Ten Steps to a More Organized New Year

By Porter Knight, Certified Professional Organizer®

The end of the calendar year and the holiday season can be hectic, often leaving people vowing to “Get Organized” in the new year. And indeed, winter can be a great time to focus on increasing productivity and reducing stress through organization, whether at work or at home. But if you want your effort to succeed, you’ll need more than intention. Many a New Year’s Resolution has fallen by the wayside before the end of January.

Here are 10 simple steps to help you get and stay organized in 2010.

1. Begin with the end in mind.
Before you start heaving your clutter into trash and recycling bins, take a few moments to look forward a year from now and visualize your organized life. Picturing the results you hope to achieve will help you focus your efforts.

2. Notice what works.
Be attentive to the successful strategies you already have in place. Most people have a few good habits that work well for them. Study your patterns to identify what you currently do that is effective, and think about why. Then, when possible, replicate that thought process or build onto it.

3. Clear the backlog.
It is difficult to practice good habits when there is stuff all over the place. And it is hard to put things away when all the files, cupboards, drawers and closets are full. Set some time aside to go through old files and piles. Keep your goal in mind, and ask yourself whether each item will support you in moving toward the goal. Those that don’t can be tossed.

You can avoid the “I-have-to-leave-it-out-so-I-remember-to-do-it” trap by learning the relationship between space, stuff and time. Here’s the secret: stuff is not an effective time management tool. If you leave stuff out to remind you to act you’ll simply end up with a lot of stuff out.

To effectively accomplish your goals:
• **Create open space**—Don’t put things down, put them away. This keeps flat surfaces open and free of clutter.
• **Create safe homes for stuff**—Think about how you are going to use them next. Focusing on the future will make it easier for you to come up with a meaningful name and location for each item so that when you need it again you can find it reliably.
• **Create an effective time system**—Track both what you have to do (the list) and when you commit to doing it (the calendar). If you have more on your list than you have time for on your calendar, you aren’t fooling anyone (even yourself). Be realistic. Shorten the list.

5. Move the decision to the threshold.
Your next task is to prevent papers from entering your office unless you know (Article continues on page 3)
Facilities Services announces changes to vehicle rental guidelines

The new year brings changes to the guidelines for renting College vehicles. Effective February 1, 2011:

• Requests for rentals must be completed seven days in advance of departure date.
• Requests for rentals less than seven days in advance will not be honored.
• All requests are handled on a first come–first served basis. If a College rental is not available, the rental office will fill your rental need from an outside vendor, if indicated on the request form.

Cost of rental for College vehicles:
15 passenger van
7 passenger van
5 passenger car
Each = $12.50 per day and $0.30 per mile.

Average cost for an outside rental ✪:
12 passenger vans – $125.00 per day
7 passenger vans – $80.00 per day
5 passenger car – $50.00 per day
4 wheel drive (SUV) – $80.00 per day
* Note: If the outside rental is contracted with Thrifty Car Rental, a drop off fee is charged.

To submit a request for a College rental vehicle, go to http://blogs.middlebury.edu/facilities/online-forms/vehicle-rental-request/. Please note that anyone who will drive a College vehicle must have a College driver’s license. Go to www.middlebury.edu/offices/health/ehs/forms/driverslicense for an application.

News from the Middlebury College Staff Council

What do Naomi Neff, Dave Donahue, Valerie Costello, Drew Macan, Arabella Holzapfel, Ron Liebowitz, Michael Glidden, Ken Pierce, Tim Spears, Cathy Tester, Charlotte Tate, and Ben Bruno all have in common? As we move into the holidays I want to thank some of those whose good work has helped further the Staff Council agenda this semester. I have bulleted some of our projects and recognized the contributions they have made.

• Staff Council was instrumental in the creation of a campus events committee to coordinate recreational events for staff and faculty. I must thank Dave Donahue for his willingness to take the lead with this committee and Drew Macan and Valerie Costello for their work on the committee. The results of their efforts were announced by the President’s office earlier this month and include:
  Family Skate Party – December 18, 2010 (2:00–3:30)
  Family Ski Day – December 19, 2010 (All day)
  Family Skate Party II – January 22, 2011 (12:00–1:30)
  Family Ski Day – February 12, 2011 (All day)
  Spring Golf Outing – May 11, 2011 (TBD)
  Summer Golf Outing – August 17, 2011 (TBD)

• We were able to reestablish MCSC representation on the Wage and Salary and the Benefits committees. We owe Michael Glidden special thanks for his recognition of this need. I also thank President Liebowitz for his prompt response appointing MCSC members to both committees.

