



Make Your Office Work Better

Avoid the High Cost of Inefficient Systems

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Does this sound familiar?

You waste time everyday looking for documents, phone numbers or slips of paper with deadlines and appointments written down on them.

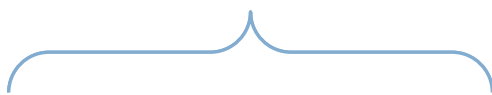
You spend hours each week doing things that you know should only take minutes (or seconds!) but you aren't sure how to make these laborious tasks more efficient and less time consuming.

You dread trying to work on a big project (or any project) because there is no space on your desk to work or you have to shuffle clutter to make your way to your desk.

You pay bills late because you've misplaced them or simply forgotten that they were due.

You have piles of paper everywhere because your file cabinet is full.

You have piles of paper everywhere because your filing system is entirely inefficient - or nonexistent.



700,000 to 1.4 million Americans may have compulsive disorder syndrome--difficulty in throwing away anything for fear that they may need the items later.

Self Storage Association: Obsessive Compulsive Foundation




Sound like you? Read on!

The Big Question

If you're reading this report, most likely you've scoured the internet and raided the shelves of your local bookstore or library in search of information that would help you get organized or learn which systems to implement for your business. Maybe you are transitioning into working for yourself and know that if your personal habits transition over to your business life, you might be in trouble. So why not take the time to put systems into place that aid in your success?

When most people read how-to tips on getting organized or implementing new strategies, they put the tips in the "One day it would be nice to..." part of their brains and they never take action to make it happen. How long has your filing system been bugging you? How many business cards have you collected at events that you now have shoved in the back of a drawer? How much money have you spent on late fees and penalties so far? How many events, leads, or opportunities have you missed because you remembered when it was too late?

The big question is:



Paper usage has actually increased by 14% in the last few years.

*Documents, People and Technology:
A European Perspective - Xerox Corporation*

Employees typically spend 5%-15% of their time reading information, but up to 50% of their time looking for pertinent data.

Esselte



How much is your lack of solid systems costing you?

The Cost of Disorganization

Being disorganized and having inefficient systems costs you time - which means it also costs money.

Here are some facts about the cost of being disorganized and lacking solid systems:

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the average U.S. executive wastes six weeks per year (about an hour a day) searching for missing information in disorganized desks and files.

Some experts estimate that the average person spends 150 hours a year looking for misplaced information.
Sun-Sentinel Company, January 6, 2003

28% of Americans interviewed in 2008 said they had been spending less time with household members. This is compared with 11% in 2006. In the first half of this decade, people reported an average of 26 hours per month with family, dropping to 18 hours in 2008.

Annenberg Center for the Digital Future, University of Southern California, June 2009

Crisis purchases related to disorganization could cost as much as 15-20% of an annual budget in terms of:

- Buying duplicates
- Last minute shopping trips
- Late payments
- Finance charges

aplusorganizing.com

Nearly 34% of individuals lose more than 15 minutes a day or nearly two hours every week to a disorganized office desk - hunting for lost papers, sorting through messy files and rebooking missed appointments

- Office Depot Survey

According to the same study, the majority (53%) live in "controlled chaos," where their desk is a mess but they claim to know where everything is located. Busy professionals also are finding this rather chaotic lifestyle costly:


76% of respondents report they lose time to disorder while more than half (51%) are concerned about missing important deadlines or appointments.

16% cite fear of diminishing their reputation.

14% losing business opportunities due to disorganization.

61% said the biggest frustration with their disorganized environment is that they can't find what they need quickly.


27% of professionals said they find it hard to concentrate with messy files around.



Facts for those who work from home

According to cleaning professionals, 40% of housework would be eliminated by cutting excess clutter
National Soap & Detergent Association

80% of the clutter in most homes is a result of disorganization, not lack of space.



Given these facts, it's surprising to learn how few business professionals take on the task of becoming and staying organized and putting efficient systems into place:

A mere 22% of respondents stated that they arranged their desk for maximum productivity every day, while 49% organize only once a month – or less frequently.

The most revealing part of the study? *67% of business professionals are not sure how to start or maintain their efforts.*

....think about the time you spend re-organizing things you do not need or want because you are simply shuffling them around, unsure of whether or not they serve a purpose.

Cutting your clutter, organizing the only "stuff" and information that is vital, and implementing time saving systems and strategies can help radically change your business - and your life.




Consider

What could you do with an extra hour each day?

