

## If in doubt, throw it out!

Much has been written about time management. In fact, I hesitate to even bring up the issue. However, in times of crisis, how we allocate our time as leaders becomes fundamental to our ability to get through all we need to get through in a day. Time management counts, especially as we begin the recovery and rebuild process. So, how do you make better use of your time, personally and at the library?



1. Believe that organization is the edge on success. In writing this weekly sound bite, I use a mind map, a white board in my office where I track trends, mash up ideas and plot next week's email. If I simply kept it in a computer or paper file, I would be unable to "see" the work and waste a whole bunch of time sorting and re-sorting the mountain of paper and ideas.
2. Make a conscious decision to push away the superfluous and focus on the fundamentals. The number one clutter item is paper; I know you've heard it before. Handle it once as soon as it arrives and then toss it out immediately. This truly is the secret to successful time management.
3. Choose the right mode of communication; it will save you a lot of time. To talk to boomers, use email; we understand it!!! To talk to the 15 - 30 year olds, text message them; they will respond. To talk to your mom, use the phone; there is magic in hearing a loved one's voice!!!
4. Decide when your most productive time of the day is, and use it for your most important tasks. I am naturally a morning person, so I do my "thoughtful tasks" early in the day. I write as soon as I hit the office and then move on to correspondence. In the afternoon I do the tasks that require less focus.
5. Staying organized is never ending, it is a daily commitment. Every Friday afternoon I re-commit to the Organization Goddess, the patron saint of librarians, and clear off my desk completely, even if it's only into the "Unknown" basket!
6. And, going against our entire library training, **if in doubt, throw it out!** Be it paper or digital files, over 80% of what we save/store /keep (especially emails) will never be revisited. It's like the leftovers that we dutifully tuck away in the refrigerator just to be thrown out a week later. If in doubt toss it out!

Bottom line: time management matters, especially in times of rebuilding. Handle stuff once, choose the right mode of communication, use your most productive time wisely, commit to the Organizational Goddess, and **if in doubt**, you know it, **throw it out**.