• MCSC efforts to improve communication include the following:
  - We set up a Staff Council blog. Both Arabella Holzapfel and Ken Pierce deserve recognition for their efforts creating the blog.
  - Representatives regularly communicate directly to district constituents.
  - MCSC members use e-mail to share information and review ideas weekly.
  - MiddPoints articles like this are used to share what we are doing.
  - We were able to survey staff attitudes and share the results with the administration and the trustees. Arabella Holzapfel, Naomi Neff, and Cathy Tester were instrumental in communications with the Trustees. Ken Pierce deserves special thanks for his efforts on the survey. He dedicated a large portion of vacation time to survey work.

• MCSC established the Learning Lunches program this semester. These lunches have allowed presentations by campus experts, speaking about topics of interest to staff members. Ben Bruno deserves special thanks for making the suggestion and creating this program.

• We were pleased to learn that the administration shared our interest in improving campus communications. I would like to thank both Tim Spears and President Liebowitz for their efforts to implement improved communication throughout the College.

• Charlotte Tate asked us to investigate campus-wide interest in the continuation of the College book groups program. We were able to find people willing to direct the project this spring and look forward to its continuation. Thank you Charlotte for your years of work on this program.

~ Wayne Darling, MCSC President
**Receive W-2 Wage and Tax Statement Electronically**

Again this year, employees have the option of receiving their W-2 Wage and Tax Statement electronically. We would like to remind those that have not signed up for this option that it is available. You will have until January 21, 2011 to elect this option.

**How to sign up for electronic W-2:**
- Log into Banner Web (Self Service)  
  http://go.bannerweb
- Click on Employee
- Click on Tax Forms
- Click on Electronic W-2 Consent
  (Please read the consent information carefully, make your choice and then hit the Submit button; you will receive an e-mail notification confirming your selection.)

**Electronic W-2 FAQs:**

Q: What is an “electronic W-2”?
A: This is an option to access and print your W-2 information electronically through Banner Self Service. The electronic version prints out an IRS approved paper W-2.

Q: Why should I choose to receive my W-2 this way?
A: Electronic W-2s benefit everyone.

What action is required of you. I call this “Moving the decision to the threshold of the office.” The idea is to identify what you have to do upon your first contact with the paper, before it even gets close to your desk. If no action is required, toss the paper. If action is required, immediately put the paper in a safe home and schedule the action using your list and calendar.

6. **Document your processes.**
   Once you have established processes to streamline your productivity and keep your gears aligned, make sure you document those processes so that you can remember and replicate them. Process documentation can be a simple written set of instructions or a flowchart. People often skip this step because it seems obvious, but any time a function is performed more than once, process documentation is important to guarantee consistency. Often in the workplace, employees (as well as owners!) lack clarity regarding what steps are to be followed, and quality suffers. This is especially true when a task is performed by more than one person.

   The benefits of process documentation include improved performance, increased ability to hire and train new employees, improved problem solving (because you can visualize, evaluate, and improve your systems), and the ability to delegate tasks— all of which can dramatically increase your own productivity.

7. **Attend to the virtual.**
   Now that you’ve organized your physical systems, it’s time to address the virtual piles. Electronic clutter can be just as frustrating as physical clutter, and for the same reasons: it takes time to look for what you want, it distracts you when you are trying to focus on something else, and to the extent that you hang onto things you no longer need, they take up valuable real estate that you could be allocating to your primary projects.

   Virtual clutter is found most commonly on the desktop, in your email inbox, in your folders, and on the College’s server. Schedule time to address each area of virtual clutter to ensure that you have what you need and can easily find it.

8. **Give yourself a break.**
   Literally, schedule breaks for yourself. Studies show that productivity increases when workers stretch their bodies at intervals throughout the day. Take a quick walk or do a few simple stretches between activities.

9. **Schedule realistically.**
   Acknowledge that every appointment on your calendar actually requires more time than you expect. Allow time for transporting yourself to and from appointments as well as preparing yourself beforehand and putting things away afterwards to avoid “meeting piles” dumped in your office. Most importantly, after the meeting, schedule time to take action on any promises you made during the meeting.

10. **Evaluate and maintain.**
    Remain attentive to what is working and what is not, and allow yourself to amend your systems as needed. Getting organized isn’t a one-shot-deal; it is a continuous process. This means that as you use your systems you have the opportunity to learn from them and improve on them, but only if you schedule time for evaluation and modification. A few moments a day, or 15 minutes/week will often be sufficient.

