How to stay organised at work

Squiggly Careers

Staying organised in a squiggly career means we can:

- prioritise the work that matters most
- use systems and structures that increase our impact
- avoid wasting time on low value tasks.

"A good structure is something you can trust.

It relieves you from the burden of remembering and keeping track of everything.

If you can trust the system, you can let go of the attempt to hold everything together in your head and you can start focusing on what's important. "

Sönke Ahrens, How to take smart notes

Ideas for action to stay organised

1. **Filter your emails**
   Use a folder filtering system. Separate emails into different folders for different tasks or projects

2. **Time-block or colour-code**
   Time-blocking or colour-coding your diary can support you to stay focused and easily spot what matters most in that moment

3. **Prioritise your tasks**
   Ask yourself:
   If there's one task I get done today it needs to be..?

4. **Keep a 'win-watch' for projects**
   Keeping a win-watch log (top priorities for the month/ quarter / year) can help give you the focus needed to stay organised and keep projects moving forward.

5. **Create a 'learning-to-look-forward-to' list**
   A 'learning-to-look-forward-to' list is a forcing function to look ahead and organise learning so your development doesn't get de-prioritised along the way.

Coach yourself questions

When are you the *most organised* and what systems support it?

When are you at your *least organised* and what's missing?

Ideas for action for team organisation

1. **Explicit not assumed**
   Writing down the tools and systems that support a team to stay organised creates clarity and efficiency for everyone.

2. **Team rhythms**
   Reflecting on your team rituals and rhythms identify which meetings or moments support you to stay organised.
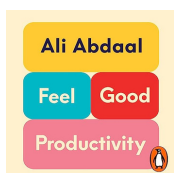
3. **'Stay-organised' shortcuts**
   These short-cuts increase clarity and reduce confusion. It might look like:
   - What/Who/When task delegation (what's the task / who needs to complete it / by when)
   - When we - shortcuts (when we create a PDF we always make sure the original is saved as well)

Recommended resources

Ali Abdaal — Feel Good Productivity

Feel-Good Productivity: How to Do More of What Matters to You
by Ali Abdaal

The Anatomy of Work — Global Index
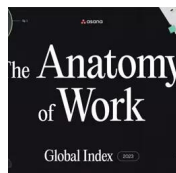
The Anatomy of Work Global Index
a report from Asana

Episode 176 — How to get practical with your productivity — Careers

How to get practical with your productivity
Listen to us talk about being productive in the changing working landscape on *Squiggly Careers #176*