

Administrative PROFESSIONAL Today

50 Verbs make minute-taking easier... see page 2

Business Management Daily

www.AdminProToday.com

1-Minute Strategies

- **Get organized: Create your own SOP manual.** To get started on a procedures manual that can be used over and over again by you or anyone who needs it, download a sample SOP manual at www.AdminProToday.com/standardoperatingprocedure.
- **4 skills you need to get ahead.** (1) clear communication; (2) positive personal branding; (3) flexibility to learn new skills and adapt quickly; (4) productivity improvement or finding ways to come up with new products and creative ways to help the organization.
- **Motivate with the right phrase.** To build excitement, say: "Please update me on your progress"; "That's an excellent idea"; "I'd be glad to take care of it"; "Nice job on saving that account"; "Let me help you solve this."
- **Make any decision-making group more effective** by limiting membership to seven. Once you have more than seven in the group, each additional member reduces decision effectiveness by 10%.
- **Use "and" instead of "but,"** advises Joan Burge of Office Dynamics. Instead of saying, "I know you've missed the deadline, but ..." say, "I know you've missed the deadline, and ..." Why? Using "but" sets up a negative. This can make people defensive.

8 steps to a more productive meeting

Nonprofit attorney Eileen Johnson recalls sitting in one board meeting where the vice chair was answering emails on his BlackBerry, the treasurer was reading *The Wall Street Journal* and another board member was knitting.

These are over-the-top examples of what goes on during unproductive meetings. Between vague agendas and never-ending PowerPoints, meetings have become a waste of time for many.

Here is how some "experts" structure their huddles to make them productive and run more smoothly:

1. Never schedule a meeting beyond 90 minutes. Bob Pozen, a senior lecturer at Harvard Business School, tells the *Harvard Business Review (HBR)* that at 90 minutes, "people turn off" and "the diminishing returns are staggering."

2. Deliver meeting material the day before by email, Pozen says. That way, you won't waste precious minutes at the beginning reviewing material as a group.

3. Require a one-page executive summary for all materials, Pozen says. The expectation is that all attendees must read the summary before the meeting.

4. Let meeting participants agree on deliverables and set their own timetables at the end of the meeting.

"Then they will have an ownership interest in the follow-up, rather than just going along with my directions," he tells *HBR*.

5. Post the mission statement in the room if you're holding a board meeting, advises Johnson. Pick a

(Continued on page 2)

How to cope with difficult co-workers

It takes a variety of personalities and work styles to make up a successful workplace, but differences can



cause misunderstandings and conflict on the job. To stay productive and professional, you have to learn to handle these differences and use them as a way to do the job better.

Rebecca Thorman, author of the "Kontrary" blog, has five strategies to help you do just that.

1. Serve up feedback sandwich-style. It can be difficult and discour-

aging to receive negative feedback, so serve it up between two slices of positive. Start with something positive, move on to the negative feedback or constructive criticism, and then wrap up with more positive.

(Continued on page 7)

Inside This Issue

- Admins' best time-management tips... 2
- Looking for a little self-help? 3
- Plan & execute a flawless event. 4
- 5 ways to improve your writing. 5
- Set stage for meeting note-taker. 5
- Essential qualities of every admin. 6
- What not to say at work. 7
- 8 phrases to resolve conflict. 8

Productive meetings

(Cont. from page 1)

mission-related topic to talk about first. Or hold the meeting in a location that is central to the board's mission.

6. Gather opinions with a round-robin approach, starting with the junior members, Johnson tells Association Bisnow. No "dittos" allowed here.

7. Appoint someone to play devil's advocate, says Johnson, to make sure problems are brought up and hard questions asked.

8. Do 80% of the work before the meeting. At Intel Corp., meeting holders must circulate a draft agenda to gather suggestions and revisions in advance.

The final one-pager includes the meeting's purpose and goals, sub-topics with time frames for each, a list of attendees and what each one should bring to the table.

"We know from experience that 80% of the hard work gets done before the meeting even begins," Michael Fors, Intel's corporate employee-development manager, tells *Harvard Business Communication*. "We're all responsible for using our time effectively, and we're aware of the opportunity costs."

