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Stephanie Shalofsky, April 2010

## **TOP 10 TIPS FOR A MORE PRODUCTIVE OFFICE**

By better managing our paper and computer information, e-mail and time, we can all be much more efficient and be able to tackle whatever crosses our desks. Follow my tips for being more organized in your office and your productivity will increase. However, be sure to limit your focus to only 1 tip at a time. Once you have really mastered the new behavior which can take up to a month, move onto another area and follow the same process. If you would like to know your [productivity score](#), fill out our short self evaluation.

1. Be in control of your e-mail instead of your e-mail controlling you. Schedule time to check e-mail no more than 2-3 times per day rather than every time the computer signals the receipt of a new message.
2. With more to do in less time, it is more important than ever to “Work Smart, Not Long”. Review your to-do list, delete tasks that are not essential and focus only on the most important ones as there won’t be time to address all of the tasks on your list.
3. Set parameters to make meetings more productive. Set a time limit. Be prepared. Ban electronic devices. Keep the agenda very specific and stick to it.
4. Manage your e-mail in-box by establishing a few very simple procedures. Set up folders, move messages out of the in-box and into the appropriate folders and delete all unnecessary messages upon reading them.
5. Apply the 2 minute rule to your e-mail inbox. If it will take you less than 2 minutes to respond to an e-mail, do so immediately upon opening the message. This is more efficient than opening the message and moving it into a folder so that it can be addressed at another time.
6. Assign a specific action to each of the in-boxes on your desk. The actions could be: To File, To Read, To Pay. The objective is to have the actions relate to the paper flow on your desk.
7. If you have lots of papers to organize, group them into piles with those that were received most recently on top. The longer the piles of paper have accumulated, the higher the probability that much of the paper is no longer needed.
8. E-mail is not always the fastest, most productive means for addressing certain issues or questions. In some cases, especially when there is a looming deadline, a brief phone conversation or face-to-face meeting is the way to go.
9. Schedule time to make/return phone calls. Make a list of all of the individuals that need to be contacted and focus specifically on doing so until all calls have been made.



10. At the end of each week, take a few minutes to clear your desk. Sort through the papers and file/discard as appropriate. Establish your priorities for the upcoming week and block out time on your calendar to tackle them.

Stephanie Shalofsky is the founder of [The Organizing Zone](#) and a Professional Organizer located in New York City. She specializes in [office organizing](#) and works with both small companies and individuals with home offices. Stephanie creates customized solutions that her clients can sustain so that they will be better able to manage their paper and computer information, time and space. She can be reached via e-mail at [Stephanie@theorganizingzone.com](mailto:Stephanie@theorganizingzone.com).

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