



Hands-on Management

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Let's Get Organized

Management comes in many styles and its relevance in our lives is not limited to the workplace. As a matter of fact, we would be less stressed if we were using management skills in all aspects of our lives without the sharp separation of work and family. The hectic demands for our attention that break up the normal routine can be overwhelming without some type of organization. Organization is a management habit that can be

improved with a little practice. New habits are formed by repeating the desired function for about 25 days without a lapse in the routine. It is also easier to form a new habit if it is linked to an established habit. For example, you can link the desired function—such as taking pH readings of the tank chemistry—with something you do every morning, such as turning on the lights in the lab or pouring that first cup of coffee.

Some Suggestions

For Organizing Your World

Here is a neat filing system* for date-sensitive items. Start with 12 hanging folders, each labeled for a month of the year. Next, label one set of manila folders from one to 31.

Here's How It Works

Because this is the June issue of *P&SF*, let's start the example with June 1, 1999. The first folder at the

front of your desk filing drawer is labeled June, followed by the July folder, August folder, etc. Next, place the manila folders (labeled 1–31) into the June hanging folder. Stuff anything that requires your attention into the proper location. That piece of mail that needs to be dealt with tomorrow goes into the manila folder marked “2” (for June 2). The inventory form that you fill out the last business day of the month if placed into the “30” folder in June, and if the form doesn’t change much, one copy goes into each of the other 11 folders. (Note: When filing, remember to allow enough time to complete the project or task—don’t file an assignment that is due on March 1 in the March folder, unless it takes much less than a day to accomplish.)

Now, back to June 1. After acting on the contents of the manila folder marked “1,” it is placed behind the “31” folder. Looking at the next day’s folder, by the way, should be included in your end-of-day planning for tomorrow. Repeat this process until the end of the month, and then sort the contents of the July folder into the

correct manila folders, labeled from “1” to “31.” After this is completed, move the June folder to the back of the month folders. (Lather, rinse and repeat as necessary!)

Taking Full Advantage Of Your Computer

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey stresses self-mastery, along with team concepts in an effort to strengthen the greatest advantage you have—yourself! I’ve used a past column to cover some of the useful ideas presented in this book. To be really successful today, however, one must be able to merchandise any book or move. Now, as far as I know, there are no *Seven Habits* action figures, but the Covey Leadership Center and Microsoft have created a very useful resource that improves Schedule+ for Windows 95™. The Seven Habits Tools** are adapted into Schedule+ with wizards for developing the basic tenets of the book: Mission statements, analyzing strategic roles and setting goals. I have not used Schedule+ very much, because I’m more

comfortable with a hard-copy organizer. The improved print function is the real strength of this computer program. Schedule+ supports only Avery and Filofax organizers; Seven Habits Tools outputs to Covey, DayTimer™, Franklin and Rolodex™ forms. You begin by configuring the printer and learning how to insert the paper correctly. Next, select the forms you want to print and build a template. There are “Daily To Do” lists and overviews of the week that you can print out on either plain paper or preprinted forms. This program creates a nice synergy between the computer and good old trusty hard copy.

Organizational muscles require continuous dedication to stay effective. Be sure they are exercised every day. P&SF

**The Organized Executive*, Stephanie Winston, New York: Warner Books.

**Seven Habits Tools—list price \$49.95. Requires 8 MB RAM, 2.5 MB hard disk space, Microsoft Windows 95™, Schedule+. Covey Leadership Center, Provo, UT; 888/942-6839; <http://www.covey.com>.