

Making Your Life *Easier* at Work

Consider that white-collar employees waste an average of 10.7% of their workweek – 5.5 workweeks per year – looking for misplaced information. If you multiply that by \$30/hr. and then by the number of managers in a department, the costs for an organization are astounding.

Life often moves faster than we can keep up with. This is especially true in business, where managers are bombarded by a never-ending flow of information. Mail, phone or fax combined with new technologies like cell phones, pagers, e-mail, Internet, mean that business people can quickly become buried under stuff, and feel overwhelmed and frustrated.

“The key to gaining control is simple structure,” says Elaine Jermy, owner of Hamilton-based Organized Evolution. “That way, you spend less time administering the details and more time focused on the things that can make your business a success. Information accumulates quickly and will always take longer to deal with in the future – and nobody would argue with the notion that time is money.”

by Elaine Jermy

In response to the stress of “too much work, not enough time”, Jermy developed the 5-step “Healthy Living at Work Program”. Specifically designed for executives and business owners, the program is guaranteed to make life at work easier. This all-inclusive program teaches techniques that make sense and provide long lasting results. “The major benefits of a personalized system are that you can make fast decisions, and experience renewed energy and peace of mind knowing that you can find what you need,” says Jermy.

THE HEALTHY LIVING AT WORK PROGRAM TEACHES YOU HOW TO:

- Clear space – Get rid of clutter and personalize your workspace for how you work.
- Manage information – Sort incoming information, set-up your paper flow system and manage your computer files.
- Save time – Customize how you manage time. Prioritize your tasks, protect your focus time and end your day.
- Maintain your system – Evolve your system to suit changing needs. Stay focused, motivated and strengthen new habits.

“Most of us are incredibly good at what we do, but we don’t have a clue where to begin when it comes to handling huge amounts of information,” says Jermy. “There are many terrific self-help books out there, but it’s often difficult to find the TIME to read them and then to follow the advice. The fact is, it’s much quicker (and easier) to get things done when you have someone to keep you focused and on task, especially when that person is an expert at clearing clutter, setting up paper flow systems and managing time.”

Jermy, a Professional Organizer, offers some tips that can help anyone “overcome the overload”. For a free Idea Kit packed with simple tips to help you get organized, visit www.organizedevolution.com.



10 TIPS TO OVERCOME THE OVERLOAD

1. BE REALISTIC & SET TIME LIMITS

If you attempt to organize too much at once, you may get discouraged and give up. Instead, block off a few hours and do as much as you can in that time. For example, instead of trying to organize your entire office in one day, break it into small “bits” (e.g. desktop, desk drawers, one file drawer, etc.).

2. TOUCH EVERYTHING ONCE AND MAKE A DECISION

With paper, ask yourself “what is the next action?” You have three choices: Toss, Act or File. With things, ask yourself “when was the last time I used this?” If it hasn’t been used within the last 6 months, move it into storage (label it with the date) or donate it.

3. STORE THINGS BASED ON THEIR FREQUENCY OF USE

Don’t clutter up your desktop with items you rarely use. If you use something often, it needs to be close by (e.g. desktop/desk drawer), but if you rarely use something put it into storage.

4. EMPTY YOUR INBOXES REGULARLY

“Inboxes” not only include slots, baskets and e-mail, but also voicemail, briefcase, purse, planners, and any other place that information is stashed! A daily clear out is ideal, but weekly will help to prevent mass accumulation.

5. SET UP ACTION & REFERENCE FILES

Action files hold information you are currently using (i.e. today/this week); all other information belongs in your reference files and can be pulled as needed. For easy access, locate your action files on your desktop and/or desk drawer and review regularly!

6. WHEN YOU THINK IT, INK IT!

Since the average human can only retain seven things in short-term mem-

ory, remembering is the least reliable and the most stressful way to manage your time. To relieve your memory, write everything in one place (e.g. appointments, to-do’s, important notes, etc.).

7. MANAGE YOUR TIME

Use a planner/PDA to schedule both your personal and business tasks. Prioritize your tasks, estimate how long they will take and make appointments with yourself to get them done. This will raise your level of commitment and help to avoid reacting to unexpected situations.

8. MINIMIZE INTERRUPTIONS

So that you can concentrate on completing important tasks, close your door, and turn off the phone ringer and e-mail notification. If you are home-based, avoid self-interruptions by buying duplicates so you don’t need to get up from your desk (i.e. calculator, scissors).

9. DO IT NOW

Get in the habit of taking a few minutes to do small tasks now. If a task will take more time, write it down and schedule time to do it later.

10. END YOUR DAY & ENJOY YOUR LIFE!

When you start your day with a messy desk, you feel defeated because you’re right back in the middle of yesterday’s issues. When you take a few minutes at the end of each day to clear off your desk, you can end your today and start tomorrow with a clear mind. After work, be sure to reward yourself with something you enjoy. You deserve it!



Elaine Jermy is President of Organized Evolution