

4. Do the Legwork, Dig Deep

In the Legwork stage, you go beyond surface-level information, gathering insights that support informed decision-making.

Remember, not every task in Completed Staff Work (CSW) is a project, nor does it always involve solving a problem.

Often, your job as staff is to **equip your boss with the clearest, most relevant information possible**—enabling wise, strategic decisions.

It can be tempting to treat each task as a project with defined solutions and end results. However, in CSW, your role is often to synthesize complex information, identify root causes, and present actionable insights without necessarily recommending a solution. Sometimes, there is no immediate problem to solve; instead, your boss simply needs the best data available to steer their decisions.

This distinction is critical. Legwork in CSW means gathering dependable facts, exploring various perspectives, and verifying insights that will empower leadership, whether or not a direct solution is required.

Approach this phase as a researcher and advisor, ready to present findings that strengthen the boss's confidence in their next steps.

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1: Identify Key Information Areas

Knowing exactly what to find out is the first step toward meaningful research. Define these areas carefully to focus on the most relevant information.

- **Action:** Identify essential topics or questions, aligning each with the boss's decision-making needs, end game, and problem scope if applicable.
- **Guiding Question:** What specific areas of knowledge are crucial to help the boss make an informed decision?

Step 2: List Trusted Sources for Each Area

High-quality research demands reputable sources. By relying on credible information, you ensure your boss receives reliable insights.

- **Action:** For each information area, list specific, trustworthy sources—such as industry reports, expert interviews, or case studies—that provide dependable insights.
- **Guiding Question:** Which trusted sources will provide the information the boss needs?

Step 3: Verify and Confirm Findings

Confirming information with multiple sources is crucial for building a reliable case. Cross-referencing prevents biases and strengthens the accuracy of your findings.

- **Action:** Document each original source and verify with a secondary source for consistency and reliability.
- **Guiding Question:** How can I be sure this information is accurate and aligned with the boss's needs?

Step 4: Organize Insights into Clear Takeaways

Organizing findings into actionable takeaways allows you to present information that directly supports the boss's goals.

- **Action:** Summarize key insights into concise, actionable points that clarify the current situation and guide decision-making.
- **Guiding Question:** What are the essential insights from my research that will help the boss make an informed decision?