

Get it together! Five habits of exceptionally organized and successful people.

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A successful executive at a major airline reportedly said his secret to success was getting one solid hour of important work accomplished each morning. Then, smiling, he said, “Then I go to the office for interruptions.” Let’s face it. Successful people are successful because they have developed habits, routines, and tools that help them move from where they are to where they want to be.

Do you “have it together”? Are you accomplishing what you want and need to accomplish in your life? Is your life stress-free? Are you satisfied with the legacy you are creating for your life? Let’s take a look at your life accomplishments and figure out what you can do to “get it together” and reach your goals.

First, let’s take a look at how organized you are. Click here to take a quick 15 question quiz to establish to take a quick 15 question quiz to establish a starting point of where you currently are from an organization perspective (www.liveandworkonpurpose.com/ResourcePortal.html).

How did you do on the quiz? Are you an organizational guru or is it time to get to work at creating habits that will move you forward? Regardless of which end of the organizational spectrum you found yourself, developing and strengthening these five habits of exceptionally organized people will help you make a quantum leap forward in the effectiveness and satisfaction in your life.

1. Focus on your vision.

Highly successful and organized people have a long term vision for their life, career, or business. They know what they want the outcome to be. They have “en-vised” the end state. They know where they are going. Then, they focus their life on that vision.



What is your vision? If you are able to articulate your life vision without pausing, good for you! If you are not sure about your vision, perhaps it is time to create one. Don’t panic. Creating a vision for your life can take as little or as much time as you want to put into it. A good way to create your vision is to take stock of yourself. Define your values (what is most important to you), your interests, your skills, and your abilities. Then, ask yourself, “What do I want people to say about me at my funeral?” Based on what you want the culmination of your life to be about and including your interests, skills, and abilities, write (in just a sentence or two) the vision for your life.

2. Set goals based on that vision and your values.

Highly successful and organized people realize that, in order to cross the chasm between where they are in life and where they want to be, they need to build a bridge. That bridge consists of goals or “stepping stones” that will get you closer to your vision.

There are short term and longer term goals. Short term goals are goals (or often tasks) that can be completed in one sitting. Longer term goals are usually goals that are more complex and may take longer to accomplish.

Once you've identified your short and longer term goals, prioritize them. If it's a critical 'must-do' goal, place a '1' beside that goal. If it's important but not critical, please a '2' beside that goal. If it's not critical or important, place a '3' beside that goal.

Now, it's time to get to work on making the "1" and "2" priority goals happen.

3. Habitualize your goals.

Highly successful and organized people recognize that, in order to make progress towards their vision, they must make their goals a 'do-able' habit; a part of their daily routine.

First of all, longer term goals should be broken down into simpler goals or tasks that, over time, will result in your meeting the longer term goal. This will make those bigger goals more achievable and less intimidating.

Now, it's critical to make your goals part of your routine. The best way to build this habit is to schedule time to work on the goals. We usually schedule important appointments on our calendars. We should do the same with important goals and tasks. Start by blocking off one or two hours each week to accomplish one of your '1-priority' goals or tasks. Be realistic. Don't try to 'boil the ocean' by scheduling too many tasks in your hour. Remember that, by focusing on just one or two key goals during your scheduled time, you will habitually make incremental movement toward your longer term goals and vision.

4. Utilize a central time management system.

Highly successful and organized people have a system for managing their time. Notice I said "a system", not multiple systems. Keeping appointments, email addresses, phone numbers, and goals in separate places (for example, having several calendars, post-it notes, and lists) only causes confusion and encourages disorganization. Select one tool (that could be a "Day-Timer" or similar system) that will be your single, central place to view and keep track of your appointments, goals, and contact information.



In today's high-tech world, there are many electronic, computer-based, and web-based systems available. The advantage of using these systems is that they are mobile and accessible anywhere and anytime. Many of these electronic systems will take the work out of organizing by indexing tasks and appointments, sending you reminders, and integrating everything in one place. The tool I use is "Chaos Intellect" (www.chaossoftware.com). It is an inexpensive and powerful tool with many functions that keep me organized. That's just one example. There are many other similar tools that may work better for you. The bottom line is pick a system and stick to it.

Finally, it's important to follow your schedule. When you schedule time for a task and your time management system reminds you, do it! Don't wait. Don't reschedule. Just do it.

5. Deal with the distractions.

Highly successful and organized people recognize that "distractions happen". They also recognize that distractions can be their 'undoing'. It's important to be prepared for and manage these distractions.



Here are some of the most common distractions and how to deal with them:

- Clutter – Whether it is a cluttered home, office, desktop, or email inbox, clutter will distract you. Take an hour or two to handle and clear out old email, snail-mail, files, etc. Act on it if it needs action, then file it or throw it away.
- Incoming email – Break the habit of checking your email as soon as it ‘dings’. If it’s an emergency, the person will call you. Set aside a time each day to check and respond to email. Manage your email. Don’t let it manage you.
- Smartphones – While today’s smartphones and cellphones are amazing tools, they can also be amazing distractions. Avoid the distraction of your smartphone by silencing it or putting it away when you are working on something important.
- Needy people – This may sound harsh but, let’s face it, there are people in our lives who demand our attention in unhealthy ways. Obviously, if someone is in an emergency situation and they need your help, help them. Aside from that situation, consider setting clear boundaries with people in your life as it relates to the time you have set aside to work on your goals and priorities. Learn how to say ‘no’. Or, at least, ‘no, not now’.

To be successful and organized, it is critical that you stay focused on achieving the goals and tasks you have set for yourself.

Following these five steps may not guarantee fame and fortune, but they will help you articulate your vision, set your goals, and make progress. Now, go forth and live the life that you are called to live!

Bradley Davidson is a certified personal & professional coach whose personal mission is to empower people and organizations to lead their lives and worlds with purpose, vision, passion, and integrity by providing individuals life-changing learning, coaching, and support. He may be contacted through his website at www.liveandworkonpurpose.com.