

Getting Organized Once and For All

Robert A. Arzt, CLU, ChFC, LLIF

Perhaps the most frequent questions I receive in my sales coaching practice are, “Can you help me get organized once and for all?” or “I don’t have enough time each day to accomplish everything that needs to get done, can you help me?” Are these people saying that they don’t know how to get organized? I think not. Most people already know what to do to solve a problem or initiate a new goal or strategy. According to Dr. Stephanie Burns, “Setting an intention to achieve something sometime in the future is a normal routine for most people.” The problem is deeper than that.

Too Many Promises and Good Intentions

As human beings, we are very creative and curious. We have the ability and desire to always want more or to be better, and that’s a good thing. However, the way our mind works can get in the way of us actually following through on our goals or the promises we make to ourselves. In the course of any given day, we are faced with many choices of what to do and how to do it. Basic human nature causes us to move in the direction of what gives us pleasure or to move away from what might cause us pain or to be uncomfortable. Therein lies the problem. Overcoming this natural tendency of doing what feels good and not doing what doesn’t feel good is a real challenge.

Following-Through Strategies

Don’t be too discouraged though. There are strategies you can employ to help you overcome these natural tendencies. First, let’s deal with actions you can take to help ensure that you will follow through on your goal to get more organized. These actions can be applied to any goal you set for yourself.

First, create bold compelling reasons why you need to follow through on your goal of getting more organized. Make it more painful to not move forward with your organization plan than to do so.

Second, start small and get into the habit of getting started. Then build upon this habit by adding the required actions to achieve your end result.

Third, reward yourself for both getting started and staying on track. It takes energy to create new habits. You might experience some mental soreness. Be prepared for it.

Before discussing some tools and activities you can use to get on top of your organization and time control issues, here’s a list of some additional suggestions to help with your motivation to do so.

- Strike while the iron is hot—don’t delay in getting started.
- Tough it out—Do whatever it takes to stay on track for the first few weeks.
- Focus—consider cutting back on the number of projects you want to undertake.
- Don’t go it alone—ask associates to partner with you. Keep each other on track and accountable to your goal.
- Find someone you would not want to disappoint and make a promise to them.

- Consider how bad you will feel by not getting organized. The more you exaggerate this consequence, the more likely you'll follow through on your plan.

Perhaps the most important aspect of changing your behavior to accomplish something new is this, *you become what you believe you can become and/or accomplish!* Belief in the attainment of any goal, whatever it might be, is a critical requirement in the achievement of that goal. Every strategy and tactic you have at your disposal to build belief should be deployed. Do whatever works best for you, from writing out affirmations to visualization to giving yourself rewards for incremental progress. If you're not sure what works best for you, try them all.

Problem-Solving Strategies

Now that we've handled the psychological issues surrounding how to follow through on any goal, let's look at some actions you can take to conquer your organization and time control issues.

- Time wasters—Discover all of your time wasting activities and what gets in the way of your being organized. For each time waster, create an action plan to either totally eliminate it or reduce its impact.
- Define your workflow—Determine all of your necessary activities each week and allocate the ideal amount of time it takes to accomplish each one.
- The perfect week—Create an ideal workweek. Physically block off time in your calendar each week to accomplish each activity you identified above along with the amount of time necessary to accomplish each activity.
- Reserves—Build into your schedule fail-safe time. For example, block off every Friday afternoon as reserve time. You can use this time to catch up on excess work, uncompleted tasks, or if you're totally caught up, head home early or reward yourself with something that gives you pleasure.
- Laser planning—Set aside time everyday to review today and plan for tomorrow.

As William James once said, “Nothing is as fatiguing as the continued hanging on of an uncompleted task.” Now is the time to get organized. Begin by scheduling an appointment with yourself to write out the steps you will take to conquer your organization and time control issues. Good luck on your journey to success.

If you have some organization and time control ideas that work for you, email them to me for possible inclusion in a future article.

Robert A. Arzt, CLU, ChFC, LLIF is President and Founder of Polaris One and InsuranceCoachU.com. He coaches insurance professionals who want achieve more. Contact him at 301-610-5624, bob@insurancecoachu.com or through his website at www.insurancecoachu.com