Work Organization

Work is easily the most important part of life to organize. If we hope to get the most out of our career or job, getting organized can help deliver results much faster. Perhaps more importantly, a strong organizational system at work can help ease stress and make the working day far more enjoyable.

Following are a few tips to help you get organized in the workplace:

1. Keep Lists - The proverbial to-do list is a cliché, but it has to be one for a very good reason -- it works. Lists work, given your ability to abide by them. In essence, they are an easy way to organize your tasks. The key is not to pile papers up and keep haphazard notes everywhere. Store your lists in a logical place, like a PDA or an e-mail that you re-send yourself on a regular basis. Organize them by subject, deadline, or however else you need to for them to get done.

2. Manage Your Email - The key with email is to "zero out your inbox" by the end of every day. Many think it is easier to keep all emails in the inbox for that day for when it might become important. If it is not important now, it's probably just not important. What's the best way for you to manage your work email? Is your inbox in need of a spring cleaning?

3. Batch Routine Jobs - Do you have a list of things that need to be done every day, or every week? Most of us do. Consider taking these activities and doing them at one time or in one sitting. Do you have phone calls to make every day? Do them all before 10am. Do you have financial records to update periodically? Gather those receipts in one place and setup a specific time for doing it in one batch. What tasks can you group together every Monday, for example? What do you find yourself doing again and again throughout the day that can be done at one time?

4. Reduce Your Junk - Paperwork, books, manuals, pictures, junk, and who knows what else can pile up and invade your space. The problem begins once the accumulation starts; it becomes exponentially more difficult to hold it back. Don't go through stuff with a nostalgic or critical eye, you'll never reduce the clutter that way. Transfer it all to the dumpster and make it a new habit to do a wholesale clean every few months or so.

5. Streamline Your Computer - The most blatant mess of all is seldom on our desks, but in our computers. When you make your computer work for you and take advantage of shortcuts and efficient commands, you save a lot of time in the long-term. Take a look at the files on your computer. Do you need them all? What can you trash in order to free up space on the hard drive? How can you organize them better? Apply the same rules as for your paperwork. File them away in folders that have descriptive names so that you know at first glance what is in them. Once you get that done, move on to your inbox and use the same rule of thumb. File important emails away in folders and trash the superfluous garbage. If you use the Internet a lot for work, do likewise and organize your bookmarks and favorite sites. It is very difficult to find a site when you click on "Bookmarks" and two hundred links appear. Organize them into folders: this is why the command exists.

If you're too frazzled to think about trying any of these tips, it's time to ask for help. Does your life feel totally out of control? If so, contact Cascade EAP for assistance.