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Organizational Tools & Systems for Profitable, Productive and Joyous Organizations & Enterprises

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Chapter 2

Your Personal Productivity System

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Money-Making Systems

By Dame DC Cordova and Carol Dysart

Chapter Two

Your Personal Productivity System

What is a Personal Productivity System?

How to Create the "Perfect" Desk and Office

Part One: Your Desk Top and Files

Part Two: How to Manage Yourself So That You Can Automatically (and Happily) Work Within this New Environment

Summary of the Processes for Maintaining Your Personal Productivity System

What is a Personal Productivity System?

A Personal Productivity System includes the complete instructions, filing priorities, and processes that are easy to use, keeps you organized, makes it possible to put your hand immediately on any piece of paper you need, and allows you to spend more time to work on the activities that produce the most money for you — your **Income Generating Activities**.

This chapter could seem boring and possibly confusing to you if you hate paperwork and your desk often looks like a bomb hit it…

… But we recommend that you read it anyway!

Do not give up before completing this section. Hang in there and you will be able to reap the benefits of the ideas you gain herein.

If it seems too confusing or confronting, hire someone or team up with a person who enjoys handling details and is willing to go through this process with you. Once you have mastered this system, you will feel much better about your work area — and have lots more time to focus on generating income.

Other benefits of mastering this system:

Minimize stress. Many people experience tremendous stress just from looking at the clutter on their desks. It is a much more serious issue than most people admit. Not only is a lot of potential business lost from loose notes that never re-surface again once written, but the paperwork is stressful — even under the most ideal of conditions — and is the one thing that almost everyone complains about — unless they have the personality type that loves details. So to make any paperwork process easier will go far in making life in the office happier.

Save time. Once you have cleaned out all the unnecessary clutter, organized your office, and your "Perfect Desk" system up and running, you will find you have a system that, on a daily basis, will save you hours of time doing work that you may possibly hate. You will find there is no reason to spend a lot of time getting ready for and organizing yourself daily to do paperwork. You won't be wasting all your time just looking for the documents you need, or turning everything upside down just to find that small piece of paper you know you left in your

pocket… or somewhere.

Make more money. Your newly developed system will allow you to spend more time on what is much more important to you — and infinitely more interesting — **Income Generating Activities**.

Not only will you find yourself able to think more clearly about what it is you do, but the feeling you have of yourself, as others will see an efficient and well-organized professional as someone who is confident, competent, and knows what they are doing. Who would you rather do business with?

Make paperwork easy to find and manage. Unfortunately, in most businesses, *paperwork — and now technology platforms, apps and social media — are still not a choice*, yet many people operate as if it is. Once you know where everything is — or how to manage the different platforms / apps — just as with your Income Generating Activities, you'll feel good about scheduling in the time you need to complete your paperwork/productivity tasks — even if you have to do it every day — and in some case, every few hours.

Technology management is as complicated as paperwork. How many technology platforms are you using and communicating through with your clients, team(s), suppliers, and family on a daily basis? There can be dozens! Now with apps like WhatsApp, WeChat and others with free communication — which are designed for just quick chats, now they are being used for business communications. People are using "quick communication" apps for productivity tasks and becoming more inefficient as ever — so it's important that you implement systems that can really support productivity and implement them in your technology platforms.

Experience Peace of Mind. If it seems awkward to use your new system for the first few days, remember, like anything else you do for the first time, "practice makes perfect". Smile in the knowledge that the day or two you invest in cleaning up your desk and office — no matter how bad it is — will pay huge dividends. Not only will you actually be more productive but also as you get into the habit of staying organized, you will experience a newfound *peace of mind* from finally having the freedom — and the time — to do whatever else it is you want to do.

Create a new profit center or profession. If you find that you enjoyed the process of creating your perfect desk so much that you start telling others how they can do it too, you may want to become one of our team of professional office organizers.

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These people can make a nice income helping others set up their office systems. Regardless of whether this is your new calling or not, we are going to teach you everything they do in this section.

Give yourself a break. Do not beat yourself up for being messy or disorganized. The truth is, unless they had a very patient role model or mentor who showed them their secrets, most people have never been trained in how to actually **be** organized. So, one of our aims is not only to show you how but to help you develop your interest in organization and become motivated to make it one of your *habits for success*.

