

# Faculty Development

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### Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. April 2005.

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*"The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable and binds us irrevocably in thought and act."*

--Orison Swett Marden

as quoted in *Eat That Frog! 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time* by Brian Tracy

### Conferences

It's spring, and you know what that means. It's conference season! To make your conference season a little easier, I've compiled a few tips for you.

#### When you go:

- Keep travel receipts...
  - And hotel, airline, and rental car confirmation numbers in one folder, preferably a clear plastic envelope.
- Pack extra business cards to hand out
- Purge those conference materials at the hotel
  - Toss those handouts that you were too polite to refuse and other materials that you're not interested in.
- Toss your name badge, too
  - Some conferences recycle the badge holders.
- While at the conference...
  - Take a walk when you can to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.
- Network...
  - Network. Network. You never know who you're going to meet.
- If you've promised to someone information...
  - Write it on the back of their business card to remind you. Or you can enter it in your PDA or on your calendar.
- Avoid "freebie-itis"
  - Giveaways are great until you bring them all back. Think quality vs. quantity.

#### When you return:

- Turn in those receipts for reimbursement
- In your Rolodex...
  - File those business cards you picked up under the person's name or institution -- however you're going to remember that person. You're under no obligation to file the business cards under the person's last name if you're not going to remember it that way.
- If the materials come in a binder...
  - Keep all of your conference materials in one area on your shelf.
- If the materials are not bound...
  - You can put them into a binder or file them under the conference's name.
- You could choose to file your conference materials...
  - Under the topic they're addressing. You want to make sure that you file them in a way that you will remember. Just ask yourself: How would I look for this information? How would I think of it?
- Conference bags have a tendency to multiply
  - Give your bags to someone who can use them or use them to lug groceries, stow supplies in your car, or take to the beach -- just to name a few.

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### Managing Your Meetings & Committees

One of the most common complaints I hear about daily work life is that there are "too many meetings." Let's face it. Meetings and committees are a major part of work -- whether we like it or not. Here are a few ways to manage the paperwork from your meetings and hopefully help you breath a little easier.

#### Before the meeting:

- If it's a regular meeting or committee...
  - Put all of the notes into one folder, either a hanging one in your desk drawer or an accordion one. Keep all of your agendas, notes, and minutes in the folder.
- If you serve on multiple committees...
  - Keep a folder for each committee. You can also keep a notepad in the file folder to take with you to the meeting.
- When you're ready for your meeting...
  - Grab your folder and go.
- If you meet with people on a regular basis...
  - Keep a list of their names in your day planner or on the computer. Jot down any topics you need to discuss, and this gives you an instant agenda for your meeting. You don't waste your time trying to think of "one more thing" you wanted to tell them.

#### During the meeting:

- Have an agenda for the meeting...
  - And stick to it.
- If discussion wanders to another subject...
  - Then it should be "parked" and brought up at the next meeting.

### After the meeting:

- When you return from the meeting...  
→ IMMEDIATELY put any action items on your to-do list. Otherwise, you run the risk of tossing the handouts and notes aside and never looking at them again -- until the next meeting. Ten minutes now will save you time later.
- If you need to assign a task or pass along any information about the meeting...  
→ Send out a quick e-mail to the appropriate parties.
- Purge any handouts you're not going to need
- After you've recorded your action items...  
→ Return all of the notes and handouts to their folder.

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### Ask the Organizer

**Q.** My supervisor regularly gives me different pieces of paper, and I'm not sure whether to keep them or not. What if they ask for one? But I don't want to make a bunch of file folders for single sheets of paper.

**A.** Make a folder with the person's name on it and file anything you receive from them. If your director appears at your desk and asks about that piece of paper, you know it can only be in one place.

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### From the Bookshelf

*Organize Your Garage in No Time* by Barry Izsak

The garage typically becomes a catchall, dumping ground for many, and this book pays attention to one of the most neglected rooms in the house. The author offers step-by-step instructions and to-do lists to help you organize the garage.

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### Got Clutter?

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing and time management.

Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department. I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution.

To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061.

*Happy Organizing!*

*Janice*

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