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A President

Revising

the Resolution:

Getting Organized for Good

By Angela A. Aldrich

As 2007 arrives almost everyone thinks about the half hearted New Year's Resolution we make; lose weight, save money, get organized. Ahh, getting organized, my personal favorite. I, for one, think that particular resolution needs to be revised: LEARN to get organized!

The idea of organizing anything, from our homes and family to our careers and offices, is usually an overwhelming task. To some, it can be downright frightening. It doesn't have to be that way. The fear and anxiety that comes with taking on an organizational task is usually accompanied by the thought, "Where do I begin?" When you possess the knowledge on how to proceed, the goal is much more attainable and less intimidating. In light of another New Year beginning, I want to share with my readers the essential steps on grabbing hold of the organizing process and prevailing

over the fears of getting organized.

The best way to approach any organizational challenge is to divide and conquer. You have to think of the space in sections. Whether it be a room or a single surface,

"The best way to approach a challenge is to divide and conquer."

breaking the task up into smaller parts will make it more manageable. When deciding on where to begin, you need to try and start with a small section or surface of a room. If you are in your office and there are papers everywhere, sort through one pile at a time. If you are home and you have stuff all over the room, start with the stuff on the floor, then move to a counter top, etc. When you section out parts of a room, you not only make the entire task easier, but you can see the fruit of your labor quickly.

Everything in your home or office belongs in one category or another. Whether it be filing, toys, or cleaning supplies, everything in your home or office can be placed into some type of category. Sort through each pile of "stuff" in each section of the room, and create category piles of all like items. This will make it clear to you how

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Organizing Statistics

80% of what we keep we never use. -Agency Sales Magazine 4/1/03

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that unequivocally 80% of our medical expenditures are stress related. -Fast Company Magazine, 2/03

50%, the percentage of time professionals spend locating pertinent information. -Price Waterhouse Coopers

Workers productivity decreases by 20% to 40% every time they multitask. -University of Michigan, 2001

It costs \$120.00 in labor to track down a misplaced document, or \$250.00 in labor to recreate it. -North Carolina Brunswick Beachon, 10/94

White collar workers waste 40% of their workday because they were never taught organizing skills to cope with increasing workloads and demands - Wall Street Journal

100,000- The number of deaths each year caused by information errors or lack of data. - The Institute of Medicine.

Revising the Resolution: Getting Organized for Good! *(continued from page 1)*

much of each thing you own. Many people cannot find something they need and assume they are out, so they go out and buy more. The average business owner spends 40% more annually on office supplies than they need to because the supply closet is never in order or properly restocked. The average homeowner spends an even heftier 70% on everyday household items because

“If you haven’t needed it, throw it away!”

they can’t find what they need when they need it. If you are able to get a visual of ALL your stuff, categorically, you’ll not only see how much you already have, but most likely save yourself money because you will not need to go out and purchase items until you are positive what you need is gone. Also, you will be able to see if you have accumulated things you no longer need or use.

Most important rule of thumb any organized person will tell you; if you haven’t used it, needed it, or acknowledged

it in six months or more, THROW IT AWAY!! Now throwing something away can be donating it to the Salvation Army, Goodwill, or other entity that may be able to put the item to use, selling it or just plain tossing it in the garbage. People inherently have the need to collect stuff. The mistake most people make is they associate memories or place an emotional connection with physical items. The idea of discarding an item that “means something” but has no real purpose is a difficult one for most people to muster. Getting rid of something that has no actual function is not a bad thing. It doesn’t take away the memory or feeling the item held. It does however clean your space and gives you the room you need to grow.

Once you have tackled the sorting, categorization, and the purging, what’s left needs to be put away! You need to place all items in a practical, user friendly place. You aren’t going to put your pots and pans in the bedroom if you only cook in your kitchen. Now this is the part of your organization process that is going

to be the most important. Where you choose to store items is, ideally, where they will always be when not in use. This is the key to knowing where everything is and how much of it you have. You can always reference back to where something SHOULD be and know for certain if it’s not there, you’re out. This creates a user friendly, stress free space while keeping spending down tremendously.

Following these tips will give you the framework to begin and successfully tackle all your organizational endeavors in 2007. Once you master your world through organization, you will have to come up with new resolutions for 2008! ■



HARRISBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER,
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A³ TIP OF THE MONTH

Utilize your time! Use a planner to track appointments and tasks. It can be a paper-based notebook, a computer software program, or an electronic handheld device.

Create at least one hour of uninterrupted time per day to tackle projects and action items. Allocate twice as much time for a task as you think it will take. This accommodates for interruptions and stopping to get more information. Break large projects down into small sequential steps. Schedule these steps into your day with your planner.

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