A habit, by the way, is merely a learned behavior *that gives you a reward you enjoy or yearn for.* Since habits run much of our lives and we operate on "auto-pilot" in so much of what we do anyway, why not make this one of the new habits you develop that leads you to success?

WARNING: Once you establish the habit of being organized, you may get hooked for life... You will get used to the effectiveness and ease with which you accomplish results, and won't be willing to settle for less.

Parts of the Overall System for Creating the 'Perfect' Desk and Office

Whether you hire someone to do this process for you, call in a friend to help you who you know is especially well organized, or you decide to simply tackle it completely on your own, set yourself up for success and choose to **make it a fun day**.

Please note — this complete productivity system is a two-part process — both which must be mastered and used each day to get the results you want:

| Part One: | **How to create and maintain your new desk space** with a clearly established place for everything. |

| Part Two: | **How to manage yourself** so that you can automatically work within this new environment. |

Remember — it is not just *practice* that makes perfect. It is *perfect* practice...

BTW, all of the recommendations here can be used for organizing your desktop on your computer. I label my files similarly.

Part 1: Create Your New Desk or Work Space (or Desktop)

Step One: Assemble the supplies needed to set up your "Perfect Desk" organization system from office supplies department in most major discount stores. (If they are not available here's the list of supplies you need. You can get them at any stationery store or the in your area or country, write to us, and we will recommend office products suppliers that can mail the supplies to you directly.**)**

- **Legal size folders** (at least a box of 100 or more if you are filing and storing documents for long term storage.**)** Do *not* use standard letter or A4 size. As your organization grows, you will find that many documents are "legal/foolscap" size and that the smaller folders can also look unprofessional with papers sticking out of them.
- **Blank labels** (for labeling file folders)
- **In Tray and Out Tray**: *In* to your desk, *Out* from work area.
- **Several bankers' boxes (archive box) in** which legal/foolscap size file folders fit comfortably. The first box will be for your **"Time Machine Tickler** **System** and the others for additional storage for completed projects or research material not currently accessed or needed. They will be labeled and put away for later reference.
- **Desktop Folder "Step" Stand —** a small, open, plastic or metal rack that has stepped dividers to hold several filing folders and be able to see the labels clearly. You will keep this on your desktop and use it every day

- **Desktop Pen/Pencil/Scissors Holder**

- **Multi-colored (dark) felt tip pens — or a label-making device**
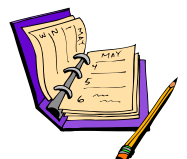- **Small Post-It® pads**

Other supplies and equipment you may want or need:

**File cabinet** for files needed within reach or in office

- **Personal Time Management System/Diary** — a paper-based or online diary/calendar system to keep with you for daily appointments and a place to keep important personal and contacts

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information.

- **Other special equipment required for your profession or business** — (Calculators, etc.)
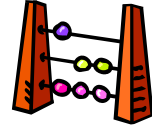
Step Two: Clear your desk completely.

Take everything off the top and put it on the floor. This will allow you to start completely fresh and new. When you have everything off of it, take a minute to experience just how wonderful a clear desktop feels. Just think of it! This is how YOUR desk will look every day when you come to it to start your work.

Step Three: Clear out the other clutter around your desk.

Many people have saved magazines and newspapers for years as if someday they would take them to that tropical island on vacation and finally have time to read them all. Trust us, we have already tried it, and it does not work. Somehow, when you *are* on that faraway, exotic, tropical island vacation, the *last* thing you will want to do is read those old magazines. So just let go of that thought right now.

However, we recognize that there are some articles in that yellowing stack of magazines that you probably really want to save and read sometime. So here is what to do instead: As you find those articles you want for future reference, cut them out (just be realistic about which ones), and put them aside to put later into your *To File* folder. We will explain later more about that file and what to do with it.

Then bundle up the rest of the magazines and newspapers to take to your nearest recycling center. For many of you, this step alone will clear your work area considerably — and you will have contributed to the environment as a bonus.