Premeeting checklist

- ✓ Meeting name, date and name of person you are arranging the meeting for (if you work for multiple people)
- ✓ People required at the meeting
- ✓ Purpose of the meeting
- ✓ Time and location
- ✓ Canvas for available dates (keep to four)
- ✓ Has an agenda been provided?
- ✓ Is the boardroom booked?
- ✓ If it is a teleconference, have the call-in numbers and moderator code been provided?

Source: Admin and author Patricia Robb.

Time Management

Admin pros' best time-management tips

Odds are you're wasting time. A Salary.com survey reveals that the average employee admits to wasting roughly two hours each workday—not including lunch or scheduled breaks.

But what about administrative professionals? After all, to do the job well, you must be a master of tracking dozens of moving pieces, while keeping a close eye on scores of deadlines.

Administrative pros offer their top time-management advice:

1. Transfer all tasks (work and personal) onto your Outlook calendar, advises one admin. She can access her synced calendar on her PC or smartphone. Why? Simply writing down a to-do is no assurance that it will get done. Assigning the task a date and time ups the chances that it will.

2. Set two reminder alerts for every calendar task and appointment. Set one reminder for two hours prior to the task deadline and a second reminder for five minutes prior.

3. Schedule some joy in your life. For example, put a standing dinner date with friends on the calendar. It's not about doing more but about doing the right things.

4. Rise early. One uber-productive admin uses morning hours to organize everything at home and read her email for work. "By answering emails from home in the morning, my travel agent or co-workers have answers to work on and aren't pouncing on me the moment I walk into the office," she says.

5. Build in a safety net. One admin sets a timer at work for whatever job she's tackling. It lets her know how much longer she must maintain her focus. "It doesn't always work, but most times it does," she says.

Online resource Get your entire office organized efficiently, once and for all! Use the easy-to-implement guidelines in our free Special Report at www.AdminProToday.com/officeorganizer.

Minute-Taking

50 verbs to spice up your minutes

If you find yourself repeating the same words over and over when you take meeting minutes, Executive Assistant Nicky Christmas, who blogs all things PA-, EA- and VA-related on her Practically Perfect PA blog, offers a good list of verbs "that you can slot into the minutes as and when you need them." Here's her list:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Acknowledged/Agreed On | ▪ Declared | ▪ Listed/Maintained | ▪ Requested |
| ▪ Agreed to | ▪ Described | ▪ Mentioned | ▪ Reviewing |
| ▪ Announced | ▪ Detailed | ▪ Noted | ▪ Said |
| ▪ Arranged | ▪ Discussed | ▪ Observed | ▪ Settled |
| ▪ Asked for | ▪ Displayed | ▪ Perceived | ▪ Showed |
| ▪ Asserted | ▪ Emphasized | ▪ Predicted | ▪ Specified |
| ▪ Assured | ▪ Explained | ▪ Presented | ▪ Stated |
| ▪ Believed | ▪ Expressed | ▪ Promised | ▪ Stressed |
| ▪ Brought up | ▪ Guaranteed | ▪ Proposed | ▪ Suggested |
| ▪ Complained | ▪ Identified | ▪ Recommended | ▪ Summarized |
| ▪ Confirmed | ▪ Implemented | ▪ Remarkd | ▪ Understood |
| ▪ Decided | ▪ Informed | ▪ Reported | ▪ Worked on |

Looking for a little self-help?

You want to improve yourself, but who has time to read all of those self-help books? Never fear, *New York Magazine* did the work for you and summarized the key advice contained in some of the best.

- **How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less**, by Nicholas Boothman. When you're talking to someone, find places in the conversation to say "me too." Try spending 30 seconds of a conversation synchronizing your body language to the other person's body language.

- **The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business**, by Charles Duhigg. Pick a cue and set a clear reward for yourself.

- **Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion**, by Robert B. Cialdini. Do someone a small favor before you ask him for something. Always ask for more than what you want, and when you get turned down, ask for what you want.

- **The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking**, by Oliver Burkeman. Focus on the worst-case scenario because

what happens will inevitably be a pleasant surprise.

- **Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To**, by Sian Beilock. Write out your worries before an important event. Sing a song or count backward by threes.

- **Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long**, by David Rock. Practice lowering your expectations. When you feel anxious, remind yourself, "That's just my brain." If you must multitask, toggle between repetitive tasks and those that require you to think actively.

