

TRANSFORMING COMBAT ZONES INTO COMFORT ZONES

Newsletter – March 2010

Now that spring is officially here, we are energized by the warmer temperatures, longer days and sprouting tulips. For some, this will be the time to tackle projects like their jam packed closets, overflowing file cabinets and the piles of papers and books that litter many surfaces. However, before doing so, it is essential to have a plan of attack so that the allotted time is used efficiently.

This was the very focus of an article in the March 17 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. The writer conducted an experiment to determine the best approach for de-cluttering and cleaning her home. In the end, she recognized that it was possible to make time in her busy schedule for this project providing that she followed the steps listed below.

Organizing Strategy

Plan. Divide the area that needs to be re-organized into smaller sections so that your actions will remain very focused.

Prepare. Gather project specific supplies for collecting items to be kept, discarded and donated.

Schedule. Block out specific chunks of time to devote to your project. Think in terms of a 5k instead of a marathon.

Clarify. Clearly define how the room, closet or space in question will be used prior to starting.

Define. Identify the tasks that need to be addressed and tackle them in a logical sequence so that your productivity will be maximized.

Case Study

This is the same approach that I applied when recently helping a client re-organize her law office so that she could better manage her information and time. Her lack of control over the information that crossed and covered her desk was causing undo stress. An added challenge was that my client worked out of two offices and needed access to all relevant documents from both work locations.

Before:



- Entire desktop was covered by papers
- 3 overflowing in-boxes
- No specific action assigned to any of the in-boxes
- Inefficient system for managing priorities and daily tasks
- Over 10,000 read e-mails clogging up the in-box
- Duplicate and outdated folders for filing computer documents

After:



- Clear desktop
- Created a system for managing the paper flow and addressed scheduling time for each task
- Assigned a particular action to each of the 3 in-boxes
- Established an e-mail management process so that the in-box is emptied each day
- Re-organized the files and folders on the computer so that they reflected the current requirements

Testimonial:

"Stephanie customized organizational systems that work the way my brain works and months later I'm still using the systems she created for me.... and even introducing modifications based on the principles she taught me."

Be sure to follow this approach before tackling your organizing challenge so that you'll be assured of success. If you are having trouble with any of these steps, [contact me](#) at [The Organizing Zone](#) and I'll give you some pointers.

If you find that the objectives for your project aren't explicit enough and you need help clarifying them, fill out the [Productivity Scorecard](#) that is available on my website.

Have a productive month!