Step Four: Make the File Folder Labels

Label the folders you will keep both in the Desktop Folder Stand and the "Time Machine" — the tickler system kept in one of your Banker/Archive boxes. This is where you drop all the memos, letters and paper documents relating to a certain date. The following is a summary of all the files you will need labels for. We will explain their full use in more detail later on in the chapter.

Using a felt tip pen to print neatly or use a label-making device to make the following labels to go on the tab of each file folder:

Labels for the Desktop Folder stand on Top of Your Desk (or computer files)

For Immediate Attention	A file of immediate things to do daily
A-Priority	Income Generating and Cost-Cutting Activities
Agenda for	Information/documents/letters that relate to a particular person
Project: _____	Name of person or project you are working with or on. Later, you may date it and file it in storage, giving you a history of the entire project. (You may also have other copies of some or all these file names within a project.)
To Call	Documents/notes or letters relating to someone to call
To Write	Documents requiring your written response or notes to yourself reminding you of letters or proposals to write
To Do	Actions that you or your Assistant actually have to "get up and do" such as going to the cleaners, getting your car serviced, running errands, etc.
To Fax	Everything you need to fax today (there are certain countries that still use fax machines)
To Copy	Everything you need to copy today
To Read	Things you need to read later
Personal	Reminders of special events, or notes from people in your personal life
To Organize	Documents and other papers you need to organize later if you are in a hurry on that day or week

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To Type,	Documents to be typed or entered into your
To Scan or Data Entry	database or to be scanned.
To File	Documents to file.

. **Note:** As you develop the system, you will create other files to suit your needs such as: **To Sign, To Plan, To Market Research** — whatever is needed on a daily basis in your business or organization

Labels for Time Machine Tickler File System

Your Time Machine is a Bankers/Archive Box consisting of the following file dividers — two sets of Daily date files - numbered 1 to 31 - plus one file named for each month. **Again, this can be done physically or on your computer desktop. There may be some Apps you could use. Research it!**

Thirty-one Daily Date folders numbered 1 to 31.

Each file folder is marked with the numbers 1 through 31 for each day of the month. **Make two sets unless your activities are not scheduled more than one month out at a time as many are.**

Months of the Year

Label 12 files, each with the name of a calendar month.

(For example, if today is January 1, your Time Machine will contain the file **January** plus the numbers **1-31**, and the file named **February** plus the numbers **1-28** — or **1-29** in leap years — followed by all the folders for the rest of the months **March to December**. In our basic system, you have room to file two months' worth of Daily files.

At this point you have:

- ❑ **Gathered all the supplies listed**
- ❑ **Cleared your desk completely (including drawers)**
- ❑ **Cleared all magazines/newspapers from your office/work area**
- ❑ **Labeled the Files for the top of your desk**
- ❑ **Set up your *Time Machine Tickler File System***

Step Five: Decide what to keep, what to store and what to discard

Go through any files you may have and pile them in some order of importance. One of the reasons we suggest you do this process with a friend or a professional paid to support you, is that he or she can help you by asking questions for each piece

of paper such as:

> "*What is the importance of this file or document?*"

> "*Will keeping this help your financial or personal well-being?*"

> "*Will the world end if you do not keep it?*"

> "*Would you miss it if it disappeared?*"

You are going to invest an entire day or weekend deciding what to do with each file and every loose piece of paper or document — whether it goes into the trash, into the filing cabinet, into storage, or is something you will have to handle right away. Most people find that many of their papers should go to the recycling center — along with those old magazines and newspapers.

Keep: The files you know must be handled immediately or in the very near future.

Put into storage: The files you are clear can be put away for storage. Put them in your **banker's/archive boxes** and label each box. These files may contain certain items you do not need to have near you but are necessary to save, such as tax items, which in most countries must be saved for a certain number of years.

They may also contain research that is valuable to you for ongoing projects that are not in need of immediate attention, or things of sentimental value.

The bottom line is that what you are storing has some real value.

Discard: Anything you do not need to store or work with currently.

Step Six: **Decide how to handle** notes, small pieces of paper, letters, and documents for the files you are going to use on a daily basis.

