

21 WAYS TO
DE-JUNK YOUR
BUSINESS:

KEYS TO TAKING
CONTROL, GETTING
ORGANIZED, AND
GETTING IT ALL
DONE

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**WE HELP YOU SHINE ONLINE...
LIKE A SUPERSTAR!**

Cleaning up chaos and restoring order to your business is all about finding the right tools and methods that work with you, your clients, your contractors—and your unique type of business.

Apply as many of these 21 ideas as you can to help you stop yourself from sliding down the slippery slope towards overwhelm.

1. Create a Company Manual

In fact, create two—a master manual for yourself, and one with without personal information for your VA or project manager.

Your company manual should act as a complete package, should anything happen to you, so that whoever is cleaning up your business affairs can find everything they need, including your RoboForm or LastPass master password, site URLs, contractors to be paid, instructions, business documents—and the password to your computer!

2. Apply for a Business Credit Card

If you have a business bank account (mandatory for LLC companies or corporations, but not for sole proprietors) then apply for a credit card dedicated solely to your business. Use it to pay online subscriptions, web hosting fees and offline expenses such as gas used on business errands, stationery and other office supplies, and business travel.

3. Manage Your Taxes—in Advance

Did you have to pay taxes last year? Is your business already bringing in more income? Then estimate and project your next year's taxes—and start putting a portion of each month's income into your business bank account or a business savings account for taxes; or set up a tax payment option directly in your online banking and pay a portion every month. At tax time, you won't have to pay—and if you do, it will be minimal. (And maybe you'll get a refund!)

4. Use Mobile Apps

Is half your life lived on your mobile? If your answer is “yes”, consider using mobile apps to help you stay organized. My favs: www.pamperrypr.com/resources

You can download:

- To-do lists
- Schedulers
- Expense tracking apps
- Dictation and recording apps
- Social media scheduling and tracking apps

Plus all those personal apps that free up more time for your business

5. Maintain Your Office!

Once you have de-cluttered your physical workspace, fit maintaining it into your daily routine. File everything the moment you use it and take note of where clutter tends to build up again.

Clutter is a sign that something is not working for you. So analyze what you are missing and do something about it. It might be a bigger in-tray, or a different place to put your pencil holder or a bulletin board instead of a wall calendar—but whatever gives you problems, don't wait till clutter builds up again. Fix it straight away, make sure it works—and get back to keeping your office a clean, inspirational, organized, pleasant place to work.

6. Get Household Help

Don't just outsource your online business tasks: Do the same for your physical space and offline responsibilities too.

Pay the children to walk the dog. Invest in a cleaning service—and have them dust, polish and vacuum your office too. Ask your husband to split the cooking with you.

7. Use Online Services for Offline Problem-solving

If you're too busy to grocery shop—don't! See if your local store has a service that will not only deliver groceries but shop for you too. If you live in a major city, Google “groceries delivered to your door”—and then check out reviews and testimonials for the shopping services that will pop up.

8. Keep Paperwork Only in the Office

Do you chronically lose paperwork you're doing around the house? Seriously, don't let it out of the office! For one thing, not only do you risk wasting time by frantically hunting “everywhere”, you're also bringing your work home and setting yourself up for stress.

9. Pay Attention to Your Learning Style

Often when a method doesn't work, it's because it was recommended by someone with a different learning style than you. If you're a tactile, visual learner, making online, text-based to-do lists is likely to have you abandoning this tactic in less than a week: Use visual apps that take advantage of shapes, graphics and color. Make paper lists and highlight the priorities in bright color.

Similarly, if you are an auditory learner, record your to-do list daily. If you are always on your mobile, use an app.

It's all about fitting your method to your preferences—and lifestyle.

10. Invest in Better Physical Storage

This tip may seem obvious, but it's amazing how often we manage to put up with things like awkwardly placed under-desk storage cabinets or shelves that are too short for our magazine holders.

Take a look at your office storage. Is it working for you? Do you need more? Less? Just something different?

As soon as you can, schedule a trip to places like Home Depot, [IKEA](#) or even Target where you can check out different storage options and re-vamp your office.

11. Change Your Chair

One other source of “office blindness”: Office chairs! If you've been sitting on the same rickety swivel chair for years (and you habitually end up going to bed with backache), it's time for a change!

Go to your local office supply store—or the Re-Store, if you're on a tight budget—and choose a new (or at least different) office chair. Test it out.

And do make sure you get the best chair you can afford. (It will be worth it in increased comfort, better temper—and increased productivity.)

12. Get Rid of Annoying Software

If you've been struggling along for years with a clunky graphics editor or an invoicing system you have to practically re-learn every time you access it, junk that too!

