The Advantage of Being Organized

Although being disorganized is portrayed as cute and lovable in characters such as the absentminded professor, the truth is that the failure to approach life in general – and business specifically – in an organized manner is a sure fire recipe for poor implementation and stagnated growth. What is missed through the lack of organization is the ability to take advantage of opportunities because the ability to execute is stunted and the timetables are unresponsive.

The advantage of being organized is more than merely being successful – it is having more time to do the things you really enjoy doing. The ability to get more done in less time – a function of good organizational skills – leaves you with more free time.

So, how do we become more organized? What are the methods to be used even for the most disorganized among us? Tudog has 5 suggestions that are sure to make you more organized. They are:

1. Work Off of Lists
2. Limit Your Distractions
3. Control Phone/Email Time
4. Limit Meetings
5. Create Space

Let’s review each one of the 5 hints in detail:

1. Work Off Lists

A primary cause of disorganization is a sense of too much to do in too little time. As we discussed, becoming more organized helps in getting more tasks accomplished in less time, and the way to do this is by working off of a list. Each morning you should set up a To-Do list for the day, placing in order of priority the things you need to complete that day. You can elect to start with the smaller tasks that can be completed quickly, or the more complicated tasks that take time (leaving the easier ones for last), however, Tudog suggests you start with the most important tasks so that you are certain to complete them, and then move on to more minor chores. The added benefit of the list is that it provides a great sense of accomplishment, as you are able to document (for yourself and if necessary others) how much you completed. Lists also work well for people who are less organized because it focuses energy and effort. If you are extremely disorganized you may want to add to your list not only tasks, but also the steps necessary to complete each task and the materials, items or documents you need. This will provide you with a mini-road map for each mission.

2. Limit Your Distractions

There are many distractions in the workplace that take our focus away from our primary tasks, often drawing us away in the middle of our activity. This disconnect, particularly for people without strong organization skills, can contribute to disorganization and poor execution. The trick is to minimize the number of distractions by blocking out the time needed to complete the task and informing others that you are unavailable for additional tasks during that time. The inclusion of more tasks can create a sense of being overwhelmed, causing a person to try to cut corners in order to accomplish more. If
someone is disorganized, this effort at multi-tasking can lead to massive confusion. The most productive way to approach the challenges before you is to limit the distractions that draw you away from your primary focus.

3. Control Phone/Email Time

There are no greater distractions than telephone calls and the compulsive need to check and respond to emails constantly. Once again, it is important to emphasize that an inability to concentrate on and complete tasks is a general by-product of disorganization and the interruption of momentum to engage telephone calls or reply to emails detract from concentration. The more effective practice is to schedule a time (on your daily objective list) for telephone calls, making certain it is a time when most people are available (for example, not during lunch hours), and putting aside time at the beginning and end of your workday to review and reply to emails. By interacting with calls and emails according to a schedule you will stick to your objectives and remain more organized.

4. Limit Meetings

Is there anything that takes more time (perhaps wastes more time) than meetings? As we have demonstrated, a lack of time is the enemy of the disorganized person because the absence of sufficient time to complete the required tasks leads the disorganized person to disregard the need for process and attempt to take short cuts. The necessity to attend meetings needs to be measured against the need to complete tasks. When meetings are needed they should be controlled both in terms of their agenda and duration. In this way, the need to attend meetings will not substantially detract from a person’s focus or enable them to sink into disarray.

5. Create Space

A great deal of the clutter and disorganization in an office setting comes from poor office skills such as filing and placing things in their proper place. The easy access to information and office tools enables us to better perform our duties. The lack of space and the processes to put things in their place can lead a person with poor organizational skills to sink into a deeper mess. By putting things where they belong, the order of good organization will prevail.

The advantage of being organized is better work accomplished faster. By avoiding distractions and creating the processes that impose order, even the most disorganized of people can enjoy some semblance of order.