founders need a Chief of Staff and haven't written the job description yet. You'll find them where the business is growing faster than its systems. Job posts piling up, new locations opening, a fresh round of funding, a founder posting late at night about being stretched thin.

How to make the move. Pick three businesses and study each one for an hour. Then send the founder a short note with what you noticed, what you'd fix first and an offer to start with a 30-day project.

Fits you if you're comfortable selling yourself, or you'd rather prove it on a project before a full-time role.

YOUR STEP THIS WEEK

Pick the one way that fits you best right now and take one step on it before Friday. A list of 20 names counts. So does asking your founder for 30 minutes.

PART 3

The five things founders are really hiring for

Founders rarely say it out loud, but every interview for this seat tests the same five things. Telling them you have these won't land. A short, true story will.

01

Judgment

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING

"Can you make the call when I'm not in the room, and make the one I'd make?"

HOW TO SHOW IT

Tell a story about a decision you made without your boss. What you weighed, what you chose and what happened next.

02

Discretion

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING

"Will what I tell you stay with you?"

HOW TO SHOW IT

Talk about a sensitive situation you handled without naming names or sharing details. The way you tell it is the proof.

03

Follow-through

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING

"Will things actually close?"

HOW TO SHOW IT

Walk them through how you track decisions, owners and dates so nothing slips. Bring a cleaned-up example.

04

People sense

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING

"Can you lead without a title doing the work for you?"

HOW TO SHOW IT

Share a time you got a team to change how they worked when you weren't their boss.

05

Numbers

WHAT THEY'RE ASKING

"Do you know what moves this business?"

HOW TO SHOW IT

Before the interview, pick the three numbers you'd watch in their business and say why. It shows you already think like the seat.

YOUR STEP THIS WEEK

Write one short story for each of the five. Give each one three beats, the problem, what you did and what changed. Keep each under two minutes out loud.

PART 4

How to build your proof before you apply

Proof is what gets you past the skim, and it's what you'll lean on in every conversation from Parts 2 and 3. Build these five things once and use them for every role.

1 Three outcomes with numbers

Write what you built, fixed or grew, and what changed because of it. Duties tell a founder what you were assigned. Outcomes tell them what happens when they hand you something.

THE FORMULA

I [built, fixed or grew] ___ so that ___. The number that moved was ___.

INSTEAD OF

~~Responsible for onboarding new hires.~~

WRITE

Rebuilt onboarding so new hires were working on their own in two weeks instead of four.

2 A one-page 90-day plan

Founders remember the person who already did the thinking. Keep it to one page and three stages, then tailor it to each company.

DAYS 1 TO 30

Listen

Meet every leader. Map the decisions that land on the founder's desk. Find the three things that break most often.

DAYS 31 TO 60

Fix

Fix two of those three. Set up the weekly rhythm, the meeting, the scorecard and the follow-up list.

DAYS 61 TO 90

Run

Own the rhythm. Report on the numbers. Give the founder hours back every week.

Close the page with what the founder gets back. Hours, decisions made without them and fires that stop coming back.

3 A Proof of Work page

A résumé lists duties. A Proof of Work page shows the work. One page, on the web or as a PDF. For each project give three beats, the problem, what you did and what changed, with numbers where you have them. It's what I send when I apply.

THE PROBLEM

What was broken, slow or missing.

WHAT I DID

The moves you made, in plain words.

WHAT CHANGED

The result, with a number if you have one.

4 A headline that says what you do for founders

Your LinkedIn headline is often the first thing a founder reads. Say what you do for them, not the title you were given.

TRY THIS SHAPE

[What you run] for [who you serve]. [One proof point].

EXAMPLE

Operations and people lead for a 40-person team. I run the meetings, the hiring and the follow-up so the founder can sell.

5 Two people who'll vouch for you

In this job, references close the deal. Pick two people who've watched you operate up close. Send them your three outcomes and the role, so they know exactly what to speak to.

YOUR PROOF CHECKLIST

- [ ] Three outcomes with numbers
- [ ] A one-page 90-day plan
- [ ] A Proof of Work page
- [ ] A headline that says what you do for founders
- [ ] Two people ready to vouch for you

YOUR STEP THIS WEEK

Write your three outcomes. That's it. Everything else in this guide gets easier once they're on paper.

PART 5

Your next 30 days, week by week

No theory. Just the moves, in the order to make them.

WEEK 1

Get it on paper

- [ ] Write your three outcomes.
- [ ] Write your five stories.
- [ ] Rewrite your LinkedIn headline.

WEEK 2

Build your proof

- [ ] Draft your one-page 90-day plan.
- [ ] Build your Proof of Work page.
- [ ] Ask two people to be your references.

WEEK 3

Go after posted roles

- [ ] Pick three roles from the job board.
- [ ] Tailor your 90-day plan to each one.
- [ ] Apply with your proof attached.

WEEK 4

Open the doors that aren't posted

- [ ] Send five intro notes.
- [ ] Pitch one founder.
- [ ] Follow up on every Week 3 application.

TRACK FOUR NUMBERS EVERY WEEK

APPLICATIONS SENT	INTRO NOTES SENT	PITCHES MADE	CONVERSATIONS BOOKED

If conversations stay at zero for two weeks, go back to your proof before you send more.

After day 30, keep Weeks 3 and 4 on repeat. Three applications, five intro notes and one pitch a week add up fast.

ONE MORE THING

Want people in your corner?

Each part works on its own. It works better with people who get it.

That's the community I'm building for Chiefs of Staff and the people doing the job without the title. Roles every week, the Playbook and peers who've been where you are.

Join the waitlist shaleaofficial.com/community

MORE FREE TOOLS

Chief of Staff jobs
Roles picked every week.
shaleaofficial.com/jobs

The Pitch Kit
Scripts for asking for the title.
shaleaofficial.com/pitch-kit

The Archetype Quiz
Eight questions that show what kind of Chief of Staff you are.
shaleaofficial.com/archetype-quiz

ABOUT

Made by a Chief of Staff, for the people doing the job.

I'm Shalea Brown, Chief of Staff for founders of growing service brands. For 15+ years I've worked across operations, people and sales, for global brands like Google, Intuit and Bosch and for founder-led businesses growing fast.

I've hired and coached the people who hold a business together. I built this guide because too many people doing Chief of Staff work are still waiting on the title.

You're already doing the job. This is how you get hired for it.

shaleaofficial.com · linkedin.com/in/sconnectwithshalea

WHERE THE NUMBERS COME FROM

- My job board. 13 Chief of Staff roles I picked for shaleaofficial.com/jobs, posted November 3 to 13, 2026.
- Chief of Staff Network, 2025 Salary Report, a survey of 450+ Chiefs of Staff, most of them in the US.
- McKinsey & Company, "Anatomy of the role in eight charts," August 2024, a study of about 250 Chiefs of Staff.