Step Seven: Select the items to go in the Desktop Folder Stand

This is the stepped (flat also works) desktop stand listed among the stationery supplies in the Third Step that holds the folders you labeled *For Immediate Attention*, etc. **These folders hold all the work you are going to do on a *daily* basis.** (All other folders and files will be located in other areas, leaving you with a clean, uncluttered environment in which to work).

As you begin to go through pieces of papers and documents, you should ask yourself: "What needs to be done next with this?"

Become clear on your priorities and commit to using the system. Do not fool yourself or the system will fall apart.

Be as realistic as you can with the timing of their use when placing these files:

- *A-Priorities file* — It needs attention *in the next day or two*

- *Desktop Folder Holder Stand* **—** If it is an item that you know *you have to work with within the next day or two*, place it in the appropriate file here.

- *Time Machine* **—** It can *wait to be handled three days or longer.*

- *Archive — Banker's Box* **—** Any loose pieces of paper or documents *for market research, or backup items for tax or legal purposes*. If they do not go in any of those areas, they probably can join the rest of the items headed for the recycling center or trash.

Physical (or computer) Desktop Folder Stand Files Recommendations:

For Immediate Attention   Immediate things to do daily.

A-Priority Agenda for _____   Income Generating and Cost-Cutting Activities.

Separate folders for people with whom you have regular meetings. They hold information you want to share or give to a particular person whom you see regularly. If you meet regularly with ten people, have ten *Agenda for* folders. Put items in them as you think of them, or as they come in from your regular *in tray*.

Only put items here that you actually have to speak to the person about. If you can give an instruction in writing, then send the item with your written instruction on it through the *In/Out Tray* system, or through the mail; or communicate **by e-mail**.

Project folders

Projects **are multi-faceted undertakings that are active and ongoing**.

You may have files with all the file categories we have listed, within a project. These file folders are named according to the projects you are working on or the people you are working with. Once the project is complete, do not keep these at your desk. Date and file them in the proper place in storage, giving you a history of the entire project for future reference.

Look at all **Project folders** when you are completing your workday and preparing for the next one. You will need to determine which items from the various projects need to be placed on your *To Do* list in your *Time Management System* or into your *A-Priorities* file folder.

To Call

Information goes here on anyone you need to call to get your priorities handled. This includes people you are going to call with regard to your projects, personal calls, and calls to be returned.
Look through it regularly throughout the day, and use it at closing each day to prepare your *To Do's* list for the next day.

To Write/E-mail

Lists of people you want to write or e-mail, and the items of information you wish to convey to them. Include all correspondence that comes to you that must be answered by letter and all items you must dictate, including memos and minutes of meetings.

This file may get accessed only once a week — when you want to spend time handling your correspondence — so make sure to schedule time each week to review it. (**Note**: If a letter comes to you that must be handled by making a phone call, it goes in your *To Call* folder, not your *To Write* folder).

To Do

Activities you need to physically get up and go somewhere to accomplish, or have someone else do. Such as keeping a doctor's appointment or getting a tire changed, *To Do* items also get written in your *Time Management System.*

To Fax/Scan

Everything you need to fax or scan today. Sometimes we have people working for us who go to the fax machine every other minute.

Depending on where the machine is physically, and the urgency of the matter, it is probably more efficient to send those faxes every few hours.

To Copy

Everything you need to copy today — same as with faxes. Unless you have your own copier, it is better to save everything you need to copy for one trip because one of the keys to good time management is eliminating repetition of actions whenever possible.

To Read

Materials you need to read before they go in a particular file, such as department head reports, annual reports, news articles, etc. This folder should either go home with you or to meetings and places where you know you will be waiting for people and will have time to read them.

If you do not have those opportunities, arrange the time to do your reading either daily or weekly, depending on your schedule.

If your business is "reading-intensive", we highly recommend you taking a speed-reading course. Most of us didn't learn to read at the speed necessary to cover our paper-intensive world.

Personal

Things to remember, letters, and notes involving people in your personal life. You could have a list of birthdays, anniversaries, or other events important to you. If you receive personal notes, and they need answering, keep them in here until you respond. This is where to place ads for toys or other items that you may want to purchase for a birthday, anniversary or gift for a loved one.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not ignore this file or prioritize it too low. As we all know, some people enjoy their work so much, or others have to dedicate tremendous amounts of time to their businesses or professions they completely ignore their personal lives. This file, properly used, will support you in attending to the things in this important area of your life.

