

Are you really organized? Take our quiz

Answer the following questions “yes” or “no” to get a quick assessment of just how organized you are.

- 1.** Do you keep a daily to-do list and cross off items as you complete them?
- 2.** Do you schedule weekly meetings with your boss(es) to review the status of the workload, update each other, discuss objectives, set priorities, give and get feedback and express your concerns?
- 3.** If you have more than one boss, do you have structures for prioritizing their work?
- 4.** Have you established a procedure for covering the bases when you're unavailable?
- 5.** Do you make effective use of your colleagues and support staff to handle emergencies and other overloads?
- 6.** Are your databases, online networks and filing systems meeting your current needs? Can you retrieve what you need immediately?
- 7.** Are you making effective use of calendars, either electronic or paper, for noting and tracking appointments and meetings and staying on schedule?
- 8.** Do you and your boss set realistic deadlines? Do you schedule checkpoints where both of you can assess how projects are going?
- 9.** Do you have a practical method for managing interruptions? Are you completely comfortable with asking people to come back later or phrase their need in an email? Are you effectively deflecting people when they intrude upon the flow of your day with things that don't really need your attention?

10. Do you group tasks that can easily overlap, e.g., dropping off a report on the way to lunch or reading while waiting for a meeting to begin?

11. Do you know your limits and heed signals that it's time to take a break, change tasks or enlist assistance?

12. Do you break problems into manageable pieces to handle in small steps?

Unless you could honestly answer “yes” to every question, you have room to improve your organizational skills. Pay special attention to questions 1 and 7—the ones that challenge you to develop a specific process for tracking your tasks. Without processes, the swamp can get deep very fast!