

WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU GO HOME TO ENCOURAGE YOUR NEWFOUND SPIRIT OF EFFICIENCY

1. WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN

- ⇒ **Schedule half an hour early into your day next week to sit down and write everything you need to do before the end of the year.** Be as specific as possible. If you have a list of your job duties somewhere, use that to help jog your memory. For example, if you're a buyer, write down all the buying appointments you know about. Write down things you have to do every day (like vacuuming), every week (payroll submission), every Monday and Thursday (take out the recycling), every other month (inventory backup). Leave your new list somewhere obvious, because for the rest of the day, you'll be thinking of things to add.
- ⇒ **If you and your staff can all do this at the same time, so much the better.** It's helpful to hear what other people expect you to do as part of your job. Also, the more people in your store embarking on this adventure together, the more likely you all are to keep at it, because it'll work better.
- ⇒ **Look for large projects lurking in your list.** For example, if you're in charge of your store's newsletter, you know that making a newsletter is not just one task. It's about a dozen tasks that are probably spread out over a few days. Write them all down. Be ruthless in looking for these hidden tasks.
- ⇒ **Now, look for patterns in your list.** What's the most efficient way for you to sort these tasks? You might want to keep all cleaning tasks on a separate list, or all event planning tasks on a separate list. Maybe you want one list for yourself of things that only you can do, and another list for the back room for things that any staff member can do.
- ⇒ **Using a calendar, or Remember The Milk, or a notebook, or whatever makes you happy, write down the list in an order that makes sense to you.** I find that chronological order by day is best, but it might not work for everybody. You might want to put them in order by hour, or by importance.

2. LOOK AT YOUR LIST EVERY DAY

- ⇒ **Capturing isn't worth a hill of beans if you don't look at what you've captured on the regular.** Think about the things you do every day without needing to be reminded. Turn on the computer? Make coffee? Check your email? What's the best place to keep lists that it won't be extra work for you to look at them every day?
- ⇒ **Experiment with different types of lists.** It's not necessary for your lists to be electronic, though many people find them easier to maintain and share. If paper works for you, use it, and if the computer works for you, use it. But if you think one should work for you and it's not, don't let your self-perception get in the way of experimenting with something else.

⇒ **Look at it every day.** Move things if you have to; it's your list and you know what your week looks like. But don't make excuses not to look at it. As painful as it might be some mornings, it's even more painful when you forget to do things.

3. MAKE CHANGES

- ⇒ If you do this, you'll find you want to make changes to your schedule. Give in to that instinct! Don't do it if you aren't in the mood for changes. (Or if you're in the middle of the holidays!)
- ⇒ I can't make many recommendations on what changes to make. That'll depend on you and your list.
- ⇒ Once you start writing things down and looking at them all the time, you will notice things about your life. Maybe you will notice tasks that you need to delegate. Maybe you will notice you are spending too much time on email. Whatever you notice, be ready to make changes based on what the lists and tasks are showing you. Don't get mad at the lists: they're just mirroring your life for you. Take advantage of your new knowledge and run with it.
- ⇒ Okay, one recommendation: make sure an early change is making a regular time to capture and look at your list. It doesn't have to take up much of your day, but it does have to happen.

**HEY, YOU CAN START CAPTURING RIGHT NOW!
USE THE REST OF THIS PIECE OF PAPER.**