

## Organization and Time Management A Few Thoughts and Tips

Most people spend almost ten percent of their life finding things and doing things over. Check this out, keep a log this week of how much time you spend looking for things at home or in the office? My Mother always said a place for everything and everything in its place. I wish I had practiced it more. Disorganization causes you to be stressed, overwhelmed at work and eventually burned out.

Step One: clean up your workspace. I do it this way. Take everything off your desk and place it in a box. (Paper, files, knickknacks, etc one thing at a time) Get rid of the stuff that you have placed on your desk. Remember: Stuff breeds and dust loves stuff. Clean the desk and start replacing the stuff. Ask yourself do I need it, can I put it away, give it away or throw it away. Paper Rule: Act on it or file it. Remember a cluttered workspace makes you feel overwhelmed. You would also be surprised at how it helps you to see your job differently and renew your energy. Maybe even rearrange your office space.

Step Two: Repeat the same process with the rest of your office or workspace. You will even start feeling energy.

Step Three: Create THINGS TO DO LIST. We all have said I have so much to do, I will never get it done. This creates the feeling of being overwhelmed. Write it all down, things that have to be done at a certain time and things that have to be done in the future. Then prioritize it. Start doing the easier stuff first, it helps gain momentum. Start a plan; either use your computer or a note book, there are also commercial products that are available Franklin Planner and of course the Palm and Pocket PC that help get you organized. But they do no good if you do not use them or get in the habit of carrying them with you. (This is my big problem so this is a talk for me too.)

Step Four: Remember thinking causes inactivity so Do it now. Just start on your list and cross it off when you have finished it.

Step Five: Plan your day the day before. Before you leave today get tomorrow's plan ready. A big disrupter of our plan is the phone. Change your voice message and add a time you will call people back. "I will be in a meeting (with myself finishing work) from 1-3 today." Schedule time on your calendar to get things done.

These are just a few things that are needed there are many more. As the weeks go on I will try to put tips on the newsletter each week.

**Question: What kinds of things do you do to stay organized and use your time efficiently? Read other thoughts on this next week at the website. It might be a great idea to close the office early on a Friday and call it organization day.**

# Responses to Time Management

When you get into time management I hope you are familiar with the college professor who gave his class a little test.

He had a gallon can and filled it with large rocks. Then asked the class if it were full. They said yes. Then he poured a whole bunch of sand over the rocks and into the can. Once it was full he asked the class if the can were now full. They said yes. Then he got out a picture of water and started pouring water over the rocks and sand. Once the water was to the top... he asked if it were now full. And they said, well yes, they couldn't think of anything else he could put into the can. Then he put another empty can up on the table and put the same amount of sand in the can first. Then proceeded to attempt to put the same amount of rocks in the can. Only problem. The rocks would not fit. Then he asked the class why. They said because he needed to put the big things in first. He said..... very good,,, and so it goes with time management. If we are going to get the most accomplished during a day will do the big, important tasks first, then fill in with the other items of the day. If we spend a lot of time early in the day doing non important things we will never end up with enough time to get the important things done during the day.  
Gene Watson UT

I LIKE TO MAKE LISTS OF THINGS I NEED TO DO THEN THAT WAY I JUST CHECK THEM OFF ONE BY ONE. THIS ALSO HELPS WITH TIME. ANOTHER THING I DO IS GET ALL THE INQUIRY DONE ON SOME ONE BEFORE THEY COME FOR THEIR APPT. THIS HELPS A GREAT DEAL. WELL GOTTA RUN HAVE FUN IN YOUR TRAVELS AND HAVE A SAFE TRIP CATCH YOU LATER.  
NORMA

I know that I need to be organized to perform well. I do understand there are others who can work with disorganization, just how effective they are I do not know. For me, it is important to be able to retrieve information quickly so I need to be organized to do that. I place my reference books right next to my computer. Some of the reference materials are; Dictionary, Thesaurus, Project Management Guide, Target Editing, and other important materials that are work related. I keep the telephone book right under my telephone. I keep my files in alphabetical order and I have labeled folders for other reference material that I need to refer to from time to time. I have reference binders on my desk, at least those I consider most important, such as; law, handbooks, client reference, etc. I post important flyers on the tack board over my modular system furniture desk, such as: our vision, values, and goals; great motivation quotes, a calendar, a map of California that is colored coded to reflect the area I work with. I also have a clock on the panel to the right side of my computer because I am very time conscious and believe in and promptness. I have a list of frequently used telephone numbers posted on the panel next to the clock. I have a small basket on my desk which hold the memory jogger, a small Spanish/English Dictionary, an Emergency Training Guide, and Van Write highlighters. I do my best to keep the things I use daily in close proximity to save time. Hope this is helpful to someone. Thanks for allowing me to share!

