



Case Study: Time management and organization

Rena, a junior partner with a large firm, hired me to help her resolve time management and organizational challenges. She told me that she had never developed strong skills in these areas and that since assuming the additional responsibilities of partnership, she found her skills to be woefully insufficient. She described her office as cluttered and a "dump" in which papers were routinely lost.

We worked together for only two months, during which time we focused on creating blocks of time for discrete tasks such as writing a brief. Rena also learned not to look at her email first thing in the morning, and she discovered that she'd wasted a lot of time by waiting to start a project until she knew she'd have sufficient time to finish it. Rena created systems that allowed her assistant to manage her calendar, to docket her upcoming deadlines, and to review schedules with her to help her stay on track. She also enlisted her assistant's help in creating a filing system that matched her preferences in lieu of keeping documents in her office.

In the months before we worked together, Rena had missed two filing deadlines. In the approximately eight months since we worked together, she has not missed any deadlines, nor has she worked all night to complete a filing at the last minute. She was also able to take her first vacation in several years and succeeded in returning to the office with a plan to get back into the regular schedule. Having dreaded her return after a 2-week absence (so much so that she declined vacations), Rena returned to a heavier-than-usual work schedule that she cleared within 3 weeks. When we last spoke, she was planning a 1-week vacation.