

7 WAYS TO GET MORE ORGANISED



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Chapter 1:

How to Become More Organised

Organisation is a skill that we all strive to master, but if it doesn't come naturally to you, then it's something you have to learn, which can, of course, take some time to do. However, there are ways that you can become more efficient at home, at work and just in general, and if you're willing to learn, then you're already on the way to becoming a more organised person.

Do you know someone who's incredibly organised? They could be your parents, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbour. If you do know someone like this, then they will be a great help in becoming more organised. So tell them what you're trying to do, and ask them for advice on how they became so organised, the chances are that they will be very flattered by you approaching them, and they will probably be more than willing to help you out. See what kind of systems they use and try to use them in your own life, they may not work for you at first, so you can always adapt them to suit your circumstances, and see if they can work for you.

Another way to try and get more organised to start using a calendar and a diary, they will let you see what you have on and when, from meetings to Doctor's appointments to plays, and therefore let you plan out your day, week or even month with staggering accuracy. Diaries are particularly handy for appointments of any kind, because you can choose to write your appointment done in them instead of relying on the appointment card they give you at the time, which if you're disorganised you'll probably lose. If you don't like the idea of carrying a diary around with you, then all smartphones and most mobile phones are equipped with a calendar that can remind you of any upcoming events, hours or days in advance. Just make sure you get into the habit of always putting your meetings, appointments and any other happenings in there, or it'll be a bit useless.

Being organised is something that can be learnt, but it does take a little time and lots of practice, and if you succeed in it, it will be a skill that you will carry with you for the rest of your life. So if you do well, reward yourself by booking a holiday to a special island or by going on a shopping spree - just remember to put a reminder in your smart phone or diary first.

Chapter 2:

How to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time

If you want to stop procrastinating and get more done in less time, you will need to be clearer about what you want and what you have to do to achieve it. Once you have done this the easier it is for you to overcome procrastination. A major reason for procrastination and lack of motivation is vagueness, confusion and a fuzzy mind about what you are supposed to do and in what order and for what reason. Strive for greater clarity in everything you do. One of the great rules for success is to think on paper. Write all your ideas down.

If you are serious about wanting to stop procrastinating, there are seven simple steps that if followed will triple your productivity.

Step 1 - Decide exactly what you want. One of the worst uses of time is to do something very well that need not be done at all.

Step 2 - Write it down, think on paper, crystallize your goals and put energy behind it. Create something that you can touch and see.

Step 3 - Set a deadline on your goal. A goal or a decision without a deadline has no urgency.

Step 4 - Make a list of everything that you can think of that you are going to have to do in order to achieve your goal. Keep adding to the list until it is complete. A list gives you a visual picture of the larger task or objective. It will increase the likelihood that you will achieve your goals as you have defined it and on schedule.

Step 5 - Organize the list into a plan. It will be easier to achieve your goal when you break it down into individual tasks. With a written goal and an organised plan of action, you will be far more productive and efficient.

Step 6 - Take action on your plan immediately. Do something! Do anything! For you to achieve any kind of success, execution is everything.

Step 7 - Do something every day, resolve to do something everyday that moves you towards your major goal. Never miss a day, keep pushing forward. Once you start moving, keep moving, and don't stop! Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement. Think about your goals and review them daily. Take action on the most important task you can accomplish and achieve your most important goal at the moment.

If you decide to take these simple steps on board and implement them into your daily routine, you will soon see a big change in your personal and business life. I wish you all the best on the road to achieving your goals.

Chapter 3:

Personal Organisation Made Easy

Life is so easy. You plan your work and list out what you are going to do on your 'Job's List' and then you just get on with it. No one interrupts you, you don't get any telephone calls, your boss doesn't make unreasonable demands...and there are fairies at the bottom of your garden!

OK, so life's not like that. You do get interruptions, you do get telephone calls and your boss does make unreasonable demands. So what are you going to do about it? Not bother to plan because there's no point? Just get on with whatever comes to mind? We suggest not. Get organised. Let your conscious brain rule your working life, not your subconscious. Don't let your subconscious cloud what you are doing with those negative emotions.

We suggest that you operate a three-tier system of self-organisation,

A day book, A task list, A diary.

Let's look at each of these in turn.

Day book

Most, if not all of you, will already be using job's lists. But are you using them efficiently? How many jobs have you ticked off at the end of the day? How many new jobs have been added? If your boss rings and asks you to do one or two extra things for him, do you just add them to the list?

