

Three Steps to Clutter Management

By Glenn Gordon

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It's that time of year for me again, is it for you? No, my wife hasn't asked me to clean out the garage, the attic or the whole house. I'm talking about cleaning out the accumulation of 'stuff' related to my online business.

Perhaps you are one of those rare persons who keeps your work area and hard drive neat and tidy and never lets junk accumulate. But perhaps you are more like me - I hesitate to say more normal. I am task-oriented and place higher priority on getting the job done which is at hand than I do cleaning up the clutter that accumulates in the meantime. Thus periodically my 'task' turns to cleanup duty, including my work area, hard drive and ezine subscriptions. During this time I can get a little ruthless. I have a feeling this is the mode others are in when they send an ezine unsubscribe request to me with an angry tone to it. Probably I am the target of their general displeasure at all the burdensome clutter they have accumulated.

The problem is, of course, that each ezine we subscribe to, each program we sign up for, each e-book we download or purchase and each ad we place is evaluated in isolation - with temporary amnesia about all the other similar items we have made some commitment to in the past. Yes, we can go on a slash and burn mission, deleting and unsubscribing with a vengeance, and sometimes that is what is called for. But I like to think I occasionally learn from my past mistakes, so I have a few suggestions to make that can curb this relentless accumulation process.

1. Log your commitments - I have found that a simple text log of 'commitments' made can work wonders. I lump all these items together under this term because each one involves some level of commitment to yourself or others. What do I mean by a log? A log is a simple text file in which you record each program signed up for, each e-book purchased,

each ad placed, etc. You may well have a more sophisticated method of tracking some of these. If not, however, there is no substitute for placing a record of your commitments in one place so that you can see the scope of them at a glance. You may well want to have separate pages for each type of item, but resist the temptation to place them in separate files. Depending on the entry, be sure to include the following types of details:

****Programs****

Date of commitment

Cost - one time/recurring/free period, as appropriate

Purpose (how quickly we forget!)

Requirements - what do I have to do or need to do?

User name and password

****E-books****

Date purchased

Cost

Resale rights, if any

Hard drive location

Specific purpose or sales campaign in mind, if any

****Purchased Ads****

Ezine or other location

Cost

Number of times run and dates

Ad itself

****Ezine Subscriptions****

You could also log ezine subscriptions, but it may well be easier to handle them differently. One good way is to create a separate email folder called New Ezines. Put the first copy of each ezine you subscribe to in the folder. Then at any time you can just go the folder to see how many you have actually agreed to receive.

You may think of other items to include that are important to the type of commitment involved.

2. Consult your log prior to new commitments - having your prior commitments of each type readily viewable at any time can save you cost and overload, but only if you use it to evaluate the necessity of a new commitment. Is this new whiz-bang hit exchange program that different from three others I already have? Will I really use another e-mail marketing e-book? A little honest evaluation here can save dollars now and program overload later on.

3. Review your log periodically - a quick review of your log contents can help you to allocate your most precious assets - your time and money - most efficiently. If you see several programs that you never use, you should ask yourself whether that program simply doesn't work, doesn't work for you, or

whether you just haven't been working that program. If you see several e-books that you had great plans for but haven't even opened, you can re-evaluate your original plans in terms of your current marketing programs and goals. Forcing yourself to face up to the totality of your commitments periodically is good for your business, not to mention your sanity!

Put your commitment log in place today and start exercising some clutter management!

Glenn Gordon

Building Success Online at

<http://www.ur-in-business.com>

The Ultimate Autoresponder Guide at

<http://www.allaboutautoresponders.info>

BusinessBuilder Newsletter at

<http://www.businessbuildernewsletter.com>

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