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About the Author

Porter Knight, a graduate of Middlebury College, is a Certified Professional Organizer® and founding partner of Porter Knight, LLC, which specializes in workplace productivity, physical and virtual office organizing, project management, and process documentation for the small business environment. Recently Porter and her business partner Catherine Matosky led two workshops here on campus on Time Management and Project Management. We look forward to having them back in the new year.
Faculty Grants

Catherine Combelles (Biology) and a collaborator at the University of New Hampshire have received an award from the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture for her project titled “Control of oxidative stress during bovine folliculogenesis.” The grant provides funding for two summer research assistants.

Jason Mittell (Film & Media Culture; American Studies) has accepted an invitation to be a Fellow-in-Residence at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg Institute for Advanced Study at University of Göttingen in Germany, funding his leave for the 2011-12 academic year. Jason will be working with Göttingen’s American Studies department on a grant-funded research project on “Popular Seriality,” examining serial narrative forms across different media and national cultures.

Milestones are determined by years of uninterrupted employment at Middlebury College. The following milestones were attained in December 2010:

5 YEARS
Jennifer Feehan
Registrar’s Office
Michael McLaughlin
Student Financial Services
Danielle Reigle
Dining Services

10 YEARS
Larry Bassett
Controller’s Office
Susan Simmons
Budget Office

CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING THESE MILESTONES!

MILESTONES

January in the Arts

2011 brings many events in the arts at Middlebury College. Highlighted below are only a few of them. Go to http://www.middlebury.edu/arts/news/2010-2011/Jan2011 for a full calendar and for more information on the events below:

January 17, Monday
Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Concert: Let Freedom Ring!
8:00 P.M., Mead Memorial Chapel
This 13th annual celebration features the Middlebury College MLK Spiritual Choir, Alexander Twilight Artist in Residence François Clemmons; Christal Brown, choreography; Alex Draper, theatrical coaching; and Middlebury College student dancers and actors. Anne Ryan accompanies on piano. Free

January 20-23, Thursday-Sunday
Urinetown: The Musical
8:00 P.M. each evening, Town Hall Theater
Inspired by the works of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, this is an irreverent musical satire about corporate corruption and greed, social engineering, sustainability, homelessness, and love. Directed by Doug Anderson, musical direction by Carol Christensen, and orchestral direction by Greg Vitercik. A co-production of the Department of Music and Town Hall Theater. Tickets: $10/8/6; on sale January 3.

January 21, Friday
Nareh Arghamanyan, piano
8:00 P.M., Mahaney Center for the Arts, Concert Hall

January 21-22, Friday-Saturday
The Dance Company of Middlebury: Culture, Cash, and Community: To Have or To Have Not
8:00 P.M. each evening, Mahaney Center for the Arts, Dance Theatre
With artistic direction by visiting lecturer in dance Christal Brown, the Dance Company of Middlebury presents a concert exploring issues of wealth and class as manifested in culture. Post-performance discussion and reception following Friday’s performance. Tickets: $10/8/6; on sale January 3. www.middlebury.edu/arts/boxoffice.
2011 MiddPoints Publication Dates

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TIAA-CREF One-on-One Counseling with Erik Moreau

If you are interested in scheduling an on-campus, one-on-one visit with Erik Moreau, consultant with TIAA-CREF, to discuss your retirement plan investments, he has confirmed dates he will be on campus during the first half of 2011. To schedule an appointment, please call Erik’s assistant, Melissa Prunier, at 866.904.7801 x275142.

January 5, 20, 23
February 10, 17
March 3, 15, 31
April 14, 28
May 12, 24
June 1, 9, 28

TIAA-CREF Wealth Management Advisor Available to Faculty and Staff

Our TIAA-CREF Wealth Management Advisor, Gautier Wallaert, will be available to faculty and staff on a regular basis to help plan for your retirement. Gautier will be on campus and available to meet with clients in their offices or at another location to be determined. If you would like to meet with Gautier you may send him an e-mail at gwallaert@tiaa-cref.org or call 866.904.7801 x275142. Melissa Prunier will be able to schedule an appointment with Gautier for you.

January 6, 11, 20, 25
February 3, 8, 17, 22
March 3, 8, 17, 22, 31

Electronic W-2, ctd.
from page 3

Q. How do I print my Electronic W-2?
A. Log into Banner Web (Self Service) – http://go/bannerweb and click on the Employee section. Select Tax Forms then W-2 Tax and Wage Statement. Select Tax Year and hit the display button. Select the Print button below the W-2 form to display the current statement for printing. Print a copy for your records and print copies as needed for submission to federal, state, and local entities. Printed copies do not indicate if they are Federal, State, Local or an Employee copy, but the electronic version can be used for any of these filings.