To Organize

Papers and other documents that require organizing later, if they cannot be attended to that day. **Warning:** Keep an eye on this file and do not let it grow too big.

To File

Organized **data you wish to file**. Hopefully, you will have someone else to do filing for you, because Income Generating Activities do not involve filing.

But filing *is* important... You will probably need these documents in the future, and filing them in their proper place on a timely basis is a key to your efficiency in locating them when needed; so, be sure to schedule time at least once a week, to file these documents/papers in the appropriate filing cabinet or storage box.

And remember, this is a *To File* folder — **not a *pending* file and not a *storage* file.**

We will look further at suggested daily procedures in a moment. For now, let's continue with **what else goes on top of your desk**.

Step Eight: Select the items to go in the In and Out Trays on top of your desk

You created these desktop In and Out Trays in the Third Step, and there will be considerable activity around them. But **do not make the mistake** *of also creating a "Pending" tray.* You have a *Time Machine* to take the place of any "Pending" tray. All you will need are the **In** and **Out** trays.
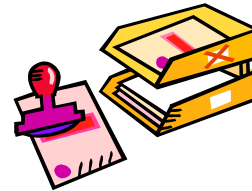
The purpose for the In Tray is to receive items on a daily basis *prior to the next appropriate action being taken with them*. **The purpose for the *Out Tray* is to hold *things going out to other people*.**

Whew! So far you have taken some key steps toward getting yourself organized. Remember that what we are doing here, more than anything else, is establishing *habits* — not only for you but also for the people who live and work with you. Once you get your organizational system set up, be sure to give yourself time to learn your new system. **Do not go back to the old way of doing things, whatever you do...**

Any habit takes time to learn, so when you catch yourself putting papers in a pile, remember instead to put them in the appropriate files.

Step Nine: Learn the "Daily Procedures" for handling the files

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Let's look at the **daily order** for working with all these files folders. An explanation of how to handle each of these follows:

A. *Opening Procedures"*

At the beginning of each day, *handle* things in the following folders:

1.   ***For Immediate Attention*** file
2.   ***A-Priorities***
3.   ***Mail*** — Open and put in appropriate files/place
4.   ***In Tray***
5.   ***Time Machine*** — Daily files
6.   ***Desktop Folder Stand*** — Daily file

B. *Completion Procedures*

At the end of the day *handle the following:*

1.   **Handle the Out Tray**
2.   **Complete the detailed Completion Procedures checklist**

Procedure Checklist for Opening and Completing

At the beginning of the day:

1.   Handle things in the *For Immediate Attention* file

When starting for the day, your desk is to be entirely clean as you left it the night before. Remember, everything is in its proper place. This is a great psychological boost for starting your day in a positive way. If you are lucky enough to have a Secretary or Personal Assistant, you will find *the **For Immediate Attention*** folder in front of the Desktop Folder Stand on top of your desk. Or, you will have put it there yourself when you last left your desk/office.

This is the file of actions to do first. In it could be such things as an urgent phone call to make, a check to be signed, a memo with information you need, or anything that needs your attention before you do anything else

2.   Handle A-Priorities

This is a *priority* file of income generating or cost-cutting activities. Look through this folder regularly throughout the day and do whatever is appropriate regarding its contents. Items that are to be read or items that require a phone call or

dictation do not go in this folder, but should be in their own folders instead, to be attended to in the proper order.

It is important to stay focused on the A-Priorities items and not to go off on tangents. The best way to determine priorities is to ask yourself the following questions:

- *"What is the best Income Generating Activity I could be doing right now?"*

- *"Who are the people or organizations that bring the most money into my business? (If you are not in business for profit, then what is the most important result that you are attempting to accomplish?)*

- *"Where could we cut costs in the business/organization that would allow us to yield more profits?"*

Here are some illustrations of how we handle priorities in our business. When we are working in our *publishing* endeavors, our priorities are to talk to our publisher, our manual sales people, the publicist, manualstores, or anyone inquiring about the manual. When we are working to promote our *seminars*, then our priorities are to work with our promoters or sales people, and potential participants of our courses.

