



EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the NJ Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter! EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance. **The EAS Employee Newsletter** contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.

Emotional Management in Relationships; How to Respond Instead of React

This important presentation will provide an overview of the emotional self-management skills necessary to have effective interactions with others. The session will discuss ways to identify our feelings, be sensitive to the feelings of others, and manage our emotions so that we don't overreact during conversations.

When:

Thursday, March 26th
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

Register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4265663515622518787>

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Effective Communication Tips

Reflecting on your career, including your current job and jobs before it, you are likely able to recall coworkers with whom you have enjoyed working, as well as those that presented more of a challenge. Differences in personality and working habits can lead to communication blocks in the workplace, but there are a couple of small steps you can take to maximize your ability to be a team player and keep the lines of communication open.

1. *Be proactive.* The majority of time, we find ourselves becoming frustrated with the behavior of a co-worker, and struggling to convey concerns without becoming upset or frustrated. Instead of waiting until you are already upset, consider having open conversations with your colleagues about your needs, and take time to hear theirs. Helping one another understand what optimizes your part in a team can help prevent conflicts and increase the likelihood of successful team efforts. Focus not only on what you need, but be sure to gain an understanding of what compromises you can make to help your coworkers as well.
2. *Be a leader.* Regardless of your title and role within the company, you always have the choice between being a leader and a follower. Being a role model requires great determination and discipline. You must put in the effort to practice positivity, proactive communication, and a team mentality, but the rewards far outweigh the costs. For many, the demands of a stressful job leave us feeling as if we do not have enough time or energy to invest in setting a good example. But, by investing the time and effort it takes to improve your skills and communication at work, your coworkers are likely to follow suit. Waiting for your team members to take the lead does not guarantee results, nor does it lead to a sense of control or satisfaction in the workplace.
3. *Confront appropriately.* No matter how proactive you are, communication barriers are bound to occur. When this happens take time to cool off, focus on the facts, avoid gossip, and be sure to allow your co-workers time to express their perspectives. If you feel your efforts don't lead to a desired outcome, consider following your chain of command for suggestions or interventions.
4. *Put everything in perspective.* When looking at the big picture, many workplace conflicts are fleeting and mild in nature. If you find yourself becoming irritated or frustrated, ask yourself how big of an issue it really is, and if it will matter in one week. If you find that the issue is not as major as the feeling it evoked in you, make a choice to let it pass, and use your efforts instead to focus on your own self-care. Getting frustrated easily and not being able to effectively communicate with coworkers can be a sign of your own stress.

If you find yourself struggling to effectively communicate with family, friends, coworkers, and others in your life, call EAS for confidential assistance. EAS can provide helpful tools, tips, and guidance.

Time Management at Work: SMART Goals

Time management is best defined as a systematic prioritization of tasks and competing demands to complete the most important tasks within a target time frame. The goal of time management is to reduce the distractions that lower the number of tasks a business owner, manager, employee, or worker completes.

Importance of Time Management

Is the saying “Time is money” true? If your business runs out of money, you always have the opportunity to get more. More money is “simply a sale away.” On the other hand, once time is past, you can never get that time back, nor can you add more hours to a day. Yes, poor time management can cost you and your workplace tremendous amounts of money. Realize, however, that the better you manage your time the more money you can earn. With time management, people maximize how much they get done each working day. Having a written time management plan serves as a guide for working smarter instead of harder.

Benefits of Time Management

With effective time management, you will

- Maximize what can be accomplished in a workday
- Optimize the use of the limited resources
- Identify critical areas for special attention
- Identify tasks that can be delegated to employees or coworkers
- Track progress toward your goals

The number one benefit of time management is more business, which means more income. Time management will allow you to be more focused on key tasks; be more organized; have less stress; and have more time for family, friends, and other interests. Here are some questions to help you determine if you might benefit with better time management:

- In what ways have you wasted or not optimally managed your time?
- How many times have you looked up and wondered where all the time went?
- How many times has your day ended where you didn’t complete a key task and/or desire?
- How many times have you missed dinner or other activities with family and friends to work late to finish something that was not done?

SMART Goals

Proper goal setting starts with knowing what you want to accomplish. Try to write your goals using the following format:

Specific—state the goal precisely.

Measurable— good measures allow you to know when a goal is completed.

Attainable—resources needed to complete the goal are within your reach.

Relevant—the goal is applicable to your business.

Time Bound—the goal has a completion date or timeframe for being achieved.

Examples of SMART Goals:

- I will move my business from my home into office space in less than four months from today.
- I will design two new training programs for clients to take starting in January.
- I will hire a web designer and have our new website operational by the end of next month.
- This month I will research the benefits of leasing a copier versus buying a copier in time for when the current lease is up in 52 days.

Examples of goals that do not follow the SMART format include these:

- I will get some new clients.
- I will increase my sales this year.
- I'm going to write a marketing plan.
- I'm going to pay off my credit cards and get out of debt.

Identify, test, and recalibrate your written goals using the SMART format.

