

THREE PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

What Every Person Should Know About Being Organized

By Lorna Riley, CSP

Certified Speaking Professional

760-639-4020

According to organizational experts, we're not only born with an innate *need* to organize, but the *desire* to organize as well. If we need it and want it, then why are so many offices a mess?

Surprisingly, order does not mean a neat row of sharpened pencils and tidy stacks of paper. If you can find something in your work area within 60 seconds, you are "organized." Clutter however, creates "visual noise" that eats up valuable energy, adds needless stress, and dilutes your ability to focus. A "noisy" desk costs you money.

In sales and business, time is money. Wasted time is that which is directed to non-revenue generating activities such as disorganization, interruptions, miscommunication, crisis management, confusion over priorities, indecision, attempting too much, procrastination, and unproductive meetings. If you waste one hour a day, by the end of the year you will have lost the month of February. That could mean some serious "change" leaking from your bottom line. One way to stop time wasters is to get organized.

Two work styles that easily lead to disorder and financial leaks are:

1. THE BUSY BODIES

These are not nosey people, but instead those frantically active with so many responsibilities, activities, problems, and excursions, that there just isn't a moment to pull it all together. Their bodies always seem to be in motion. For them, there's too much to do and never enough time. They want to be organized, but it's never a priority *now*. They

put a lot on their plate and things start to fall through the cracks. They tend to be high achievers with the perception that there's never enough time to do all that they want. If kept unchecked, this work style is headed for burnout and serious health issues.

2. THE FREE SPIRIT

These people are the “what if,” BIG PICTURE, creative, casual types who feel that taking time to organize is much too dull when there are loftier goals to pursue. “It’s here somewhere” is their common mantra, but they seem to thrive on “visual noise”—items in progress scattered about their work area, all competing for their time and attention. “Let someone else take care of the details. It’ll work itself out in the end.” This work style wastes enormous time not wheeling deals, but wheel spinning.

If you fall into either one of these categories, or have ever mumbled, "Someday I'm going to get organized," do yourself a favor and get it done. Don't know how? You can hire someone, read a book, or read my article *\$\$\$-Making Organizational Skills* (www.otclearning.com see articles). *Not* investing time getting organized is costing you valuable time and money. We all share the same amount of time. Let's use it to serve us.

Here are three basic organizing principles which will assist you in getting control over your “stuff:”

PRINCIPLE #1

Use only *one* notebook for recording notes to yourself.

No one has a perfect memory. We all need a place to write down reminders and plans. If you use a day-planner, you're off to a great start. Just be sure you only use one that allows space to write down your short-term, mid-term, and long-range plans, things to do, people to call, and other activities that integrate your work and personal life together. If your system is electronic, just remember it's not a question of *IF* it will crash, it's a question of *WHEN*. Back it up like a fanatic. The last critical phone number you just entered could be lost in a blink.

PRINCIPLE #2**Divide complex problems into manageable parts.**

No situation or problem is so large that it can't be broken down into smaller parts. Whenever you have a tidal wave of work now or heading your way, the only way to survive the crash is to take it apart, drop-by-drop. Deal with one thing at a time, then write down the remaining tasks to keep track of appropriate next steps.

PRINCIPLE #3

Make a list of what needs to be done for the day, preferably at the end of every workday (telephone calls, appointments, proposals etc.). Rank them by number according to their deadline (urgency) and payoffs (importance). Urgent deadlines must be done now, within a few hours or by the end of the day; payoffs contribute to your goals by creating recognition, visibility, or profits.

After defining a small group of *important and urgent* projects, rank them by number according to which is most urgent and important with the biggest payoff in terms of recognition, visibility, or revenue. An important problem that creates a serious urgent situation is a top priority and immediately becomes #1. A problem that can wait until next year is a #10. Don't try to arrange problems in 1, 2, 3, 4 numerical order of importance. People get so involved in what should be 5th or 6th that they lose sight of what they're trying to accomplish. Focus on the #1 first, which is usually the most bothersome. If it's a big project, follow Principle #2 and then rank your activities in order of importance as in Principle #3.

That being said, *do that which is goal achieving and not tension relieving.*

Accomplishing your goals will eliminate the stress that comes from procrastination. The aggravating little things can eat up your day but leave you with a sense that the big important goals didn't get done. Do the most important goals first in the AM. Sometimes the smaller items will resolve themselves along with it.

Contact Lorna Riley for a complete list of training programs and speeches:

Lorna@lornariley.com

Or call 760-639-4020

For more resources and complete listing of services, please visit our sites at:

www.straightreferrals.com

www.otclearning.com

www.lornariley.com