

Developing Professionalism

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Being a Professional Organizer...

- Requires more than the skill of lining up your shoes by style and color, or spatially planning an efficient kitchen, or developing a user-friendly filing system.
- It is more than just knowing how to run a business, taking care of financial issues and managing your time effectively.
- It is more than just a rewarding career.
- It is a lifestyle change, which mandates that you walk your talk as a **professional**.

Who are we...

Individuals entering the organizing industry bring along a variety of skills, experiences, values, desires, expectations and aspirations. Living in this vast world, we have diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds that play an important part in our personal development. Family history, education and peer influences have molded our character and value system. We are unique, yet we are united as organizers. As Barbara Hemphill stated many years ago, "Together we are better."

Why be an organizer...

Why do you want to become an organizer? There are more reasons than I could possibly capture here; however, we hear the same phrases over and over again.

"I've been an organizer all my life."

"You should see my closets—all color coded, the hangers facing in the same direction and shoes lined up according to style."

"I instinctively know how to create harmony."

"My life was a mess and I had to learn how to survive by getting organized. Now I want to teach others."

"I think an organizing career could be very rewarding."

"I am tired of working for someone else.

I want to be boss!"

"I love helping others."

Do any of these quotes resonate with you? Do you think that just because you are organized, you could start and run a professional business? Well, maybe you are right, but there is more!

What does it take...

As you start your organizing business, and even as your business continually grows, it is imperative to keep your own house in order. I am not referring to just your physical home, but your mental home as well. Make sure that you have the right **attitude** to make this business a success. It is up to you to establish a respectful and respected business that conveys the confidence that you are a *professional*.

Definitions: (Random House)

Professional – one who is engaged in an activity as a means of livelihood or for gain rather than as a hobby

Professionalism – the character, spirit and competencies demonstrated by the standing practice of the profession.

The Professional Attitude...

Among the various characteristics that an organizer must possess as they enter into the industry, professional attitude is the most important. This is a key requirement for success both in terms of personal and business attainments. The challenge of maintaining professionalism involves subscribing to the ideal behaviors and values shared by colleagues.

The public holds professionals to a high standard of behavior and code of ethics. In order to attain these benchmarks as organizers, we must possess an exemplary decision-making process, function as team members as well as leaders, and commit to the profession as a lifelong endeavor.

There are certain expectations when clients contract with professional organizers. Failure of these expectations by one individual can result in condemnation of the entire profession by that client, and criticism spreads like wildfire. As professionals, we must aspire to maintain a high degree of personal integrity, uphold confidentiality and continually strive to increase knowledge and skills required to advance in the industry.

Professional organizers must be ready to contribute to society beyond their business life. They need to provide service to the local community through volunteer efforts as well as fulfill civic responsibilities as a voter, taxpayer and good neighbor.

As professionals, we must perform our work in a skilled manner, promote a truthful image, and serve the needs of society with confidence and discretion. The very attitude we uphold when conducting our business has a huge effect on the reputation of the organizing industry. In turn, clients will grow increasingly confident in the value of our services when they respect us as professionals.

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Judith Kirk, owner of Organizing Resources, maintains two distinct aspects in her organizing business. She works with individuals who are eager to make changes in their life, both personally and professionally. And, she works with fledgling organizers who are interested in obtaining and maintaining a viable business. www.OrganizingResources.com