

# TRANSFORMING COMBAT ZONES INTO COMFORT ZONES

**Newsletter – February 2010**

We are all back in work mode and attempting to put our New Year's resolutions to be better organized in the office into practice. Before all of our good intentions go completely awry, it's time to re-evaluate our procedures, renew our commitment to greater productivity in 2010 and break out those unopened planner books. As we are doing so, consideration should be given to observing a lesser known but extremely worthy February occurrence....**National Time Management Month.**

Making a commitment to ourselves to better manage our time during the 9-5 hours so that we can enjoy our non working time should be a resolution that we all share. In addition to the benefits that we as individuals can derive, the companies for whom we work, manage or even own could also benefit.

## **Company Benefits**

- Time for essential tasks that are not currently being performed
- Less time spent re-creating misplaced documents
- More tasks completed on time
- Ability to retrieve key information within seconds

Here are some time management tips to adopt immediately:

## **Organize Your E-mail**

- If an issue can not be satisfactorily addressed with a limited number of rounds of e-mail, forgo e-mail altogether and make a phone call or have a brief meeting to get the issue resolved.
- Schedule time to check e-mail 2-3 times/day and if need be disconnect the computer alerts so that you aren't tempted to do so constantly.
- Don't open an e-mail message, read it and leave it in your in-box. Each time a message is opened, an action is required.
- Apply the 2 minute rule. If you can respond to an e-mail within 2 minutes, do so immediately upon opening the message instead of moving the message to one of your folders for future action.

## **Organize Your Work Day**

- Identify the top 2-3 tasks that need to be addressed each day and focus on them one at a time until they're done. Recognize that everything on your daily to-do list will not get done.
- Take no more than 10 minutes at the beginning of the day to review that day's priorities and at the end of the day to assess your progress/establish the next day's priorities.

-Book sufficient time in your calendar to work on special projects and specific tasks. Allow at least 25% more time than you anticipate needing as it usually takes longer than we think to get the work done. Any left over time can be used for unexpected delays or new tasks that arise.

-Stay focused in meetings. Be sure that your agenda items are addressed. Take notes and use a highlighter during the meeting to flag those tasks that require action on your part.

### **Organize Your Desk**

-Instead of creating piles of paper on your desk, establish a paperwork flow system. Determine the actions required to move the paper off of your desk and then setup a series of trays labeled accordingly. (For ex: In, To File, Out)

-Clear your desk at the end of each day. Put away files, collect current project related materials in one place and discard papers that are no longer needed. This way you will always be able to easily find documents when needed.

-Avoid the excessive use of post-it notes. Much time can be wasted looking for that important phone number that was jotted down on a post-it note and is now attached to a totally unrelated document buried in a file that is used infrequently.

Give thought to how you can better utilize your time and make Time Management Month a year long observance. If you need some tips specific to your own situation, [Contact Me](#) at [The Organizing Zone](#).

Have a productive month!