Most people who aren't well organized operate in a "management by panic," "management by reaction", "management by who is yelling the most", or some other crisis management mode. Therefore, instead of focusing on what will make the most money for them, they spend time wondering, "What is the best way to avoid _____?" (Fill in the blank).

Does it not make sense to spend more time on *Income Generating Activities*, so you can create the business and money to pay off all those bills instead of spending your time trying to avoid them? Why give long periods of time to things that will not make money for you?

3. **Open your mail daily**

Most people do not open their mail daily, creating "paper" bottlenecks for themselves. We highly recommend that you always look at your mail as if you were looking for cash in the envelopes or potential clients and the money they could make for you. This gives you an incentive to actually *open* the mail.
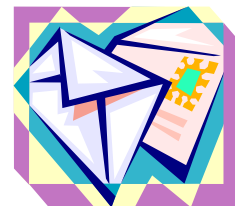
Some people try to recognize which mail is important, but it is a much better habit — if you do not have a personal Assistant — to take 10 to 20 minutes *and*

open every piece of mail and file it in the appropriate place immediately. This will save you hours of work and worry later.

In addition, by looking at some of that "junk mail" or promotional materials from different organizations, you just may gain some new insights into more marketing and moneymaking activities. At the very least, tossing out junk mail on a daily basis reduces clutter in your office.

If there is "bad news" in the mail, you might as well handle it as soon as possible. Remember, one Habit of Success is to handle the most unpleasant thing you have to handle that day, as soon as possible. The more you procrastinate, the more difficult that it becomes to handle unpleasant activities.

File papers/documents from the mail in the proper files or discard them. Begin to let go of the idea that you are going to do every project you have in your head and that *that* piece of paper is going to be *the* document you need. Stay focused on your current projects. Later, if you do other projects, you will find the appropriate information to allow you to succeed by following the procedures you have learned here.

4. The In and Out Tray Procedure:

Handle actions in the *In Tray*: This is where you will find the mail and other documents that have been placed there by your Assistant or other co-workers since you cleaned it out when you last left work. (The key here is to *do it now.*)
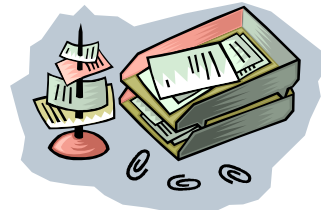
Handle each item here only once, rather than putting the item down to decide what to do later then picking it up again before it gets distributed. Put it where it belongs in the first place, either by placing it in the proper folder or by completing it *at once* and distributing it to your ***Out Tray***.

The *Out Tray* is where you put items to be mailed at the end of the day, documents or papers to be picked up by your assistant or secretary, or any other item that will be going out from your desk at the end of the day

For items that can be distributed to your staff or other department heads in the office, immediately action them by clearly marking each with a sticky note or use the *Memo Form* (see later chapter) indicating *To*, *From*, *Date*, *Time*, *Instruction*, or *By When* a response or action is needed. Follow proper memo procedure when

sending memos through the system and put the item immediately into your *Out Tray*.

If someone else is not assigned to handle the contents of your *Out-Tray*, do it yourself several times a day. These items will then either, need to be distributed in the *Central Information Area* or handled as needed.

Ask yourself these questions about the document in your hand:

- o *"What exactly do I need to do?"*
- o *"Whom do I need to speak to?"*
- o *"Who needs to know this?"*
- o *"Can I assign someone to do this?"*
- o *"Or should it be discarded?"*

For items you need to actually speak to someone about put the item in the proper *Agenda* folder.

For items you must do something personally to handle:

- *If a phone call is required* put it in the *To Call* folder

- *If you must write an e-mail message, dictate a letter, instructions, minutes, or a memo*, put it in the *To Write* folder

- *If it is something you have to read and you do not have the time to do it immediately* put it in the *To Read* folder.

- *If you must do something other than phone, write, or read*, put it in its appropriate folder or in the *Time Machine folder with the date you expect you can get to it, or it must be done by.*

5. **Handle Daily Files from the *Time Machine***

Next, look at the daily file for this particular day in your *Time Machine*. For example, if today is January 3, go into the file numbered "3" behind the January folder and glance quickly through it. *If you find a document relating to something you have already handled*, discard it or file it away, as appropriate. *If it is a matter that is no longer a priority*, do not do it just because it is in today's file. If it can wait or you have other, higher priority work to do, go ahead and put it in a later date file.