- **The Happiness Trap: How to Stop Struggling and Start Living**, by Dr. Russ Harris. Practice accepting tough times and thoughts by saying to yourself, "It's unpleasant, but I can accept it."

- **How Will You Measure Your Life?** by Clayton M. Christensen, James Allworth, and Karen Dillon. Never cave to the temptation to violate your moral code—even once.

— Adapted from "How to Read 31 Books in Four Minutes," *New York Magazine*.

Want to be happier? 6 habits to adopt

The only true measure of your success is how happy you are, says sales expert Geoffrey James, who offers six simple habits that can help you be happier.

1. **Expect the best.** Life usually lives up to your expectations, so set them high by making your first thought each morning something positive.

2. **Plan and prioritize.** Make sure you do one thing first each day that will move you closer to your highest goal and purpose in life.

3. **Give everyone you meet a gift.** It could be as simple as a friendly nod, smile or kind word.

4. **Assume others have good intentions.** When you assume the opposite, you just add extra misery to your life and isolate yourself.

5. **Don't stress what you can't control.** Do what you can and don't worry about the rest.

6. **Be grateful.** Write down one great thing that happened to you during the day.

— Adapted from "9 Daily Habits That Will Make You Happier," Geoffrey James, *Inc.*

Getting *Ahead*

5 steps to becoming that go-to person

Every office has a go-to person people count on to deliver in any situation. While that person may appear to work more, she also gains considerable advantages, including respect, a broad network, great recommendations and plenty of leverage. It's possible to become the go-to if you try, says Kelly Gurnett, assistant editor of *Brazen Life*.

1. **Be adaptable and agreeable.** Take problems in stride and do what's asked with a smile.

2. **Do more than what's expected.** Turn in your work early, come up with a better way to do things—

anything to show you're a strong member of the team.

3. **Keep calm and carry on.** Don't lose your cool when things go wrong, just keep working to accomplish the task at hand.

4. **Remain consistent.** Strive to be the rock everyone can count on in any circumstance.

5. **Stay in learning mode.** Don't stop learning and soaking up information outside of your purview. Also keep bringing new people and their ideas into your network.

— Adapted from "How to Become the Go-To Guy (or Gal) in Your Office," Kelly Gurnett, *Brazen Careerist*.

GRAMMAR REPAIR SHOP

This, that and the other thing

Be careful when constructing sentences containing *this*, *that*, *they*, *it* or *which* when these pronouns can refer to more than one noun.

Vague: The photo album was found in the attic. It was a real mess.

In the sentence above, the reader cannot tell whether "It" at the beginning of the second sentence refers to the album or the attic.

Clear: The photo album was found in the attic. The place was a real mess.

Planning and executing a flawless event

Great events, the ones where everything goes well and everyone has a good time, don't just happen. They're always the result of hard work and a great deal of planning.

When you find out you'll be responsible for organizing an event, the first thing you should do is create a planning timeline and a budget, says Christi Domingue-Rangel,

owner of SophistOccasions, a Baton Rouge, La., company that specializes in planning corporate and nonprofit organizations' events.

Having a timeline in place from the start allows you to avoid trying to pull everything together in a rush at the last minute and allows you to delegate some tasks if you need.

It's essential to find out the budget and also what your boss expects the event to be like. "Some companies expect a champagne event on a beer budget," says Domingue-Rangel. That's certainly a challenge,

but one that's best to understand from the start.

After you know how long you have to plan your event and how much you have to spend on it, you can get down to the nitty-gritty work of planning. Domingue-Rangel offers these tips to help you make it great.



■ **Invite the right mix of people.** Whether you're holding a formal professional event or a casual summer mixer, having the right mix of guests is essential.

■ **Select a good host.** It's also important for the host to set the tone for the night. This person should make an effort to help people mingle, introduce guests to one another and make everyone feel special.

■ **Serve great food and drinks.** Consider introducing your guests to new wine and food to create a memorable experience. A signature cocktail with a unique name is also

always an event favorite. If your budget allows, hire a bartender to keep the drinks flowing.

■ **Set the mood with an appropriate atmosphere.** Match your event's ambiance with the style and formality of the event. When you have the appropriate layout, lighting and entertainment, it will support all other aspects of the event.

