

Fire Up Your Organizing Skills

Tips to Get Organized Without Resorting To Arson

By LIZ FRANKLIN

If you've ever wondered about how much time and money you've lost because you can't remember where you put things, you'll probably think my tips were heaven-sent and I'm your guardian angel.

I'm on a one-woman crusade to make people laugh their way out of chaos and to achieve new levels of organized perfection. I'm a 25-year veteran of office organizing and have even been called in to do rescue and damage control after a company had a multi-million dollar deal go astray for not remembering where the instructions were to submit a simple application!

My new book, *How to Get Organized Without Resorting to Arson*, takes a totally innovative approach and uses outrageous humor to teach people funny, fast and people-friendly techniques for getting organized.

Subtitled "A Step-by-Step Guide to Clearing Your Desk Without Panic or the Use of Open Flame," my book puts the reader back in control of his or her own destiny. Over the years, I've become a master of extracting
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efficiency out of every moment. In my book, I offer hundreds of money- and time-saving insights into how to reduce your workload, gain more time at each and every step, avoid the impacts of re-work, and save lots of money in the process.

Here's a sample of some organizational improvement tips and tactics:

1. If you are an "out of sight, out of mind" person, you're not out of your mind, you just respond to strong visual cues. So use bright colors, large labels, and signs and you'll remember where you put things.
2. If you are a "time traveler" you simply and naturally access paperwork according to when things happened or when they must happen. So leverage your innate skills and use systems with dates and numbers, not colors or places.
3. If you are a "sparklebrain," you start lots of things but rarely finish them. You'd be better off if you used a matchmaking service to pair off with a "linear person" (like an engineer or an architect) so you can trade tasks at the halfway point. Then you can go shopping.

4. If you are "cross-dominant," you switch rapidly between starting and finishing. You will become better organized only after you improve your delegation skills, which you'd better do because you assign yourself more than is humanly possible.

5. Ignore the saying, "If you haven't used it in six months, throw it out." That could be your spouse!

6. Procrastination is usually a sign that you have more important things to do.

7. A clean desk is a sign of a person who is on vacation, new to the job, part time, delegating, or mentally elsewhere.

8. You are not obligated to return any calls made by machinery.

9. Arrange your desk furniture into a u-shape and circulate your work around you. This mimics your hand, body and arm movement, and makes jumping to conclusions so much easier.

10. Keep everything you want to keep. Just label things according to when you'll want to use them. Instead of "tax stuff," call it "open in January," or "open or go to prison."

11. Too many items on your to-do list? Ask yourself, "Which of these will I be sorry about tomorrow if it's not finished today?" Then prioritize according to regret. And if you won't regret it, you can forget all about it.

12. To know if you should throw something away, ask yourself how you would feel if a stranger sneaked in and destroyed it. If you'd get mad, keep it. If you'd secretly be thrilled, you can toss it without fear.

13. Can't figure out what to do first? Write the goal on the bottom of the page, then keep asking, "What must I do before that?" and write ("backwards up") upwards as you think of things to do to achieve the goal. When you're done, follow the steps from top to bottom.

Implementing my techniques will take a little time and thought. It's not going to happen simply overnight, after all, how long did it take you to get as disorganized as you are?

If you follow my advice, you'll find out better ways to use your furniture, learn the nine most essential organizing supplies, and learn that in many cases it's perfectly OK to throw things out the door. Of course, you may choose to scrap my suggested plans and throw them out the window instead.

Liz Franklin's *How to Get Organized Without Resorting to Arson* is available online and in bookstores nationwide. For more information visit www.franklinizer.com or call toll-free 877-274-0844; telephone 510-814-0770; direct contact 1-800-457-8746.

