



Dear Friend,

Making It Look Easy

Our church has just added a third service to the Sunday morning schedule. As you can well imagine, doing so has raised a whole range of logistical issues to be resolved. We've needed to accommodate not only additional worshippers but the servants who must be in place as well.

Following a comment I made as a part of a recent email discussion on logistics for our children's ministry, I got a side email from a lady with whom I serve. She thanked me for my input, remarking that I'd shed light on an aspect of the operation that she and the rest of the team usually take for granted. In her words, "You're so organized in making [that] portion look so easy, I forgot just how difficult it can be." Wow!

Being organized isn't always easy. In fact, it requires both intention and attention. But, as I think about my work with clients, it's clear that not taking that time and effort can have a serious impact on a person individually and on those around him.

This month's edition of *EA Insights* addresses the issue of organization. A lot of folks talk about getting better organized...and the talking stage is often as far as it goes. My hope is that, by realizing the cost of disorganization, those of you who fit this mold may be ready to take the bold step of moving beyond talk to action.

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
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Disorganized? What's It Costing You?

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Here's a question for you, and you can only give a "yes" or "no" answer.

Would you describe yourself as an organized person?

Oh my goodness, I can hear the explanations starting to flow already!

"You see, I would be organized, but my company inundates me with so much paper; it's just too much to keep under control."

"There's always something preventing me from being on time...traffic, kids, too much to do."

"I can't get anything done because of interruptions."

I'll let you in on something that's probably not a secret to those around you. Unless your answer to my question was a clear "yes," the answer (whether you actually said it or not) was "no."



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Quotes

"We give our lives to that which we give our time. I have learned that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to unclutter one's life by starting at the top of the pile with the idea that the solution is to just get things sorted and better organized."
~ William R. Bradford

"Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life."
~ Immanuel Kant

"Work expands to fill the time available."

Think about it, though, what is disorganization costing you:
A promotion or a new job?
Your reputation?
Customers?
Money?
Peace?

If you're being honest with yourself, the true cost may rest in one of these areas, or it may be hitting you in multiple ways. Either way, there's pain.

So, here's the next question. *Are you ready for the pain to end?*

If you answered "yes" this time, let me offer five steps to help you bring your pain to an end.

Acknowledge your challenge. This involves being honest about the area in which you are having difficulty. For a few moments, look not at those around you; focus just on what really is vexing *you*. Is it timeliness? Is it neatness? Is it developing an organized approach? Is it staying on task? What's your challenge?

Consider the impact of this situation on you. Think about how this challenge really affects you. Has it held you back from reaching life goals? Does it cost you extra work or money? Is it showing up in your physical or emotional health? Sometimes, the effort needed to change a habit seems too great until you realize what you're actually losing by doing nothing.

Consider the impact of this situation on those around you. The reality is that none of us lives in a vacuum. Our actions impact others. So, how are others being affected because of *your* challenge? Do your actions add strain to your co-workers or to your family relationships? Are you costing your employer clients or business opportunities? Are you teaching your children lessons that will be seen for generations to come?

Visualize the change, and map out possible solutions. Honestly consider what's really important. You can take any number of steps to fix things that appear broken. However, if you're making changes in areas that have little or no value to you, you may perform a task better, but you're still tackling the wrong task.

Assuming your focus is on what you really value, if you could rewrite the script, how would things work differently for you? Visualize the way you would prefer your time, your desk, or your to-do list to be.

Then, considering your challenge, think of at least two things you could do to move you closer to that vision. Solutions don't have to be in-depth, multi-year plans; they can be simple adjustments to your routine. And, while many possibilities may come to mind, start with those that you can accomplish on your own. "I'll get up and leave home a half hour earlier in order to get to work on time." "I'll develop a triage approach for the paper that comes across my desk, deciding whether to work it, delegate it, or trash it." Postpone solutions that involve others, as it may be a lengthier process for you to get others on board. Rather, begin with personal goals; you are likely to experience results more quickly, and it's possible that you'll start to win buy-in from those around you as they too see your progress.

Take action. There's much truth in an old Japanese proverb: "Action without vision is a nightmare; vision without action is a daydream." Envisioning your changed life is important, but then, you've got to wake up and do something about it. So, try out your possible solutions. Tinker with them, as appropriate, to make them workable for you. Once you find the right balance, keep at it. Experts say that you can develop a new habit by doing something for 21 days. So, make your fix a part of your new routine, and see the difference!

For more information about how **Executive Advantage** can help you stop the pain so that you can become more productive and reach your goals, contact us today [online](#) or at 301-280-5950.

~ Unknown

"No mind is thoroughly well-organized that is deficient in a sense of humor."

~ Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"Why kill time when one can employ it."

~ Proverb

About Executive Advantage

At Executive Advantage, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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