

Go on – get organised

If business is a little slow at present, it may be a good time to really get on top of your time management and organisational processes.

It can be hugely debilitating in both your business and your personal life if you are surrounded by chaos. And it can also mean you are far less effective in your business.

Why not take a full day to sort out your office, catch up with all your filing and organise the clutter.

Did you know that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that it's probably the worst thing you'll do all day. Okay, so I am kidding! But the "eat that frog" is a metaphor for tackling the most challenging task of your day - the one you are most likely to procrastinate on, but it is also probably the one that can have the greatest positive impact on your life.

Being organised also means that you save money. Remember that in business that time is money and if you waste time all day long looking for things, you are wasting money. If you spend just five minutes of every hour of an eight hour day looking for things, that adds up to over four weeks per year (166 hours). Many times, we spend hours looking for something. It adds up fast when you take each employee's hourly rate of pay and multiply it by 166 hours per year.

For example: \$15/hour X 166 hours X 10 employees = \$24,900/year thrown away!

Disorganisation can also have an emotional impact – the tidier and more work efficient your work place is the more likely you are to be effective.

So, go on, use your time productively and when the upturn comes, you'll be well and truly ready for all the extra business coming your way.

7 quick tips that will help improve filing systems

1. Create a records management protocol - determine storage methods, classification of information, indexing methods, purging inactive records, implement safe storage of vital records.
2. Location of records - locate your system for ease of access and optimum efficiency
3. Reduce costly floor space - conventional 4 drawer filing cabinets have been around for over 100 years. You can store the contents of three 4 drawer cabinets in 35% of the same floor space by using a lateral filing cabinet. It's more cost effective to use airspace rather than floor space.
4. Avoid fixed spine files - lever arch or other fixed spine files take up the same shelf space whether they are filled to capacity or have a single sheet of paper in them. Use files that expand as their content increases.
5. Highlight important files - use a different coloured file to ensure your staff give priority to your important clients
6. Use colour coded indexing labels for ease of identification and to highlight costly misfiling - people read colour faster than words so indexing with colour coded

labels makes sense. Saving time means saving money. Further a misplaced file stands out.

7. Create a system - many filing systems rely on one person to find the information. For others wanting that same information it's like trying to find your way around in a foreign country without a map. Ensure that your system is a system and there is a directory or a method of finding information without the custodian present. Don't let people keep information where only they know where to find it.