Ask yourself again, *"Is this an Income Generating Activity or something that just needs to be done or did I just think once upon a time that it was a good idea, but now know it is not a good idea and should probably be filed someplace else or discarded?"* Go through this process quickly.

6.   **Handle daily files from your** *Desktop Folder Stand*

Once you have gone through the daily routine of checking each folder in the order listed above and done what is required of those files, continue your work contained in the files that have been pre-designated as **Projects, Agenda, To Write, To Call, Personal**, etc. (More about this is covered in the Personal Productivity chapter where you will learn some good tips on the best way to set aside time for these tasks).

At this point you have handled your paperwork for the day! You now can go onto your other regular activities, such as a project you are working on.

Daily and Weekend Completion Procedure

Completion Procedures Tip: At the end of the day, designate a person to do the different tasks for the group. Make sure items do not sit for long periods of time or it undermines the purpose of this system. If you are using e-mail systems like *Microsoft Outlook* — some of these steps may be done in this system — as long as you check it each day as part of your procedures.

Before you leave each day or for the weekend:

Item	Procedure
In/Out Trays	Both should be empty and desk clear before leaving for the day or weekend
Projects Folder(s)	See what needs to be done tomorrow or next week.
To Call folder	See who needs to be called tomorrow or next week.
To Do folder	See what needs to be done tomorrow or next week.

Agenda folder	a. See if you should schedule any meetings
	b. Prepare agendas for meetings already scheduled for tomorrow or next week.
Make a To Do list	List all items you must do tomorrow or next week and check it against your Personal *Time Management System* **t**o make sure they are entered there and that you have scheduled enough time to complete the list
Check the Time Machine	Distribute all items to the *In Tray*. Look at any that are yours and see what needs to be done tomorrow or next week.
Check the To Type file	Decide to whom you will assign your typing or data processing, or schedule into your day any of these you must do yourself.

Additional Office Systems for Any Office

Central Information Area

No matter how large or small — *Central Information Area.* It is the they can pick up mail, phone messages, every office needs a place everyone knows and memos. Your office should have e-mail hook ups for messages between members of the staff that everyone uses (which makes it much more efficient and easy for everyone to communicate without paper clutter). Some companies use an area with slots, spaces or "pigeon holes" that store everyone's messages, mail, and memos.

Phone Messages — if all communications are not electronic, phone messages should be taken on a phone pad with carbon copies. It is easy to misplace phone messages written on small pieces of paper, and the "million dollar deal" phone number may be on the one you lose. In today's increasingly electronic world, phone messages can be even more important than mail, so **it's important to keep them in a separate place**.

Bulletin Board — The Central Information Area includes a bulletin board where you put updated information relating to everyone. Make it very simple. This is *not* the company photo "album" or

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the place to hang humorous cartoons. You can have another board for that.

Have a bulletin board that everyone checks on a regular daily basis, knowing that the information here is current. This saves you time if you have to communicate an important message to everyone (e.g. a change of venue for a celebration party or a new policy that everyone needs to know about), and you cannot do it on a one-to-one basis.

Ask that everyone to initial the bulletin after it has been read. That way, you know who has and hasn't read it, and it can be brought to their attention at the next office meeting or as soon as practical.

If using e-mail systems, make sure the one you use has a feature that confirms when messages you have sent have been picked up. After all, your communication chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

DONE! Doesn't that feel great? What an accomplishment. Enjoy the feeling and congratulate yourself.

You now have a system you can count on to take over when your natural instincts to be disorganized appear. You know your business will grow in direct proportion to your mastery of a system like this. It will prevent you from making the cardinal sin of *forgetting someone or something that you promised to do*.

If this manual does only one thing for you - to give you a "Perfect" Desk - it will be worth its weight …

…in gold!

CONGRATULATIONS! Now take time to record any thoughts or ideas you are getting and feel free to take any ideas from this chapter or manual and customize them to improve your own business procedures.