

You Can't Afford NOT to Be Organized: 5 Tips for Navigating a Stressful Economy

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Many people entertain the idea of getting more organized. It's well known that organization is the key to growing business, creating more balance in our personal lives, using time to the greatest advantage and managing resources for optimal benefit and return. Yet for many, making time for getting organized hasn't become a priority. Now is not only the perfect time, but a necessary step to help move through the current economic downturn and set the stage for the next chapter of life. Economic down times offer the perfect opportunity to assess your current financial and business situation, make new plans and cultivate gratitude.

In fact, right now, you can't afford NOT to be organized. Not only has the time and opportunity come, but the necessity for organization is greater than ever. In these times, it is essential to make sure everything counts - money, time and personnel at the business/financial level, and energy, attitude and action on the personal level. Unless you are organized, you risk wasting precious resources, and may allow situations to dictate your state of mind and keep you stuck in old patterns that are no longer working.

Here are five tips to be better organized as you navigate this economy.

1. Conserve & Manage Resources

Get a thorough idea of what you currently have - money, contacts, supplies, opportunities. Take one sheet of paper for each category and make a list. Once you have a clear picture, ask yourself where or how you can use what you have more economically or create new opportunities. Use information for planning and take action. Redesign your spending plan, reconnect with contacts, organize your supplies so that you no longer duplicate purchases, and move forward on potential business.

2. Plug up & Prevent Leaks

Ask yourself where you are wasting money or time and plug up the leak. If a daily cappuccino is busting your budget, start making coffee at home. If you are spending too much at the video store, check out the DVD selection at the library. Prevent future leaks by canceling subscriptions, catalogs, and stop using shopping as entertainment. Check out opportunities for volunteerism and use your spare time for the greater good.

3. Become More Conscientious

Create a new mindset that says you will pay better attention to every action you take every minute of the day. Pay attention to what you think, say and do. Watch yourself as you spend money and time. Check yourself as you experience emotions, especially fear, irritability, worry and anger. When you notice you are overspending or caught up in a negative emotion, take out your journal and write a few sentences about it. This will help you keep better control of your finances and attitudes and keep you on a more even keel. Staying balanced is equivalent to staying organized.

4. Gain New Appreciation for What You Have

It's easy to look at what you've lost, can't do, aren't getting, and want, but don't have. Focus on what you do have and use those assets to your advantage. You may have worries and concerns, but you also have trusted and helpful people in your life to help you brainstorm solutions to current challenges. Things may feel tough, but when you remember that you have your health, your family and loved ones, friends and colleagues, hope is

renewed and the future seems brighter. Look at the big picture. You know what's truly important and what's not.

5. Utilize Down Time to Strategize

Use down time to review and refine your contact list. Write letters or emails to reconnect with prior clients or colleagues. Update your website, rewrite your resume, and redesign your marketing materials. Clean out your files, desk drawer, storage cabinet, closets, garage, basement or attic. How many times in life do we get extra time to return to projects, revisit a craft or go back to a sport? What about that book you were writing, the business you thought about starting, the friends or family you've thought about visiting, the topic you've wanted to research, the skill you would love to hone? While you are engaged in new activity, that new prospect is emerging, new ideas are cooking and strategies are being created. Let go of the old patterns, the and the disorganization, and you may just walk right into a new world of opportunity.

Disorganization sends the message that you are unprepared, disheartened and befuddled - you can't afford that. Getting organized now will not only pave the way for greater income and opportunity, but when new prospects start to emerge you'll be more prepared than ever to greet them.