Using SMART Goals

Many people take the time to write their goals but struggle to achieve them. The next action to take with your SMART goals is to write down the steps and tasks to complete them, identifying the “who, what, when, where, and why” for completing the goal.

Look at the SMART goal you wrote for your business. Write the steps and tasks needed to achieve your goal here:

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). (n.d.). Time management (p. 6) & SMART goals (p. 10). In Time management for a small business. Retrieved September 10, 2019, from <https://www.sba.gov>

Spring Cleaning: How to Get Organized

Are you organized? If not, learn how to plan it! Get the resources, and then commit to doing it. It is important to get organized at home and in the workplace.

Statistics

- Cleaning professionals say that getting rid of excess clutter would eliminate 40% of the housework in an average home, according to the National Soap and Detergent Association.
- According to the Self-Storage Association, 1 in 11 American households rents a self-storage space, spending over \$1,000 a year in rent and contributing to a multibillion-dollar industry.
- According to the National Soap and Detergent Association, 80% of the clutter in most homes is a result of disorganization, not lack of space.
- For every hour of planning, 3 to 4 hours are saved from redundancy, waiting for information, not being prepared, and poorly managed tasks.
- Researchers have found that clearing away clutter at work and at home improves focus. It also increases productivity and makes it easier for the brain to process information.

Are you organized?

Do you find yourself looking for things?

If you look around your space do you see clutter, such as stacks or piles of papers?

Can you find your important papers easily?

How does this affect your coworkers and family members?

Are you paying for storage space outside of your home?

Are you disorganized?

Do you have junk in your drawers?

When you ask your phone's personal assistant what your day looks like, does it respond, "You don't want to know"?

Do you regularly check your Facebook page to see what you've been up to?

Has your personal philosophy become, "If I can't find it, I probably don't need it"?

Reasons for Being Disorganized

People are busy, so there are many reasons why one might be disorganized. Reasons might include your life situation, habits, family history and how you were raised, social behavior, chronic issues, inability to make decisions about "stuff," and the fact that you accepted disorganization as a fact of life.

Organizational Skills: Separating Fact From Fiction

Myth: You have to be neat in order to be organized.

Fact: Being organized is not about appearance, it's about function.

Myth: You have to be born with the ability to be organized.

Fact: Being organized is a skill, and, like all skills, it can be learned.

Myth: Throwing things away is the only way to get organized.

Fact: You don't have to get rid of anything; you just have to find a place for it.

Why get organized?

Ask yourself these questions:

Why do you want to get organized?

How will your life be improved?

What are you waiting for?

Do you have too much, or not enough, time?

Organizing may take more time than you think, but it's time well spent! It's the little things that count.

What Being Organized Does for You

- It reduces stress.
- It makes a good impression.
- It can be a safety issue.
- It can ease relationships with others.
- It increases productivity.
- It saves money!

Planning

- Go room by room and evaluate.
- Make lists.
- Visualize what you want your space to look like.
- Divide and conquer! Start by sorting like things together—don't over think it—and assess what you have.
- Decide what to keep, sell, donate, or throw away.

What do you need?

Think about resources that will help you to be more organized. Here are some ideas:

- An A–Z file
- Bins and baskets
- Drawer space
- Labels
- Garbage can—throw stuff out!
- Time (Set up a regular time to do your organizing projects weekly—a little at a time.)

Getting Organized at Home: Best Practices

- You don't need two of anything.
- Have an empty cabinet or drawer as a backup.
- Save one object, donate one object.
- Find a good place for everything, and put everything away in its place.
- Simplify, simplify, simplify!
- Break your organizing into small projects. Don't try to tackle your whole space in one day—set smaller, achievable goals.

Getting Organized at Work

Organize your work surface:

- Only keep what you are working on at that moment.
- Use technology, calendars, to-do lists in your email and other programs.
- Create an A–Z file, and use it.
- Think before you print!
- Only handle it once (OHIO).

It's about time!

Follow the five Ds to make the most of the time you have:

Delete the task: Create a Not to Do list for things you have decided can't be done.

Delay the task: Decide what is still important but can be done later.

Diminish the task: Reduce the task to its most basic components.

Delegate the task: Ask for help.

Stay Determined to stay on task: Be aware of distractions and bad work habits.

When It Becomes a Problem

Some clutter is healthy—to a certain point. When you think it may become unhealthy, and you feel you cannot throw things out, you may want to contact EAS or a counselor for help. You could also consider taking a class on organization, or finding a support group.

In Summary

- Organizational skills are not inborn. You can use inborn traits to develop and enhance these skills.
- Investing time in getting organized is worth it. In return, you save time and reduce stress.
- Someone else's organizational system may not work for you. You are more likely to stay organized if you make it your own.
- Good organization is an ongoing process—the activity is the goal.

Source: Federal Occupational Health (FOH). (n.d.). Getting organized [PPT] (B. Schuette, Ed.). Retrieved January 28, 2019, from <https://www.wfm.noaa.gov/>