

ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS

by Cynthia H. Stringer



Being organized is a skill that one learns by practice. A willingness to experiment and to focus on what you want and need, rather than professional or personal challenges, are helpful faculties. As you grow and change, so do your organizational systems at home and in the office.

Have you outgrown existing ways of organizing, office management, and business practice? If so, you're one among many who can benefit from evaluating and redesigning your systems. With this article I want to share how you can start today.

As a professional organizer and coach, I find that many of my clients come to me with the following key issues. Guiding someone to a solution and renewed growth and vigor requires an individual approach using proven techniques. Here are some ideas of how to organize and change your life.

- ◆ **Sort through the incoming mail.** Allow items and projects to be touched by you only once and decide what pile they belong in: the to file pile, the to read pile, the action pile, trash, etc.
- ◆ **Put it away.** File items immediately according to the above categories. Have your resources such as manila folders, hanging files and label machine all in one place and awaiting your direction. The less time you spend hunting for something, the more motivated and willing you will be to

follow through and manage tasks as they present themselves. This goes for everything from cooking, to baby care, to running a successful business. Be organized, have your resources handy, and just do it.

- ◆ **Design Your Space.** Evaluate whether your office is the most efficient place for you right now. Ask yourself the following questions: Are the items you use most frequently within easy reach? Is your organizational system working for you, or do you have trouble locating important information? How is your computer equipment (hard and software) supporting you, or keeping you from effortless task completion? By moving furniture around, can you improve space utilization and lighting? Contemplate these issues and redesign your space to perform in harmony with your personal style and type of work.
- ◆ **Set Goals for Success.** Create a personal protocol identifying your goals and values, both on a personal and professional level. These need to be translated into daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly goals. Think of writing and documenting your plans and goals as an investment in yourself and a road map for your success.
- ◆ **Do Frequent Check-Ups.** Periodically evaluate your progress by doing a check in and check up. Use whatever means are most

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appropriate and helpful for you. Some people use a professional coach, others prefer assessment questionnaires, reading books, taking a vacation, or remaining silent and listening. Each of these tools is important and may facilitate answers for you to ponder and integrate. Whichever method you choose, do it with abandon to learn more about your current organizational style and work modes.

- ◆ **You're in Command.** Give yourself permission to redesign your life and the gift of Choice. Know that you do not need to do everything at once, and that everything does not need to be done by you. Remember to encourage and promote people in your environment to take on and do what you no longer have the time nor the interest in doing. People want to help and be of service. You just need to ask.
- ◆ **Delegate and Ask for Support.** Learn to delegate projects, tasks, and items that you do not want to do or have time to do. Find consultants, organizational assistants, or

others who compliment what you do. Get them to do those projects or tasks that drain your time and efficiency. Set up a mutually rewarding arrangement, and make them feel like they are making a difference.

- ◆ **Design Your Personal Style.** Decide how you want to handle your communication (phone calls, mail, faxes, electronic mail, etc.) ahead of time and be willing to design your professional and personal life to accommodate your values, purpose and goals in these areas. How you respond to people in these modes of communication can make a tremendous impact on your professional image and your connections with people. Notice how you get different and more direct results with others as you become better in tune with yourself.

In this day and age of personal service we need to discern what is important to us and be willing to create our lives to accommodate those choices. Now you can take action and refocus your efforts to give you a more rewarding and satisfying way of life. Contact Cynthia Stringer at Success By Design Inc. for additional articles and checksheets.

Resources

- Books:** *Tame the Paper Tiger*
Following Through, by Levinson & Greider—excellent for the Maintenance step of systems.
It's About Time, by Dr. Linda Sapadin.
- Web:** *NAPO.net*; questions, answers and referrals to professional organizers.