Why not keep a daybook? A simple bound book will do. Then, whatever happens during the day note it in your daybook; don't interfere with your job's list. It's a place to record all of those reactive things that just happen.

Then, at the end of the day (or first thing in the morning if you prefer) go through your daybook and transfer the relevant items to your job's list.

Task list

Use your task list to control your day to day work. As part of your regular review of your work, go through your list and prioritize your work. Use any classification that you like. Why not just keep it simple? 1 - for the most important jobs; 2 - for the not so important, and 3-for the rest. It doesn't matter how you do it – simply devise something that suits you, and do it.

If something needs to be done today, then clearly it is category 1. What about those jobs that, well, they don't have to be done today but it would be a real bonus if they were. Maybe these are category 1 as well. Look at each job and look at the return on investment. Which ones are going to give you the biggest return on investment in respect of your personal and business goals? The bigger the payback then the higher the category.

There are two exceptions to this rule. Firstly, jobs that can cause you stress. Get these out of the way as quickly as you can. You won't really be able to concentrate properly on anything else while these are hanging over you. Your subconscious brain will keep reminding you of them and you'll feel bad. Secondly, jobs that require interaction with people. Whether that's within your organisation or outside, deal with these jobs as category 1.

Don't have too many jobs on your job's list. It will just make you feel bad if you look at the list at the end of the day and you've only ticked off a couple of things. Maybe have sub lists for ongoing projects; maybe have sub lists for those small tasks that aren't important that we could do in those rare moments when we get some free time.

Diary

Now you can plan your day. Look down your job's list and put down in your diary what jobs you would like to do today and when you would like to do them. Put times down if you want. Maybe just put 'morning' or 'afternoon'. Be realistic. Don't put down more than you can realistically do.

Now we've got ourselves organised with a daybook, a job's list and a diary, what are the things that are going to stop us working with these in the best possible way?

Procrastination

We are all guilty of procrastination at some time. There are those jobs we don't like doing. Those jobs we find boring. Those phone calls we don't really want to make. That person we need to see with the news we'd rather not tell them. We're human; we're all guilty!

We subconsciously think that maybe those unpleasant jobs will go away. But they never do. We have to do them in the end. Sometimes this means that we don't do as good a job as we should have done due to lack of time. Sometimes the task turns out to be not as difficult as we thought; that confrontation not as upsetting and we wish we had just done it straight away and avoided all of that stress.

So do the tasks you normally procrastinate over first. Get them out of the way. Get rid of that stress. Do it. You'll be proud of yourself! And then give yourself a reward.

Chapter 4:

Time Management Strategies: Get more done - better and faster

If you think there are just not enough hours in the day to do everything you need to do, if it often seems as if you are chasing your tail, if you are underperforming, or stressed out, and don't know what to do about it, this could be just what you need.

To this day I am always shocked when I discover most of the clients I coach on time management have no organisational systems in place whatsoever. My clients are usually super busy entrepreneurs, self-starters, business people trying to juggle career and home life - but they have no plan! And when you have no plan, anything can happen.

In business and in life, you can't leave things to chance. The Eisenhower Matrix is a time management tool I didn't make up, but it is in my opinion one of the most effective and useful tools ever. Steven Covey, Owen Fitzpatrick and many other highly acclaimed personal development authors have featured it in their books. Books you may have read. But have you been using it? If you are reading this post, my guess is no.

Well, let me break it down for you!

Consider for a moment all the things you do on a daily basis. Work tasks, home chores, meals, workouts, family time, "me" time, time with friends, time surfing the net...

They all fall within one of the following categories:

URGENT & IMPORTANT

(Crisis management tasks-have a date/time limit)

i.e.: doctor appointment - Monday @ 10am

Work meeting - Tuesday @ 2pm

Report delivery - Friday @ 1pm

Client appointments -

NON-URGENT&IMPORTANT

(Reflect your values-things that are important to you just because)

i.e.: work out

Take Jenny to play in the park

Walk by the sea with mum

URGENT&NON-IMPORTANT

(Things that should be done, but not immediately)

i.e.: clean the house

Shopping

Tidy work desk

NON-URGENT&NON-IMPORTANT

(Time wasters-certain phone calls, certain conversations, TV, internet...?)

i.e.: Facebook

Google

TV

A lot of people write lists but they don't know how to use them to their advantage, so the things on them may or may not get done. Instead, make a list of all the things you have to get done today.

