



Becoming a professional organizer

A Self Study Course in the Clear & SIMPLE Systems



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The professional organizer industry

In response to the accumulation craze of the 1980's, a new profession and accompanying industry of services was born—professional organizing. At that time, individuals who had a natural knack for organizing began calling themselves “organizers” and, over time, the professional organizer industry was born. Gatherings began in living rooms and kitchens discussing whether this work could become a professional service industry. The movement continued to grow and has passed out of the infant stage. However, the industry is still quite young which means that it is still in the beginnings of its entrepreneur journey.

The industry has seen a tremendous growth each year and is now expanding to many countries around the world. (It was the demand from other countries for the Clear & SIMPLE Way that led to the renovation of this course in 2011). This makes for an exciting time to enter the industry and start a Professional Organizing business. The projection is for strong continued growth for the next decade.

There are two factors that have contributed most to the growth. The public is now exposed constantly in the media and other venues that Professional Organizers exist. Think about what messages you received and from where that led you to considering this as a vocation. Secondly, the need for organizing services keeps increasing with the overwhelming choices individuals make on a daily basis. Even young children and elderly are exposed to more stuff and more to do's than is realistic to maintain. People of all ages are reaching out asking for help.

The field of professional organizing serves both residential and business worlds. The professionals offer a wide range of organizing services, including:

- Organizing physical spaces
- Organizing tasks and projects
- Organizing specialties such as photos (www.appo.org)
- Clutter clearing and chronic disorganization
- Setting up personalized systems
- Organizing Paper and Digital Information
- Training in all different fields relating to organizing
- Partnering with companies like The Container Store's Contained Home Program
- Managing time and goal setting
- Managing productivity and efficiency
- Managing strategic business development
- Professional Coaching



Understanding the profession



What is it that a professional organizer does exactly? Professional organizers change and bless lives by offering their clients a rare gift; a simple, orderly, maintainable life. This work is not about creating a perfect world or life. When you help your clients get organized, you provide them with an effective way to exercise control over chaos.

NAPO's definition: Professional organizers use tested principles and expertise to enhance the lives of clients. By designing custom organizing systems and teaching organizing skills, they help individuals and businesses take control of their surroundings, their time, their paper piles, and their lives!

Here is a favorite definition by Deborah Mill, "A professional organizer is a personal consultant who provides structure, solutions and systems to increase productivity and reduce stress. We help others restore order to their lives, creating systems and helping them form new habits that enable them to live and work in a peaceful, non-chaotic environment."

Getting organized:

- Sets the client free of the past time patterns and stuff
- Establishes order and flow in the environment
- Increases the client's clarity, vision, and ability to set life goals
- Helps the client align their daily life with their value system
- Creates a way for clients to be present in relationships, creations and life
- Allows clients to clear emotional blockages and move forward
- Increases a client's productivity and ability to perform tasks
- Increases a sense of control over chaos, which promotes well-being
- Reins in stress responses and creates new coping mechanisms
- Increases creativity and "thinking outside the box"
- Increases a client's time management skills



What attributes does a professional organizer typically have?

Although many types of people currently work as professional organizers, there are some distinguishing characteristics that support a successful organizing practice.

1. The ability to group items into like categories
2. The ability to envision an alternative reality
3. The ability to communicate your vision to your client
4. A neutral, non-judgmental attitude
5. Compassion for clutter and its effects
6. Personal confidence and a deep abiding belief that change is possible
7. Professional & orderly personal appearance
8. Exemplify good work ethics
9. Systematic approach to problem solving
10. Intuitive sense of the underlying meaning of “things”
11. Action-oriented and able to motivate others to action
12. Trusting of intuition and able to suggest solutions with confidence
13. Passionate about the work and what it creates
14. Committed to helping others and the planet
15. Ability to be the “holding force” for change and reframe for both the client
16. Match client with available products
17. Attention to detail all the way through a project
18. Ability to notice patterns and understand the underlying meaning

There are also common characteristics that can get in the way of serving others.

1. A tendency to think that my way is the “right way”
2. A sensitivity to clutter that interferes with the ability to serve
3. A compulsive need for completion or a specific timeline
4. A lack of patience for the process
5. Competent at organizing oneself but not able to translate to others
6. Organizing is actually more a fun activity (a hobby) than a profession
7. A personality that is more comfortable working alone
8. A strong insistence on doing everything and won't ask for help
9. A compulsive need to “fix” the environment or the person
10. A personal inability to organize a business that serves others



Identifying your strengths

Which of the traits listed above would you consider to be your top three personal strengths?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What other personal traits have prepared you to become a professional organizer?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What tendencies or traits do you have that might challenge you in growing a thriving consulting practice?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What resources can you draw on to meet you these challenges?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe your ideal client and how you could serve him/her. Consider the personality, the gender, the age range, the type of job, how the client finds you and whether they refer you. Go crazy on this and list everything you can. This is your opportunity to get clear on who you can best work with which leads to success on all levels.

A great resource to further use this tool is in your suggested reading, *Attracting Perfect Customers*, by Stacey Hall and Jan Brogniez.
