

RAMP UP YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Are you wasting time, getting frustrated, and losing productivity at work because you're not organized? You are if you:

- can't find things easily
- miss important appointments
- buy doubles or triples of office supplies
- can't find documents in your files
- have multiple paper piles on your desk
- can't quickly locate phone numbers and addresses

Start by previewing your day.

Take the first half hour to review your calendar and get ready for any appointments/meetings, read and answer/delegate/delete your e-mails, and prioritize your To Do list.

End your day by organizing your desk.

Take 15 minutes to put office supplies in the drawer, files back in their place, and all loose paper in a stack(s). Update your To Do list by crossing off completed tasks and adding ones to be done tomorrow. Then you can leave feeling in control and, best of all, when you arrive the next morning you're ready to go.

Straighten your desk or work area at least every 2-3 days.

As you work, put papers to be filed in one stack, new business cards and scraps with phone numbers/addresses by your Rolodex, and mail in a bin. Then, at least twice a week file the papers, enter contacts in your Contacts, and open and handle your mail. No one likes to take the time, but it's the only way to know where things are and stay up-to-date.

Other quick tips:

Use a single, visible, calendaring system. Put all personal and business events and appointments on one paper or computer calendar. No forgotten appointments, no conflicts.

Keep adequate supplies. Have multiple pens and notepads readily available. Keep labels, file folders, staples, paper clips, stamps, and copy paper in stock. No down time because you don't have what you need.

Optimize your physical space. Keep frequently used files within reach and most of your desktop clear so you have room to work. (Use shelves, drawers, baskets, or stackable boxes to hold files, papers, and supplies if you have a small work area.) No frustration because you can't find a place to work amidst all the clutter.

Create an 'office to go'. Everyone spends time in their car driving to and from appointments, running errands, and doing business on their cell phone. Keep business cards, your marketing brochure, writing pad, pens, paper clips, stamps, some note cards and envelopes, coupons, and business magazines in a box/basket in your car so you can work on the fly and catch up on your professional reading if you arrive early or have to wait. No missed opportunities because materials you need are back at your office.