- Arrive at appointments on time (or early!)
- Go for a walk or bike ride
- Read a book
- Cook dinner for yourself or your family (I recommend you include macaroni & cheese on the menu - and then call me up to invite me over)
- Help your kids with their homework
- Market your business
- Get more sleep (a One Organized Life favorite)
- See a movie
- Meet with a prospect for lunch or coffee
- Reconnect with former clients
- Attend a networking event
- Indulge in your favorite creative hobby

What could you do with the money you save?

- Invest it in new marketing materials or an advertising campaign
- Use it toward networking or professional association fees
- Take that vacation you've been wanting
- Donate to your favorite charity
- Treat yourself to dinner or a movie as a reward for what you've accomplished
- Or just SAVE IT!



Despite the current economic turmoil, 47% of business people said better work/life balance would be even more important in 2009.

How did they plan on accomplishing this?

49%: Use all vacation time

44%: Prioritize projects

42%: Create a weekly To-Do list

41%: Leave work at a reasonable time

36%: Take lunch breaks

FedEx Office, 11/2008



If your space is organized and you have systems in place that help you work efficiently and stay on top of the day-to-day aspects of running your business, you have the freedom to **focus on the core of your business and the things that made you want to work for yourself in the first place.**


Once you've set yourself up for success in this way, what are some other ways you could expect to feel?

Exhilarated
Relaxed
Organized
Productive
Effective
Relieved
Determined
Motivated
Optimistic
Secure

And my favorites....

Confident
Successful
Happy!

Don't you wish these were the words you used when someone asked "How are you today?"




48% of us feel our lives have become more stressful in the past five years.

American Psychological Association (APA), 2007

71% of white-collar workers feel stressed about the amount of information they must process and act on while doing business; 60% feel overwhelmed.

Institute of the Future, Menlo Park, CA



Make a choice to change TODAY

You've seen the statistics. With or without them, you know something has to change – and fast. What can you do?

Identify what needs to be changed. What are your biggest problem areas? Write them down.

Give yourself deadlines. Make the deadlines feasible - the point here is to achieve success, no matter how large or small the initial project is. Small wins lead to big victories.

Cut the clutter. If you rid yourself of the things you don't really need and the things that no longer serve you, you will not need to spend time organizing them or worrying about where to keep them. The less you hold on to, the less you have to deal with.


Research your options. Find the best choices for you. Consider your budget, habits, and who else will need to use the system. Spend the time to make the right choice and you won't have to start from scratch repeatedly. If the system you choose seems to have some kinks, consider tweaking it before you scrap it and start over.

Build in accountability. Tell other people about your goals and ask them to check in with you. If you have a friend or associate who is dealing with the same issues, partner together to motivate and encourage each other.

Delegate. If someone else can handle a task, let them! If you charge your clients \$100 per hour, but you are still stuffing envelopes, consider hiring an office assistant at least part time. This frees you up to handle tasks only YOU can do – like networking or working with your clients.

Need help to get it done? Not sure which options to choose? I help my clients create solutions and strategies that maximize their productivity and help them increase their bottom line. We can partner together to create an action plan to get you on the road to success.

Visit www.OneOrganizedBusiness.com for more information about my services. Email me today at Alaia@oneorganizedbusiness.com to book your complimentary consultation.



Electronic invoices within the US will surpass the volume of paper invoices by 2010.

PayStream Advisors, "Electronic Invoicing Adoption Survey Report, 9/17/09

Small business owners have a variety of plans to grow their business in 2009, including:

- 69 percent will increase communication with existing and potential customers via newsletters, direct mail, etc.
- 50 percent will create or improve their online-presence (Web site, banner-ads).
- 46 percent will create a customer loyalty or referral program.
- 37 percent will attend networking events (community and professional activities).
- 24 percent will create profiles on social media/networking Web sites (Facebook, LinkedIn).
- 11 percent will lengthen store hours.

2009 FedEx Office Signs of the Times Small Business Survey



About Alaia



Alaia Williams, founder of One Organized Life and One Organized Business

(www.oneorganizedbusiness.com) has worked with a variety of business owners, helping them organize their homes, offices, and lives. From clutter and piles of paper to contact management and efficiency systems, Alaia helps create solutions that help her clients maximize their productivity and increase their bottom line. She has recently been featured in *Twitter Power*, written by social media expert Joel Comm. In 2006, Alaia created (and still runs) [The Entrepreneur Connection™](#), an organization that focuses on education and high quality networking for small business owners and freelancers. With an unflappable sense of patience and the ability to draw upon her organizing and systems expertise, she can create just the right strategy for you.