Now, sieve them through the matrix. The first time you do it, it may be a little tricky to identify the right spot, but as you do this more and more, you'll find it easier and easier. If you want certain things done urgently, you can assign a date/time limit to them, so they become Urgent & Important. For example, if your work desk is really untidy, to the point that you waste hours every day just looking for things, then it makes sense to prioritise tidying it up so that everything else will become easier. You have to organise things in a way that you'll be able to manage them better from now on. You don't wait till you absolutely stink to take a shower, do you? You take a shower every day. It's called "upkeep".

Once you've sieved your tasks through the matrix consider this:

URGENT&IMPORTANT	YOU DO IT!
NON-URGENT&IMPORTANT	YOU DO IT!
URGENT&NON-IMPORTANT	YOU PUT IT OFF OR DELEGATE IT!
NON-URGENT&NON-IMPORTANT	YOU DELETE IT, GET RID OF IT!

Now, all you have to do is transfer your prioritized tasks for today onto a schedule that suits the way you represent time, your personality, and your lifestyle... a schedule that works for you! I see too many people with A5 or A4 diaries or notebooks they rarely or never use; people who tell me they use their phones, outlook, or just their heads to keep track. Ha! I say. We process over 60,000 thoughts a day; random thoughts on all sorts of things. And you are telling me you rely on your brain to remember all the things you need to remember? Even Einstein wrote things down!

I and most of my clients work really well with a simple excel sheet like this where you can track your week (see example for Monday):

MONDAY

6.30-7am Breakfast

7-8am Emails/calls

8-10am Client

10-11am Blog post

11am-1pm Workout and lunch

1-3pm Client

3-4pm Client

4-6pm Dinner

6-8pm Review tomorrow's schedule/walk in the park

However, you can experiment with different types of schedules until you find one that suits you best. So what you do is you take your Urgent & Important things first, and slot them onto your schedule (use a colour pen that denotes urgency). Then, take the Non-urgent & Important things, and transfer them onto your schedule with a different colour pen. Then, transfer the Urgent & Non-important things (things that have to get done, but not necessarily today or now, or by you).

If you think that a task is going to take you an hour, when transferring it onto your schedule assign it an hour and twenty minutes or so. Always add 10-20minutes "buffer" time. Why? Because stuff happens; traffic, a phone call, a knock on the door...

By the time you've filled out your weekly schedule, what you are going to realize is that you have more time in your hands than you thought you had! Then, and only then, you can consider time wasters...

Make sure most of your time is spent on the top two quadrants of the matrix: I guarantee you'll start to feel happier about your life and more in control of things

I suggest you display your schedule somewhere you can see it and refer to it all the time, and possibly make a few copies to bring with you when you leave the house/office. As you get through your day/week, I recommend you tick off things as you get them done and notice the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction it brings.

Setting up a few minutes every Saturday or Sunday to devise your plan for the week will free up tons of time and mental space that you can use to be more efficient and effective in your business and your life. As well as doing this, I suggest you keep a monthly calendar (a wall calendar with boxes you can write on is great) where you can also keep an overview of the

four weeks ahead, so as well as keeping track of the small picture, you are also aware of the bigger picture. And if you really want to make some big things happen this year, then a yearly wall planner can make a huge difference too!

I do trust some of these simple techniques help you to break any sense of overwhelm down into some 'bite-sized' pieces.

Happy planning!

Chapter 5:

Get More Done with Less Stress

Much stress is caused at work by differing approaches to getting things done. Some people seem to do nothing until a last minute coffee fuelled rush. Others seem to have lists, organisers & calendars and move seemingly effortlessly through their days ticking lists off as they go.

Such polar opposite approaches can create disharmony (Conflict) at work where a little understanding could create wonderful harmony.

Let me explain.

Some people like to take things slowly keep their options open and get decisions made at the last possible minute. (Perceivers or P's)

Others want detailed plans diarised and ticked off as they go, seeing the development of their project, grow over time. (Judgers or J's)

Where an organised person (J) will want to plan & know procedures, processes, how's, when's, where's and will make sure that all Is are dotted and Ts are crossed; an evolving person (P) will let things happen - keeping his options open and allow life and his projects to unfold until the last possible minute.

There is a real hard wired and physiological difference between the Perceiver (P) and the Judger (J) in their approaches to getting things done.

J's, will start their project / task at time zero and will have a slight adrenalin lift which sustains them through to completion on, or before, the set deadline. Thus their visible effort will match their adrenalin levels and steady state activity follows.

P's on the other hand will get an adrenalin surge at the start of a project accompanied by a rush of activity. When they realise that the project /task is not due until 3 days/weeks/months/years away there is an associated drop in adrenalin with an associated and highly visible drop in activity level. They relax & chill out. No rush. Put off till tomorrow what does not need to be done today.