## Anita Oaxaca, Project Manager

- 1.- Keep my office and home clean. I can not work an a place that is disorganize. It's unhappy filling.
- 2.- I use a personal agenda to keep track of all my working and family activities as well as medical appointments. This agenda helps me to keep track of all the things that are important to me.
- 3.- I have make a habit of having and schedule. Example: Mondays: dust, dinner, and mop flowers, and cleaning bathroom, Tuesday: changing bed close (four bedrooms), vacuum, my husband cooks dinner. Wednesday: Mop flowers, cleaning bathrooms, dinner. Thursdays: laundry, dust, vacuum my husband is responsible for cooking. Friday: Dinner out, mop floors, cleaning bathrooms. Saturday: Dust, vacuum, change beds. Things that I do every day are: help my daughter with her homework, read to her at bed time, walk, and watch HGTV at night time for one hour. I have schedule for taking my daughter to school. I drop her every morning at 7:45 a.m. and my husband picks her up in the afternoon. We work on our yard ones a week. My family has a copy of the schedule so the know what it has to be done. I have train my husband and my daughter to use it and get in schedule. To help me with simple things, like pick-up your clothes, pick-up your plate after dinner, pick-up toys after finish using them. Put my daughter in bed at 8:00 p.m every night. Every thing has become more easy. It doesn't take as much time an effort know.
- 4.- I have a file system in place for home and the office. I file everything by alphabetic order at the office and by Fiscal Years. At home a have a bill organizer so we know when our bills have to be pay, and also I have a file organizer for each month of the year; where we keep track of everything in our house by month and calendar year.
- 5.- I supervise six offices, I'm responsible for the consortium meetings, I answer to five bosses, I make quarterly reports and work in the proposals, as well as responsible for the programmatic part of two programs; so management of time it's very crucial for me. I stress this concept with my case workers so they can provided good quality services. Under management of time follows all are services and this services can be affected negatively if they are not done properly. We provide transportation services, home visits, care coordination, and documentation of all activities and consumers files. I have train them(caseworkers) to use a agenda, to make and schedule a week an advance for their staff itinerary (includes everything they do). Regarding to transportation services we do not transport consumers who request services with in the same date. I have train consumers to make transportation appointments with in 48 hrs. previous to the service requested, I have requested from agencies to make the transportation referral with 48 hours previous to services. The caseworkers come back to the office at 3:00 p.m. to work in paper work after the day is done. So they can finish the proper documentation of activities, this way you don't over lap work. Regarding Home visits we have a Planning home visit form, that the caseworkers fill out one day before going to the home visits, this way the caseworkers have to review the consumer file previously to the home visit and select the information based on the consumer needs.
- 6.- I plan my consortium meetings, staff meetings, trainings for staff or national meetings, regional meetings within six months previously. So everyone knows what's going to happen and when. This keeps me and the people that I came in contact with, in track. Schedules are handle to the staff at the first meeting on the beginning of Fiscal Year.
- 7.- I use constantly my proposal to plan, due to the fact that all activities have been planed one year before so I know what it has to be done and who is responsible for doing it. The caseworkers received training in the goals and objectives that need to be accomplish by them before we begging the new Fiscal Year. Maria Luisa Towery

This is one area that I must give myself an A+. In my last position I had a very demanding and stressful job. There was no end to the responsibility

and people came to you from every direction. This is where you learn to become organized. The flip calendar is a part of you daily life. As events come along you must write them down. Each day my calendar has at least 4-6 areas that need attention. Before you start them, be sure to prioritize them, your probably going to have carryover for the next day. As long as it is on paper you will get through it all at some point. Another area is your paperwork. I needed to find something in less than 30 seconds. There was no time to look for things. Everything has its place (Not the desk top). I have file folders for each area that I feel that is important to the job. If it does not need a folder you don't need it. At the end of the day my desk looks like no works there. The only visible things you can see is the calendar, telephone, computer and stack baskets which I use to line up my work for the next day. I also use this in life. I have never (O.K. maybe once or twice) come out of the market forgetting to buy something. I also have a To Do List in general. Very simple! Try it! It does work! Massachusetts

Oh boy! What a Pandora's Box! Don't get me started on the organization thing, it's like learning a foreign language, a constant process of practicing it or losing it. And I never feel I have developed a fluency. I don't think or dream in Organization yet. So much to learn!

--Cindra--

I will try the one about cleaning my desk off. It does make it easier to concentrate when everything is organized. Lois W

Time is precious and with having so many things to do, people to see, places to go, I decided a few years ago to prioritize what I have to do daily, be flexible, and willing to make changes if necessary. With family, my home duties, my profession, working on my on the side business of photography, exercise at the gym five days a week, and my (3) hour college class one night a week, I stay busy.

