

Why the brain likes a planning calendar



The topic of the use of planning calendars recently came up. **Some people seem to love the idea and others hate it.**

When I was teaching college most of my freshman students would write down their assignments. If they wrote it on loose piece of paper they were the ones who invariably turned in the assignment late. Those who wrote it down in a notebook had a higher on-time turn it rate, except for those who lost their notebooks. The best students were the ones who had some kind of organizing system.

One day in class when I was talking about the importance of a planning calendar, one of the students volunteered to show the system she used. It was a separate binder with section dividers, a daily to do list, a monthly calendar section and an assortment of colored highlighters that were color coordinated to level of importance. When one student asked her why she bothered to go to all that trouble, she responded by saying she always saw herself going on to college. However, when told her chances were slim, she decided that **if she was going make something of herself she needed to get organized.**

A planning calendar is not just about helping one get organized and getting things accomplished; **it's really about organizing your brain** so it can give you what you need to be successful.

Most of the organization occurs in the frontal lobes of the brain which is activated by conscious thinking and planning.

If you have had New Year's resolutions or a list of goals that have fail to materialize, it's often because you haven't mapped out the steps necessary to accomplish it. **When the goal is broken down into more specific steps and given a specific time frame, the more efficient your brain performance becomes.**

Think about it this way. When you take a job working for someone else, you and your brain know what's expected of you. Your brain has an organization framework set by your job profile, daily activities and accountability through your level of performance.

But, when you work for yourself, your brain gets sloppy if the job profile is less precise, the daily activities don't adhere to a fixed schedule and there's no accountability. It not that there's a lack of will to reach the goal, it's just there's less structure for the brain to be involved in.

By laying out a blueprint or a road map with a planning calendar, you engage your brain in the process with a set of expectations. Remember, **your brain works for you and it's waiting for you to give it something meaningful to accomplish.** A blueprint or a road map increases your success by reducing mental frustration and anxiety and by reducing the amount of time it takes.

The next time your brain gets stuck or lacks motivation, consider creating a planning calendar so your brain can get back to what it does best.