Q. When will my electronic W-2 be ready?
A. You will receive an e-mail from the Payroll Office informing you that the W-2 is available for viewing and printing. Per IRS regulations, W-2s need to be either postmarked or available electronically by January 31, 2011 for tax year 2010. We will make every effort to have the electronic W-2s available earlier than January 31, 2011.

Q. What if I do not have access to a printer?
A. Please do not choose electronic delivery if you do not have access to a printer. For security reasons we suggest you avoid using printers located in public areas.

Q: What if my address is incorrect on the printed W-2?
A: You may still file using the electronic copy but you must contact Human Resources to make any changes to your address.

Contact the Payroll Office at payroll@middlebury.edu with any additional questions.
Classified ads are free for members of the staff, faculty, student body and alumni of Middlebury College. Ads must be submitted seven days prior to the publication date. Guidelines for ads can be found on the MiddPoints section of the HR Website. Please send ads to Classifieds, MiddPoints, HR, Service Building, or e-mail to middpoints@middlebury.edu (electronic submissions preferred).

Auto
For Sale: Four General Altimax RT 225/60R16 summer tires. These tires are almost new with only 4,000 miles on them. I also have two Firestone Winterforce 98S tires of the same size with about 5,000-10,000 miles of tread left. I paid $400 for the Altimax tires. All six tires are yours for $240. lahaie@middlebury.edu or x3142.

For Sale: Closet a mess? Organize it with this flexible system made by Home Depot. Stands 7’ high by 24” wide by 16” deep. Includes shelves, drawers, closet rods, and hardware. Can also be used as two free-standing units. $125. E-mail for photo. keren@middlebury.edu.

For Sale: Mosquito nets, Sea to Summit Insect + Shield treated mosquito nets, single, pyramid nets. Never unpacked. Have 5 of these, bought for expedition but never used. $25 each (half price). 462.2460.

Real Estate
For Rent: Very nice 3 BR apartment in Village setting, large living room, eat-in kitchen, den, 1-1/2 BA, wood floors, laundry hookups, heat/garbage included, off street parking, on site storage unit available for additional fee, no smokers/pets. $1,000/mo., first/last/security, references. Available February 2011. 382.8522 (D) 734.1166 (C).

Misc.

For Sale: 2002 Ford Focus ZX5 2.0L 5 speed, 1 owner, 58,000 miles, runs great. $2,400 OBO. phillipo@middlebury.edu.

For Rent: Furnished Middlebury apartment 4.5 miles from campus on a quiet road with beautiful mountain views. Walk-out basement apartment has a BR, LR, kitchen, BA, and two closets. Rent: $650/mo. includes utilities (electricity, heat, water, trash, plowing, wireless internet). Avail. for winter and/or spring terms (January 2011-May 2011). No smokers, no pets. E-mail cmyers@middlebury.edu for information and photos.

Free
Free to a good home: 3-year-old St. Bernard, male, microchipped, well cared for, sweet disposition. Owner moving and unable to take him along. Contact Gillian at 802.492.3454.

Middlebury History

25 years ago ● “Thursdays,” the weekly social gathering featuring live entertainment, cash beverages, and free food in the Cook Student Dining Unit, was cancelled. Spring term registration took place on the first Saturday of the month starting at 8 a.m. in McCullough. “Art for the Masses,” an exhibition of Russian revolutionary art by 30 artists, was shown in Johnson Gallery.

10 years ago ● James Ralph (History) received a grant from the Harry S. Truman Library to conduct research about the return of World War II veterans. Flanked by President John McCardell and Athletic Director Russ Reilly, Robert “Bobby” Ritter ’82 met the press for the first time as new head football coach. The Middlebury Chamber Singers, now in their second year, presented a concert of music for Advent and Christmas seasons.

5 years ago ● Middlebury College and the Monterey Institute of International Studies signed the affiliation agreement. The board of trustees approved promotions to associate professor with tenure for Erik Bleich (Political Science), Jeffrey Carpenter (Economics), Jonathan Isham (Economics), and Bettina Matthias (German). Writer-in-residence Julia Alvarez gave a slide presentation about her research for her new novel, In the Time of Butterflies.

The College Bookstore

Would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a joyous holiday and a happy new year!