Read reviews. Shop around online. Look at apps, if you prefer apps.

Find software that does a better job and is easier to use, saving you time and money.

13. Change Your Habits

It isn't just spaces or software that don't really work for us sometimes: It's habits too.

What are you doing that is unnecessarily complicating your business?

- Do you habitually lose money by waiting till the last minute to use this month's VA service package, wasting her time (and yours) by assigning trivial tasks instead of the ones you really need her to do?
- Do you have bad email habits that either drive your subscribers away (inconsistency; mailing too much—or so little they forget you)... or allowing your inbox to clutter up again?
- Do you never call people back or send follow up emails? Do you procrastinate?

Whatever it is that makes you self-sabotage, realize that identifying that habit is the first step to changing it. And change it!

14. Use the "Rule of Three"

If you are having a hard time discarding multiple belongings—whether or not that is business books or old bath salts—use the rule of three: Keep your three favorite items in that category—and discard the rest.

If you really have trouble letting go of things, continue this way:

- Donate three items in that category
- Throw away three items in that category

If you still have items in a category left after that, take another pass and do it again: You will most likely find it easier to discard or donate the extra items the second time (but try not to keep more than three of each item!)

15. Purge Your Office Bookshelf

If your addiction is books, you are likely to have so many that it will be hard to apply the "Rule of Three."

Sort your books into two categories:

- Relevant and current
- Evergreen authority books (e.g. Funk and Wagnall's Style Guide; Webster's Dictionary)

Take the rest and sell them at your local used book store or donate them to a youth center.

16. Plan a Yard Sale—and Outsource it

A good, old-fashioned yard sale is a great way to clear out miscellaneous items of all varieties. Do it yourself, if you have time. Get to know your neighbors!

And if you don't have time for that, "outsource" it to your older teens and/or your husband, mother, sister or whoever else you can bribe or pay to run it for you. (Or you can just let them keep whatever proceeds they make.)

One more thing: *Arrange ahead of time how you will dispose of what is left over.* Get your husband or mom or sister to take the leftovers to the dump or donate them to the local Salvation Army store or hospital.

17. Donate to Other People's Yard Sales

If organizing and holding a yard sale feels like too much time and effort away from your workload, find out when your church, local charities or neighbors are having their own yard sales.

Donate what you don't want as extra items for their sale.

18. To Avoid Overwhelm, Set Daily Limits

If you have a lot to de-junk—either online or offline—be realistic and consider whether or not physical limitations or emotional ones will likely have you quitting, half-way through. Break down your de-junking process into daily "chunks" for as long as you need to. Set limits in time or task: An hour a day or a task a day.

Try to make your de-junking sessions at the same time daily. Even if you de-junk for as little as fifteen minutes a day, this will become a habit—and your fifteen minutes will soon become a satisfying part of your daily routine.

19. Use Lists Wisely

Before you attempt to de-clutter an area of your life—either online or in your offline space—make a list of tasks to do, organized by priority.

A list will help you stay focused—and stop you from becoming distracted and veering off at a tangent, halfway through.

But remember to **cross-off** items you have completed. It will give you a nice, warm, accomplished feeling—and if you have to give up for the day, **highlight** your top priorities for tomorrow's de-cluttering session.

20. Listen to the Right De-Cluttering Music

Here's another oldie but goodie: Listen to music while you do your office house-cleaning—but suit the music to the task.

For example, if you are physically cleaning your space, moving furniture, packing up items to donate and the like, choose **energizing** music.

If you are trying to unclutter your email files, however, pick music that is soothing (relaxation or meditation music is great for this!) **Calming** music will help you get into a zen state and you may be surprised at how quickly you whiz through your hated task.

21. De-Junk Your Social Media too

If you feel like you're spending too much time on social media interaction (and it's not because you get distracted into checking out funny cat videos) then de-clutter this area of your life too.

- Check your social sites at the same time every day
- Check them when the people you most interact with and want to reach are online. (That way, you can reply instantly to any comment they make to you, which creates goodwill and a feeling of connection.)
- Delegate social sites that are “lesser” in importance to your VA to check--or get rid of them altogether if you get no interaction on those sites, even though you post regularly
- If you are really busy, have your [VA check](#) your social pages and profiles, and report to you any posts or comments you really need to address
- Use post management software like Hootsuite and TweetDeck to ensure that top-priority posts by you are repeated or uploaded at the right time for your market

In the end, there is no set system, tool or tip that is superior to another. De-junking your business is all about making a commitment, setting goals, taking serious steps to banish procrastination—and falling in love with your business all over again.

