

Planning and Organization.

I haven't really counted or done the math, but there are likely enough books written on planning and organizing to fill an entire 4 bed, 2 bath house, floor to ceiling, with them and still have a bunch left over for the garage. There are so many housewife's blogging businesses made out of the topic, and many of them appear to be doing well, too.

That's why this training isn't going to cover the particulars of how to make labels for bins, organization tips for all the stuff in your life – or even your life in general. Instead, what this training is going to cover is how to plan and organise for a singular project.

DISCLOSURE: *There are many ways to organise, plan, and manage your time. While you work through the training, note what worked and what didn't work so you can tweak your own system later.*

Planning.

There is a lot to do in life, and even more so when you have a stressful or important project on the line. The whole point of planning is simply to keep yourself going in the direction you need to be going and reaching milestones in time. The key is to keep it as simple as possible. We're going to tackle this by pulling out the map you did in Module 2 and refining it to break things down into sub-steps and assign people to the task – even if that person assigned is yourself.

When you sit down with your massive task list ask yourself the following questions for each task:

WHAT: *What task.*

WHO: *Who is on what task.*

WHERE: *Where does the task need to be done?*

WHEN: *When does it need to be done by?*

HOW: *How should it be done (i.e. a presentation, could it be done as a slide show or poster.)?*

WHY: *Defend why this task is necessary; no mindless busywork here!*

Any task you didn't have a clear cut why, toss it out. Remember, we're aiming for simplicity here, and the fewer steps the better.

Armed with these questions and your task list, grab your favourite, or more convenient, tool for organizing all these bits. This could be an electronic tool like Asana, a Trello board, Evernote, or a simple pen and paper. You can use a simple outline, a colourful mindmap, or anything in between. This is where you need to really lay it out and organise the project.

And, of course, don't forget to manage the chaos!

You can either use the blank space on the next page to write/draw it out or insert a screenshot of your electronic sample.

“
...keep it as
SIMPLE
as possible.”

Organization.

Remember how we talked about how organization is both stuff and systems? The planning you did earlier in this module is system organization, but now it's time to address the stuff. This should be both fun...and irritating for you.

Step 1: I want you take a before and after picture to send me of your organization.

That means I want you to snap a pic, then organise your working space for working on the project, then take another picture. Easy, eh?

Step 2: Now, describe what you did and why.

Example: I like to stack books in order that I think they might be appearing in the papers so I can grab, scan, and go. This step is not for me, but for you to recognise why you did something in a certain way so you can go back and analyse if it worked at the AAR step.

Time management.

You've got yourself set up with both The Stuff and The Flow. All that's left to do is work, right? Yes. And no.

We are humans. We tend to get sidetracked by life. Distracted by the wall, social media, and suddenly even organizing the sock draw becomes more interesting and important than doing the actual work. (My guilty pleasure? Playing with my kittens.)

That's why you need to come up with a policy that works for yourself. You get to be your own parent! Everyone remember the days when a particularly annoying parent would declare, "You can go out and play after you finish cleaning your room/homework/folding your laundry/etc." The thing is, this sort of reward system works.

It works whether you are using the time allocation system like business consultant Chris Brogan does, the Pomodoro Method, or any other time management system out there. All of these systems have a couple techniques in common: Deciding what is important and doing them first, and focusing time on actually working.

Below I want you to describe how you will systemitise your project time (not the personal life) to work on the project. Consider and answer: How long will you work for on each day? How many days a week? When will you take breaks? What rewards will you give yourself?

After Action Review

Both parts of this module are important, but oft-times we find we are better at one or the other. This AAR is to reflect on how you might increase your efficiency both in terms of organizing the Stuff and the Flow.

Which did you find easier to organise: the flow of the project or the physical stuff?

What techniques would you like to learn for planning, organization, and/or time management? What will you do to find time to commit to learning and mastering these new technique?

What do you believe is your biggest time sink that keeps you from managing projects and life well? How can you address it for future projects?