

# BASIS POINTS

LITTLE THINGS THAT HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW

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Welcome to Basis Points! Each month, Basis Points provides you tips and techniques that we've gleaned from a variety of sources to help better your business life. This month's theme, "De-clutter Your Space", will discuss the costs associated with clutter and efficient ways to keep the workplace organized and productive. By tackling each task one at a time, this issue will help you gain control of clutter and improve your day-to-day efficiency.

## Organizing Tips

**Organization Tip #1:** After lunch we can find ourselves with less energy and thus, less productivity for the remainder of the day. Energize yourself by leaving the office during your lunch time; breathe some fresh air, take a brisk walk or simply close your eyes for a few minutes.

**Organization Tip #2:** It's important to have mementos at the office, but hang them on the wall or place them on shelves. Having personal "things" on your desktop can distract and rob you of adequate space to work.

**Organization Tip #3:** Appointments between co-workers can often turn into personal conversations which eat away at valuable time during the day. When you schedule appointments and meetings, make sure there's a stated starting time and an ending time. People tend to stay "on point" when they are against a deadline.

**Organization Tip #4:** Upon completion of an important phone call, write down the agreed-upon action steps. Writing down tasks on a 3 x 5 notecard and placing it in your inbox will make sure you don't forget the substance of the phone call and the appropriate follow-up.

Source: [www.ineedmoretime.com](http://www.ineedmoretime.com)

*"Out of clutter, find simplicity."*

- Albert Einstein

## The 5 Faces of Clutter

Today our lives seem busier than ever and guess what? They are! Generations before us never had to deal with everything we get bombarded with on a daily basis. We get thousands of pieces of mail, bills, emails and "stuff" we have too little time to deal with. All of these things create what we commonly know as clutter.

### Five Incoming Items:

1. Paper
2. Email
3. Voice mail
4. Verbal requests
5. Thoughts in your head (things to do)

### Five Decisions:

1. Discard
2. Delegate
3. Take immediate action
4. File for follow up
5. File for reference



Consider the above decisions in the order suggested above. Think of a funnel. Everything enters the top of the funnel and the volume of paper gets smaller as you move down the funnel. If you can throw it away right from the start, you won't even need to consider the other four options.

## The Cost of Clutter

**Clutter costs time**, which is priceless, because it can never be replaced.

- 80% of papers that are filed are never referenced again
- According to the American Demographic Society, Americans waste more than 9 million hours each day looking for lost and misplaced articles.
- Office World News reported that the average executive wastes 150 hours per year looking for lost or misplaced documents.

**Clutter costs us energy** and makes our jobs harder.

- 80% of the clutter in most homes and offices is a result of disorganization, not lack of space.
- In an average home, getting rid of excess clutter has been shown to cut housework by 40%.

**Clutter costs us peace of mind.** It's hard to relax when we are on sensory overload.

- Evaluate the number of subscriptions (magazines, journals, newspapers) you have mailed to your home or office. Can you realistically read them all? If not, reduce your cost and guilt of not reading and cancel them!
- We gain peace of mind knowing that we will be able to find what we need when we need it.
- Being clutter-free is a habit, not an overnight miracle. Start with one task a day and you'll be on the path towards a happier and more productive life.

Source: "De-clutter Your Life" Kathy Paauw, [www.orgcoach.net](http://www.orgcoach.net)