If you're seeking more advice and tips on event planning, Domingue-Rangel recommends checking out **BizBash.com**, **About.com's** Event Planning Guide and **ATasteful-Affair.com's** Party Planning guide.

"I keep up with new ideas and trends by attending other events," says Domingue-Rangel. "It helps me keep my own work fresh. If I'm planning an event that I haven't done before, I find one to attend and take mental notes about what worked and what didn't."

Online resource To keep tasks and timelines on task, check out our event-planning checklist at www.AdminProToday.com/checklist.

Networking Tips

4 apps to help get your network going

Networking can be hard, but it's easier with a little help from these four applications recommended by writer Emily Green in the Daily Muse

1. LunchMeet. This app helps you find good people to network with wherever you go by connecting with your LinkedIn account and finding people in your industry who are also interested in networking.

2. Business Card Reader. Rather than keep saving stacks of business cards or losing them along the way, you can save them digitally with this handy app. Just take a picture of a card with your phone and the app will add the person and his

details to your contacts.

3. MeetMe. Instead of going back and forth via text, phone or email to figure out a place to meet, just enter where you and the other person are coming from and this app will suggest places in between where you can get together. It also lets you email directions to yourself and your colleague.

4. Contacts Journal. This app helps you keep your connections straight by allowing you to keep notes on each one, set up meetings and attach documents related to your connection.

— Adapted from "10 Apps That Will Ramp Up Your Job Search," Emily Green, The Daily Muse.

Dare to get visual

When we're trying to convey a concept to co-workers, we tend to take the path of least resistance: typing a few words and dashing off an email. But think of the effect of that same email if, unlike any others that the recipient received today, it was comprised solely of a color photo with the message embedded within it.

Even the free Paint program included in Windows lets you quickly drop text into any image, and the skill takes just a few minutes to learn on your own. Your reminder about a deadline will take on extra emphasis when the words are superimposed over a ticking clock.

The key to maximizing this technique is to use it sparingly, when you really need to strike a stronger chord.

5 ways to improve your writing skills

Like it or not, people judge you by how you write. Strong writing skills will help you get noticed, earn your colleagues' trust and move you up in your career, says author and writing coach Roger C. Parker.

If your writing could use some work, he has five suggestions to help you improve it.

1. Understand your audience. The best writers tailor their work to the people who will be reading it. Think about your audience and figure out their frustrations, problems and goals, and then tailor your writing specifically for them.

2. Pick your topics off deadline. Adrenaline may get you moving at the last minute, but it won't help you do your best writing. Instead, set up a schedule where you write out the topics well in advance. This affords plenty of time to think about them, both consciously and unconsciously, to more fully form ideas.



3. Leave time for editing. You don't want to immediately send your work the minute you finish writing it. Leave at least 10 minutes, but preferably overnight, for it to sit while you clear your mind. When you

come back, read it out loud to help you identify any glaring errors, run-on sentences or awkward phrasing.

4. Read a wide range of writing. The more you read, the more you learn, and the more you will discover the differences between good writing and bad. Don't limit yourself to writing by people in your field. Broaden your horizons to take in a wide variety of topics and writing styles.

5. Develop a personalized process. Strong writing is a habit, not something you do once or from time to time. Set a time and a place to write so you will become consistent and efficient.

— Adapted from “5 Writing Tips for Personal Branding Success,” Roger C. Parker, Business 2 Community.

By Melissa Esquibel,
Microsoft® Certified Trainer

Q. How do I keep Word from AutoFormatting or AutoCorrect-ing certain text?

A. Sometimes AutoFormatting is a beautiful thing; sometimes it's just an annoyance. For example, say you have an AutoCorrect option set for “cna” to correct it to “can,” but this time you want to use “cna” for the name of a company. As soon as you notice the change, use your left arrow key to expose a little blue box below and on the left side of the corrected word. Hover over it, and you'll see a little lightning bolt icon. These are your AutoCorrect options. You can choose Undo Automatic Corrections to just undo it for this instance, or Stop ... to stop doing it forever. You will also notice the lightning bolt when Word thinks you want to use AutoNumbering. Hover and click your preferred option to stop it.

