

\$\$\$-MAKING ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

11 Tips for Getting More Done in Less Time

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GETTING ORGANIZED

Wasted time looking for what you need is costing you by the minute. Here are 11 tips for making more money by getting organized and accomplishing more in less time.

1. Manage Paperwork - Paperwork can get out of control if we let piles and little slips of notes build up. Paperwork blizzards come from procrastination--an inability to decide on what action to take and then to take it.

OHIO paper.

The first rule of paperwork management is to Only Handle it Once! If you pick up a piece of paper, decide what you are going to do with it and DO IT! Don't put it down until you have a way to traffic it. TRAF will help you do that.

TRAF Paper

Organizational guru Stephanie Winston says there are only 4 1/2 things you can do with a piece of paper -toss it out, refer it to someone else, act on it now, or file it (the 1/2 category refers to reading). Note there is no "P" in this acronym for "pile." If there were, it would say TRAP. Be decisive when handling paper to avoid feeling trapped. Don't put it down until you have decided one of the 4 (1/2) actions.

T - Toss it out (about 20% can be tossed, or 80% depending on the item)

R - Refer it to someone else by putting in your out basket.

A - Act on it NOW by putting the paper in front of you and completing the task.

F - File it. Put the paper in an easy-access stand-up file right in front of you if you intend to get to it that day or week. DO NOT PUT IT IN A PILE. It will be there when you need it, but won't take up space. Long-range projects should be

filed in their permanent locations, making a note in your day timer/contact manager if it needs additional action or follow-through.

(R) – Read. If you have a document that takes longer than 5-10 minutes to read, do it during non-production time, before 8:00 or after 5:00.

2. Make Good Decisions Quickly

One of the qualities of successful people is that they have the ability to make good decisions *quickly*. Roy Disney said that, “Decisions are easy when values are clear.” Define your values of what’s important and the decision will self-select itself saving you valuable time.

3. Barter

If a job is distasteful to you (filing, sorting) see if a co-worker or team member might be willing to take it on in exchange for a "service" from you. Although you are still spending time to do a task, your perception of the time you spend is more enjoyable, and therefore seems to speed by. Get someone who’s better at organizational skills to help you out.

4. Delegate

The most successful people always ask, "Who else can I get to do this?" Delegation enables you to free up valuable time to do the top priority activities only *you* and your special talents can accomplish. John Paul Getty once said, "I'd rather have 1% of the effort of 100 people than 100% of the efforts of myself." Getting others to help you benefits both parties.

5. Assign Interruption Times

In some ways sales people need to be available 24-7, but if you teach your clients when you are *most* available (early mornings or late afternoons), you can begin to protect your sales time and provide better service. Set aside a regular day of the week in a certain area of your territory, or a specific day to call on repeat clients. Close your office door with a sign that states when you’re available, or stand up during meetings to help cut back on

meeting time.

6. Speak in Numbers

You can organize your thoughts and avoid miscommunication by speaking and writing in numbers. Plan what you're going to say (or write) and if there are several items, begin by saying, "I have three things to go over with you." It keeps you and the listener's thoughts more organized and help eliminate miscommunication.

7. Multi-Task

When pressed for time, multi-task by doing two things at once. Exercise while watching TV; file papers while waiting on hold etc. Don't let this become a habit however. This is a rich opportunity for making mistakes that come from a lack of focus. Do "no-brainer" activities, but give 100% of your focus on more important tasks.

8. Make Use of Bits of Time

Plan small projects during waiting periods. Outline a report or pay bills while sitting in the doctor's office. Always carry a book with you if you don't wish to use the down-time for thinking, resting, or planning. It's difficult to find big blocks of time, but you can accomplish a great deal in smaller bite-sized chunks that add up over time.

9. Consolidate

Return all phone calls during a specific period rather than responding to each one. Combine errands. Consolidate movement — keep file folders you use most often at your fingertips, use roll carts or caddies if possible. Consolidation keeps you efficient and saves time.

10. Use Color Code "Tickler" Files

These folders "tickle" or remind you that something needs to be done. If you deal with multiple A priorities, put all A items needing action immediately into a red folder indicating that they must be completed ASAP. Use green for those needing completion by the end of the day, blue for the end of the week, and yellow for the end of the month. Check your folders daily and move items to the appropriate colored folder as items are

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advanced to the red folder. Store completed items in an A-Z file. Files exceeding 1 ½ - 2 inches should be subdivided. You may also use a 12-month yearly tickler file, each file labeled with a month of the year holding appropriate items needing attention that month.

11. Eliminate Organizational Procrastination

Postponing getting organized is due to several self-imposed excuses that become “self-blocking” saboteurs. Here are a few reasons for organizational procrastination:

1. Setting impossibly high standards. Thinking that the task can't be done to your liking, you may ignore or put it off indefinitely.
2. “Clear-my-plate-first” rationale. Somehow, there's always something that mysteriously crops up needing your attention. "I'll clean up my work area as soon as I ____." And there's always something else more pressing to do.
3. The "Big Picture" is another major self-blocking technique. You want to get organized but it's so overwhelming that you don't even know where to begin.

ORGANIZATIONAL THERAPY

1. Bring your ideal in line with reality by assigning yourself segmented organizational jobs, doing one chunk first thing in the morning or at the end of the day. Estimate how much time you think each chunk will take, or simply allocate one hour a day until you get on top of it. Write down what you intend to do during one session. *What gets written gets done.*
2. Apply the "Just as long as I've ____" technique. "Just as long as I've got the file open, I may as well organize it. As long as I'm looking in my in-basket, I may as well straighten it out." By the time you officially assign yourself the project, you may find most of it done! Do the same thing with email maintenance. Decide what to do with e-mail as it comes in instead of letting it pile up in your in-basket.
3. Do two organizational tasks a day. Force yourself, by an act of will, to put on blinders concerning other projects and take just two baby steps towards getting it done. Start at the left side of your office or desk and work your way to the right

side, making decisions about where to put things in organized files. Touch each item and make a decision about where it goes and then put it there. Don't just start more piles. Be ruthless about those items you haven't used in a year. You may be able to be discard them or send to the archive files. The momentum will keep you going!

Getting organized is fun. You'll definitely enjoy the fruits of your labor when you can find anything in your work area within 60 seconds and reduce your visual noise levels. If time is money for you, you can make more money by investing time to get organized!

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

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