

Tips for New Organizing Consultants

- ~Keep your day job, the one that pays the bills and takes care of the family. Building a client based business like professional organizing can be a slow process so you need to have the safety net of a regular job. (There are professional organizers who fast-tracked their businesses by investing money in advertising and business manager, but most don't have start up funds to do so.)
- ~Go to www.napo.net and read through the web site to get to know the profession.
- ~Find a NAPO chapter, chapter-in-formation, or informal gathering of professional organizers near you. Join and volunteer. It's the best way to learn.
- ~Read all the books on the subject of organizing that you can get your hands on. You will find that every professional organizer is different and approaches subjects differently. You will find some repetition but you will glean bits and pieces between the repetitions. Try your local library. Try www.half.com where you can purchase books inexpensively according to their condition.
- ~Go to www.FaithfulOrganizers.com and www.napo.net and read every single professional organizers web site in every state. Read each one cover to cover. You will learn a lot about the business side of organizing and it won't cost you money, just time. You'll also see the tremendous spectrum of work that professional organizers do.
- ~Begin thinking about a business name. Thoroughly research it to be sure you are not using a name that someone else is using or that has been trademarked. Do your best to choose a name that you can also secure as a domain name. Ex; Organizing Matters, www.OrganizingMatters.com
- ~As you research professional organizers web sites all over the country, take note of what you like or dislike about their web sites. Begin planning your web site. Creating a presence on the internet is essential for business success in today's market.
- ~Write articles about organizing even though you don't know what you'll ever do with them. It will help you sharpen your organizing philosophies.
- ~When you are ready, there are several professional organizers who offer training courses through their web sites. You will no doubt, stumble across them while you're reading through web sites.
- ~Along the way, learn as much as you can about business. Many professional organizers came from other industries, homemakers, teachers etc... and have not known how to effectively run a business. Again, learn as much as you can for free. Contact your local chamber of commerce, women in business organizations, and any other people who or organizations which can help you learn to be an effective business.
- ~Once you are ready, tell your friends what you are doing and ask if they would be willing to let you organize for them. (Trust me; you will have people very happy to accept your offer.) It will build your interpersonal skills and help you figure out your boundaries as a professional. It will give you the chance to work through your 'uncomfortable zones' like opening people's closets, drawers and such. It will help you get comfortable with being uncomfortable. You will learn to how to judge do-able sized jobs. You will learn the things that slow you up and speed you up.
- ~One of the most common questions asked about the organizing profession is, 'How much do I charge? The Federal Trade Commission has clearly advised professional organizers not to disclose their fees with each other because it could be perceived as price fixing. Considering the following when determining your fee; There are several schools of thought on the subject; Price yourself somewhere between a reputable cleaning service and an interior designer. Price yourself for what the market can bear. Price yourself for what YOU NEED to in order to stay in business. Judith Kirk, Organizing Resources, has a formula on her website that you might find helpful: www.organizingresources.com.

Linda Ely is the owner of Organizing Matters, an Organization Consultant and member of NAPO, National Association of Professional Organizers. Linda is the founder of Faithful Organizers, the only nationwide virtual community of Christian Professional Organizers.

Organizing Matters is committed to helping clients reach their goal of a more organized home, workplace and schedule. To learn more, visit www.OrganizingMatters.com or e-mail her at info@OrganizingMatters.com