Q. My tables never look right when I paste them into PowerPoint. How should I paste Excel data into PowerPoint?

A. This has been a long-standing issue between Excel and PowerPoint. You have a few options when pasting Excel data from a spreadsheet into PowerPoint. The one thing that doesn't work well is a straight Copy/Paste. Using your Paste Special options is the way to go. For example, pasting as a bitmap allows you to size the “picture” of your cells to suit the slide. And you can choose to Paste Link, so your table keeps up with your Excel data, or not. Don't link the data if you want to make sure that no one can change the numbers you pasted. Pasting as Formatted Text allows you to paste the data more plainly and have control over font size, color and style.

Note-Taking Tips

Set the stage for a meeting note-taker

High-speed presentations, rambling discussions, unclear decisions and vague action items at meetings without agendas make life hard for meeting note-takers, writes Lynn Gaertner-Johnston. Here are a few of her tips for organizing meetings that are easier to record, which she shared in her recent e-newsletter.

• **Have an agenda and distribute it in advance.** This helps the note-taker know what is relevant and important enough to record.

• **Include outcomes rather than just topics on your agenda.** For example, “Discussion of team emails” is a topic; “Agree on best practices for team emails” is an out-

come. That outcome tells attendees to work toward agreement, and it informs the note-taker to listen for and record best practices that the group has agreed upon.

• **Help the note-taker come prepared.** Be sure the note-taker receives copies of presentations in advance to be ready for any unusual vocabulary or technical terms. Talk with the note-taker before the meeting about how much information you would like to have recorded in the meeting notes.

• **Summarize throughout the meeting so attendees will know what the group has accomplished.** This helps everyone know decisions, action items and key points.

The essential qualities of every admin

The specifics of administrative assistants' jobs are as diverse as the admins themselves.

A question came up recently on the Admin Pro Forum:

"For the company policy guide, our team is submitting a set of three rules—just three—that administrative assistants should keep in mind as they go about their work in order to be the best they can be. What should we include?"

— Toby, receptionist

We're sharing readers' thoughts on the three traits they felt were essential to being an excellent admin.

By far the No. 1 answer was "confidentiality." "Hear everything; repeat nothing," said Admin Amy. "A lot of times we, as assistants, are left out of the loop. I do my job better if I understand what's going on in the background."

"Have a can-do attitude" was also a popular response. "Don't say that something can't be done, just make it happen," said Angela. "Never leave



someone hanging because of lack of information; always make it your job to find the answer," said Colette.

More than one reader suggested the ability to prioritize a number of tasks and focus on what's most important to all admins. "The person and the company you work for are your No. 1 priority at all times," said Darlene Puckett.

"Establish your priorities at the beginning of each day, communicate them to your boss to make sure you are on the same page and commit to achieving at a minimum the first thing on your list," said Laurie.

Other reader suggestions included being honest and acting professionally at all times.

Time to trade in your sticky notes?

Gone are the days of needing to write notes on easily destroyed scraps of paper that clutter your desk. Instead, try one of these note-taking applications, Verne Kopytoff writes.

- **Evernote.** With 50 million users and availability online and on iOS and Android devices, it's the most popular note-taking app. Evernote allows you to organize, search and share your text, audio and photo notes.

- **Simplenote.** Similar to Evernote, it's available only on iOS devices and the Web.

- **Notability.** An iPad app, Notability is great for creative types. You can highlight, draw pictures and add notes to your Notability documents.

- **Catch.** It's available online and on iOS and Android devices, and covers all the basic functions.

- **Keep.** This is Google's note-taking app. It may or may not become a worthy competitor.

— Adapted from "5 apps to track your every idea," Verne Kopytoff, *Fortune* magazine at CNNMoney.

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Business *Communication*

6 strategies to communicate better

Effective communication takes deliberate intention, so if you find yours lacking, it's time to refocus and get down to work, says Jessica Edmonson of Bisk Education.

She has six strategies to help you:

1. **Ditch the distractions.** It takes focus to write an email, talk on the phone or have a face-to-face conversation. Shut down the distractions.

2. **Beware of buzzwords.** Corporate lingo doesn't contribute to clear communication, so cut it out of your vocabulary and be direct and concise.

3. **Accommodate your audience.** Know your audience and anticipate what they need to hear from you. Also make a point of listening to their concerns by showing you're really hearing them.

