

## Improve One Area of Disorganization This Month!

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*The Now Newspaper, B2B  
October, 2004*

The first full week of October is Get Organized Week. This week, which celebrates the benefits of organization, was established in 1992 by the National Association of Professional Organizers. So if you're looking for a little extra incentive to get organized, October is the month that can help you get back on track.

What's so great about being organized? As millions of people already know –getting organized can actually improve your life. It reduces stress and frustration, increases efficiency, enables you to find things when you need them and get things done. Through getting organized, individuals all over the world have streamlined their life and increased profits while actually creating more time for themselves.

So in the spirit of Get Organized Week, why not turn October into the month you get organized? Instead of just jumping in and tackling everything at once, let's focus our efforts on one specific area that's giving you trouble.

To identify one main area for improvement, please read the sentences below and rate yourself on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being strongly agree and one being strongly disagree.

- My days and weeks are planned and organized so that I always know and act on my priorities.
- I read, schedule, act upon and respond to all e-mails in a timely manner. In addition my inbox is emptied out once every 24 hours.
- I act upon and respond to all voicemail and verbal requests in a timely manner.
- I can find any file in five seconds or less and all of my current action items are easily accessible.
- I have a designated location for recurring daily tasks and actions, such as calls to make, documents to read and incoming items.
- I regularly delegate projects that are outside of my area of focus
- My computer is organized to the point that I can always find the file I am looking for.
- My appointments are all clearly scheduled in one calendar that I use in and out of the office.

Now, let's take the lowest numbered item and use the month of October to improve on it by a level or two. You're not Superman, so I don't expect you to be at a 10 before the month's end.

Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Know your priorities and then schedule time for those tasks in your calendar. Delegate non-priority items and focus your energy on what matters.

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- E-mail can get out of control very quickly. Take a few minutes to organize your files within your e-mail program. Add files for the following: action; read; respond; waiting for a response; and templates. Each morning, delete unnecessary e-mails (spam/junk), respond to any e-mail that will only take two minutes or less to respond to, then move all other e-mails to their designated files, leaving a completely empty inbox. Then schedule time each day to deal with those e-mails.
- The Paper Tiger is an amazing filing tool. If you aren't using it or some other file management index, it's time to start!
- If you don't have a designated location for daily tasks and actions, then it's time to make one. Start with a Tickler System that sits right on your desk.
- If you don't regularly delegate projects that are outside of your area of focus, then you're wasting valuable time! Plan to delegate at least one non-focus related task this week.
- If you are wasting time searching for files on your computer, it's time to clean it up. Take some time to review files. Back up all files and then delete the ones that you never use.
- If scheduling isn't your cup of tea, you're not alone! Start by getting a calendar you like and use only that one calendar for all your scheduling needs. By using only one calendar, you won't waste time transferring over appointments or risk losing track of important appointments.