At the last possible minute our Pressure Prompted P gets an 'oh gosh' moment. A massive surge in adrenalin followed by a rush of creativity and a very highly visible burst of activity; perhaps an overnight dash to the finish line with delivery/completion on, or around, the set deadline. Where there is no deadline at all our Pressure Prompted P does not get an adrenaline burst so the activity simply does not get done. Both J's and P's can schedule and plan. Both can create Gantt charts and work to them. It is simply that J's Schedule from time zero and plan forward; while P's schedule from the delivery deadline and plan backward to the absolute latest they have to start to get the task finished on time. The challenge comes when they underestimate the amount of time needed to complete the task.

What does all this mean? Information is not useful unless you can apply it somewhere.

If you are an organised "Early Starting J" and work with a "Pressure Prompted P" then you are probably seething in frustration at the seemingly never ending fire-fighting stress-based rollercoaster. "Why can't they just start earlier?" Why can't they delegate more to me earlier so that I don't have to rush?

If you are a "Pressure Prompted P" it is highly likely that you are tired of being micromanaged by Early Starting J's who don't trust you to deliver on time with your usual genius just like you always do (well mostly).

Early Starting organised J's if you want to get things done by your Pressure Prompted P colleagues on time and with your stress levels intact - The Secret is...LIE to them. Yes Lie! Tell them a false early deadline. Better still - break your project into smaller tasks with lots of mini deadline along the way to the 'real, completion. They will still get an adrenalin surge and you get to know that your project is being delivered.

Pressure Prompted P's if you are tired of being micro managed, tell your J colleges what you are doing and why they can't see your visible output. Show them your plan (please write it down first - Js' like to see things written down!) Show them when you plan to start & finish.

Reassure them and if that doesn't work to appease them then agree an earlier deadline. Over time, when you regularly deliver they will begin to trust you more. But you will have to train them to relax with your way of getting things done.

Chapter 6:

Why Personal Organisers Are a Perfect Gift for Any Business Person

In this hyper-consumerist age, where choice is at its peak thanks to the internet and purchasing more immediate thanks to using credit cards online, it's easy to forget the reason why a gift can be so meaningful. For many, it's everything to know of the effort made to find that one special item that seems made for its recipient. Such a gift is more personal than a woollen scarf and more valuable than the price tag its cover would suggest. This is where taking the time to find alternative gifts, those less obvious than the normal types, pays off so well.

Shopping for a gift that differs from the ordinary isn't a difficult task, though choosing the item that perfectly matches the recipient's interest and personality can still be. The internet has made access to reputable sources of such gifts much easier, removing the need to traipse the pavement of numerous towns or boroughs before finding what you are looking for. Nevertheless, it is always advisable to consider the available options carefully before coming to a final decision.

When considering a gift to give to a family member, loved one or even work colleague, the unusual option is guaranteed to generate greater appreciation. Imagine, for example, the reaction when an old-world map is given to a lover of history; or perhaps a calligraphy set is presented to a wordsmith or artist: such gifts suggest the giver thought carefully about the persons interests before deciding. For the business man or woman then, amongst the most popular items to consider are personal organisers, which provide not just quality but an added sense of practicality.

Of course, they are not the only options available, and not everyone has a hectic work schedule that needs organising. Journals are a good idea in such cases, with leather journals sporting authentic leather covers offering a greater sense of worth to pages that will (mostly likely) be filled with the thoughts and opinions of the owner. Journals come in a variety of sizes to suit just as many purposes, whether it be small and discreet in which to keep simple notes, or larger and hard-covered in which more significant jottings can be kept.

There is a difference between organisers and journals, with the latter offering no calendar, diary or additional useful information, as would be expected from an organiser. Also, its pages are not always ruled, and can be used as a sketch pad for the amateur artist in us all. A personal organiser, on the other hand, usually accommodates refills and is designed to note and inform, rather than offer space to jot ideas.

As an item for the professional, personal organisers are expected to have a host of features, such as credit card and business card holders, a diary section, daily rulers, a schedule section, notes and finance pages, a monthly/yearly planner, and a A-Z contacts section. Document pockets are also keenly sought after as they are particularly useful to the professional who prefers to conduct meetings discreetly outside the boardroom.