4. **Learn to listen.** Don't just hear what people are saying, be an active listener. Ask questions to get clarification, and paraphrase what you've heard to get confirmation you aren't misunderstanding anything.

5. **Keep calm and stay civil.** When you feel anger, defensiveness and other problematic emotions rising to the surface, you need to take action. Admit that's how you're feeling and take a break to calm down if you need to.

6. **Resist the urge to react.** A reaction is often emotional and comes without much thought. Instead, respond to information with directness, honesty and consideration.

— Adapted from "6 Concrete Ways to Improve Business Communication," Jessica Edmonson, ThoughtLeaders blog.



ADMIN TO ADMIN

BY LISA OLSEN, SPEAKER AND TRAINER, ADMINTOADMIN.NET

Just a little bit of R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

Whatever the scope of your position as an admin, it's paramount to your success to be visible and show others how your goals benefit everyone. Consider these five ideas to get you thinking in a new way about how you are earning respect in the workplace:

1. What are you avoiding? Is there someone at the office who you need to confront and assert yourself regarding an issue, but the prospect fills you with anxiety? Consider the cost of waiting and compare those to the benefits of doing it. Usually, the benefits are worth the effort. Avoiding it causes a leak in your credibility bucket.

2. Stop procrastinating. Once you make a decision to stand up for yourself, or your ideas, your self-sabotaging thoughts might paralyze you and suddenly you want to hide in the copy room organizing the toner cartridges. If you sense the paralyzing feelings and hear anything-but-positive affirmations in your head, note why you've stopped in your tracks. I did this exercise several years ago and realized I was writing down the same excuse over and over; it gave me the kick-in-the-admin pants I needed to take action.

3. Shrink your boss. Early in my career, I felt intimidated around a particular person. I felt "less than" in his presence. I attended a conference and heard this nugget that I still use 20 years later: Imagine your body growing until your head skims the ceiling. Now that person who intimidates you looks like a small child who wants a hug! See yourself smiling down at them and the interaction is more likely to have a positive outcome.

4. Be a relationship engineer. We don't need to be at a conference or seminar to practice networking. Every day, focus on how you can help the people you meet and interact with, rather than on what they can do for *you*. By bringing people together, you will become vital and powerful. That's how you build respect and leadership influence.

5. Stay in control. Our emotional responses to people, situations, events and projects define how we are perceived by others, and even how we feel about ourselves. What do you want people to say about you when you leave a room? Challenge yourself. Transform yourself in small ways if necessary so you consistently remain in control and evoke a calm confidence.

What not to say at work

Strong communication skills are a must for anyone in the workforce and there are things that should never come out of your mouth, says Roxana Hewertson, CEO of Highland Consulting Group.

- **But.** It cancels out anything nice that you may have said before.
- **Don't you think.** This sets a negative tone. It's better to start with "What do you think about...?"
- **Truthfully.** This implies you're lying the rest of the time.
- **You.** This makes you sound accusatory or judgmental.
- **Not to be funny/sarcastic/critical, but...** This sets you up for a lie.
- **I meant to tell you.** Another sign you're lying and only telling them now because you have to.
- **Surely you jest.** Using sarcasm cuts away at your credibility.

— Adapted from "12 Career-Killer Comments," Roxana Hewertson, *Forbes*.

Difficult co-workers

(Cont. from page 1)

2. Ask questions about personal work styles. Some people communicate via email while others prefer talking in person. Ask those you work with about their preferences and do what you can to accommodate them. This helps co-worker relations, shows you're a team player and keeps things running smoothly.

3. Pick your battles wisely. Conflict shouldn't be constant. You need to know when to push and when to go with the flow. The best employees know that teamwork is key.

4. Remember your shared goal. It can be frustrating when someone wants to do things differently from you, but remember you're on the same team as your colleagues and you're all working toward the shared goal of doing the best job you can.

5. Respect others' knowledge and experience. Everyone wants to be heard and feel their expertise is being respected. Include co-workers in discussions about getting things done.

— Adapted from "How to Successfully Work With Different Personalities," Rebecca Thorman, *U.S. News & World Report*.