If I had not prioritize my activities, I would feel overwhelmed with all that I handle, and the truth is, I am doing all that I do because it feels right and because of my commitment to organize what I do daily within the time frame I have and with my willingness to be flexible, making changes when necessary, allows me to remain free from stressing out and continue to accomplish all that I do from day to day.

**Patti**

I find that I am spending a significant amount of time reading and replying to email. I have created a cc folder that will direct all the email that I am a "cc" on to go directly to that folder. I know if an email is in that folder, it is typically not a high priority and allows me to prioritize my time.

*Jo Ann*

I come in at least 40 minutes to an hour before my day should start, if i need to work a little after 4:30 i do that and as you can see i do work on weekends to stay caught up. Just what ever it takes to stay afloat.....FAYE

I LIKE TO MAKE LISTS OF THINGS I NEED TO DO THEN THAT WAY I JUST CHECK THEM OFF ONE BY ONE. THIS ALSO HELPS WITH TIME. ANOTHER THING I DO IS GET ALL THE INQUIRY DONE ON SOME ONE BEFORE THEY COME FOR THEIR APPT. THIS HELPS A GREAT DEAL. NORMA

As far as tips on time management, I have a few things that I do. I do consider myself pretty well organized most of the time. But like you state, the phone calls or other unannounced interruptions can put all of that pretty much out the window. I do prepare as best I can for the next day of business and I do make a point of clearing or straightening my desk before leaving for the evening. I have folders and drawers for reports and handout materials, etc. I have a day planner that I use constantly for meetings, luncheons, appointments, etc. I have found that that is a big help to me. If an employer calls or customer needs me to do a project that is time-consuming, I do have to do some shuffling but so far, I can stay on top of things but it does take some thought and work to keep the system going. June P NY

The first thing to put on your to do list is "Make a to do list", and then you can cross it off as you finish your to do list. It really makes you feel like you have accomplished something. Just the crossing it off, silly or not, is the first step in getting that energy started. Thanks, Paul, for the step by step process of cleaning up your work space. I will put that at the second spot on my to do list!!! We have four small work spaces in one room, along with much computer equipment all around us, so the clutter becomes overwhelming very quickly. Cleaning up my own little space, will really help my feeling of being in control of something!!! Hope you have a wonderful week, take care of yourself. Molly WA

Hi Paul,

Sorry I haven't been able to participate in discussions lately, but I have been busy. I'm glad to know your next topic is about time management. It will be nice to see others' ideas, etc. I have found what helps me is to keep a daily/weekly list of "Things To Do". This has worked best for me as I am one of those persons that lives for the day. Don't get me wrong, I like to plan, prepare, etc., but for some reason it seems that the more I plan the less I do :) In writing a daily "Things To Do" list, I am able to stay focused, and to take care of all that needs to be taken care of in a timely manner. Even if I go grocery shopping, I must take a list as this will definitely speedy up the process and I will also bring what I have to get. I like to pace myself, and not find myself in a rush. If I am rushing I am grumpy. I also keep my appointment book, and write down all functions, events, trainings, etc as this helps me greatly at evaluation time. I get done with the evaluation process much faster, because I kept all this information all year. I prioritize my duties, bills, etc. I have learned that by keeping a list of thing to do, bills to pay, pay days, etc. helps speedy up everything I do that isn't really fun to do. All the fun things can go without a list. Lydia, CA

As for time management: Each day, before I leave the office, I write on my "To do list," my daily schedule for the next work day: I even add in the time that I take lunch. Also at the end of each month, I create a calendar for the next month, and write down: meetings, days off, late days, important events, workshops, etc.. I then disseminate this information to my supervisor, and staff members. I also create a "to do list," at home. This helps me become organized, and allows me to complete every choir that needs to be taken care of, on the weekends. Lisa Stevens

I'm one of those disorganized people who get work done but at times feel the stress of the disorganization. I appreciate your comments on Time Management and hope to put some to work for myself. One thing I sensed when reading through other's comments is when do these people take time for themselves to be creative? I get so focused on work and what needs to get done at home that I cut myself off from having a life. One of the big rocks that I believe needs to go into everyone's bucket is a space for self. Who are you outside of your job and how often do you take purposeful time to feed that inner creative self? Our society doesn't seem to put much value on creativity yet I believe it is difficult to be truly happy if we don't find the time to express our unique creative self. Alan R OR

- 1) Make a list.
- 2) Prioritize that list.
- 3) Just do it.
- 4) No excuses.

This is my philosophy.

Jeff (HI)