Designs can vary too, with leather covers that can be securely closed by either a simple metal stud clip or a magnetic stud clip. Their genuine leather covers are usually made of cowhide, but can be of soft Italian padded leather or leather protected by high-gloss urethane. This helps to keep the leather safe from damage caused by everyday wear and tear, bumps and

scratches. An array from colours, from brown to burgundy, and different finishing touches, such as edge stitching creates a sense of the individual.

There are also a variety of different types of leather journals, with the most obvious being the hard or soft cover option. However, because of the more personal nature that a journal boasts, there is more than just the smooth soft Italian leather kind to choose. Beautifully coloured rustic leather journals are available or even suede leather journals in colours as exotic as aubergine, fuchsia and chocolate.

For extra-special alternative gifts, one can choose hard-backed leather journals with a cover that is embossed with a Fleur D'Lys motif for example. Or, perhaps for the more intrepid chronicler, a soft calf-hide leather journal with leather straps to tie it closed before slipping it in a pocket and moving on. Whether it's journals or stylish personal organisers that you're looking for a search online is more likely to find you what you want.

Chapter 7:

Staying on Top of the Housework for a Cleaner, More Organised Home

As the New Year begins, many of us will be making resolutions to change a few things for the better. For busy families, a regular resolution made around this time of year is to get on top of the household organisation and find ways to declutter our lives. If you're drowning in a sea of toy cars, vacuuming up Lego bricks and constantly looking for things that have disappeared into the mess, here are some top tips for creating a cleaner, more organised home for 2014.

Top tips for home organisation

Spot where the mess happens: Certain areas of your home will be like a mess magnet. If you are constantly clearing art projects from the dining table, get yourself a small box or basket to pop it all in, and find somewhere handy to store it. Find places in the house where you tend to find mess, and create a solution that will make it as easy as possible for you and your family to tidy away.

Make a place in every room: Create a place in every room in the house where toys and other bits and bobs can easily be put to instantly clear up at tidy up time. A nice wicker basket or crate is ideal for this. Every now and then you can take the basket around the house, rehoming the contents when you have time.

Use a shoe box: Don't bother with a shoe rack. Families who do seem to spend all their time picking up shoes and getting frustrated when others don't, so have a simple large box where everyone's footwear can be chucked in, making it easy for everyone to help.

Swish the bathroom every day: Keep a basic cleaning product and cloth in the bathroom and give it a quick swish over when you go in for your morning wash. Just a brief wipe of the shower, toilet and sink will keep things looking and smelling fresh, and you'll never have to spend an hour deep cleaning the room again.

Take ten minutes: Find yourself ten minutes a day to tackle a problem area. This could be a drawer, a cupboard or a room, but limit yourself to ten minutes. Trying to do the whole house in one go will only stress you out and make you reluctant to do it again, but by tackling the big problems in manageable chunks, you'll keep your enthusiasm up and make a little progress each day.

Know when to throw: Remember that if you are in any doubt whether you or your family need something any more, throw it out. If you really can't bear to part with it why not consider putting it in a cheap self-storage unit as a compromise to it cluttering up your home. Having too much stuff is the major culprit for many families who are living in a cluttered state of affairs, so throw out anything that is not beautiful or useful.

Implement a few of these tips yourself, and see how easy it can be to get back on top of the housework. Don't feel like you've got to do it all alone either; even children as young as two can help with putting clothes in the washing machine or taking books back to the bookcase. Make it a team effort and everyone will be pleased with the results of living in a clutter-free home.

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After establishing her own company in 1984, Maggie has coached and consulted for many high profile clients, including MicrOpay, Ceanet, the Macquarie Institute, McGrath and Regency Real Estate, Pickwick Group, and the Global IT Platform.

Her business acumen and accomplishments were recognised when Maggie was nominated for the NSW Telstra "Business Woman of the Year" on two occasions, as well as being awarded the position as secretary of the National Speakers Association of NSW.

World-renowned integrative medicine expert and author Deepak Chopra, is one of the prominent figures with high praise of Maggie's inspirational speaking, teaching and coaching skills. When referring to Maggie's involvement with the courses offered Internationally by the Chopra Centre, Deepak shared, "Maggie is one of our finest teachers. Her dedication and commitment are truly infinite".

John McGrath, founder of McGrath Real Estate, applauded her stating that "Maggie Webber's work is fresh, innovative and right-on for businesses struggling in this new environment. She won't improve your business – she'll show you how to revolutionize it!"

Today, Maggie stays true to her passion of assisting women with a range of strategies and skills to overcome the 'struggle with the juggle'. By helping them to achieve work-life synergy, Maggie also empowers women to discover their passions and enjoy a purpose-driven life.

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