Productivity Tips

4 rules for weeding your files

Organization expert Harriet Schechter offers these guidelines on file weeding:

1. Stay focused. Remember, it's "weeding," not "reading."

2. Use a ticking timer, and set it in 15-minute increments to create urgency.

3. If you're stuck and can't decide whether to keep, toss or refile a piece of paper, ask yourself:

- ✓ Did you remember that you had this?
- ✓ If you tossed it, could you obtain it again, and would it be worth the trouble?
- ✓ If you keep it, will you know where to find it?

4. Keep moving forward. No going back in the trash to rescue anything, with the exception of accidentally discarded money or legal documents.

POSTSCRIPT

- **Use these 3 R's to work smarter, not harder, every workday:**

1. Review what you've done.

Is it ready to go or still need polish? Are you on schedule, ahead of schedule or behind schedule?

2. Re-evaluate your plan. Do you need more resources, need to involve a co-worker or to ask for an extension?

3. Recharge your batteries with a stretch and fresh air. Stand up, go for a walk outside or stroll through the hallway.

- **Make then-and-now statements to prove your talents.**

"Two years ago, it took three of us a week to turn around the sales report; now it only takes two of us two days."

- **"No-type" tip for Excel when you have multiple duplicate worksheets.** Click on the first worksheet tab and hold down the Shift key. Keeping the Shift key down, click on the last work sheet. They should all appear white, rather than gray. Now, just start typing. What you do on one sheet will also be on the remaining selected work sheets.

- **Let your body language broadcast your confidence.** Stand with your head slightly tilted and your hands clasped, and with a smile and a gaze that meets the other person's. Joe Navarro, author of *Louder Than Words*, explains that the head tilt exposes the neck and says, "I am listening; I am comfortable; I am receptive."

- **Want email RSVPs to go to a different email?** While composing your email, click on the *Options* tab and look in the *More Options* group for the *Direct Replies* to button. Enter the email address in the *Have replies sent to:* field.

Workplace Conflict

8 phrases to smooth conflict resolution



Few people enjoy conflict, but it's an inevitable part of life and business, so if you want to succeed, you need to become skilled in managing it.

A few phrases can help you to resolve conflicts when they arise, says author, speaker and consultant Barry Moltz.

1. The last thing I want to say is no. This shows consideration for the other person and takes her perspective into consideration.

2. Having no secrets between us is critical. If we can't talk to each other, we will never be able to be productive. This recognizes

the importance of clear, open communication.

3. It seems things are not running as smoothly as they have in the past. This is a nonthreatening way to open a tough conversation.

4. I really appreciate your input into our team. This tells people they're valued and worthwhile even when you aren't using their ideas.

5. We may have a misunderstanding, since I may not have been clear about my expectations. This avoids assigning blame and also opens the door to you being the problem.

6. What held you back from meeting your commitment? Sometimes there's a good reason people miss a deadline.

7. What can I do to support you?

8. You're saying one thing and doing another. This points out a discrepancy between intentions and actions.

— Adapted from "10 Phrases That Can Resolve Any Conflict," Barry Moltz, OPEN Forum.

Performance Review

Pull off a savvy self-assessment

Self-assessments, whether annually, biannually or quarterly, seem here to stay, so you need to do them in a way that's honest without seeming arrogant. *Harvard Business Review* contributing editor Amy Gallo offers advice on how to do it.

1. Ask your boss what she plans to do with what you write. "Many lazy bosses see it as an easy way to shuffle off the difficult task of writing a review," says Dick Grote, author of "How to Be Good at Performance Appraisals." If that sounds like your boss, Grote says, write your appraisal so he can copy and paste from your form to his.

2. Focus on what you've accomplished. "Be clear about what you've done well and what contributions

you've made to the business unit," says Timothy Butler, a senior fellow and the director of Career Development Programs at Harvard.

3. Address your mistakes carefully. You want to do so in a positive way. "Say, 'Here's an area I want to work on,'" Butler suggests.

4. Keep it focused on you. Don't use defensive language or criticize other parties.

5. Solicit appropriate assistance. Explain what you enjoy and which you'd like to learn more about.

Online resource Download a free self-evaluation form at www.AdminProToday.com/self-evaluation.

— Adapted from "How to Write the Dreaded Self-Appraisal," Amy Gallo, *Harvard Business Review's* HBR Blog Network.