

10 Spring Cleaning Tips for the Entrepreneur

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Spring-cleaning gives us that wonderful feeling of freshness and renewed energy. It means a new start and for many...a new life. After hibernating for the winter, you may find that you are surrounded by lots of clutter! Spring is the time for new beginnings and we all benefit from the yearly ritual of throwing out the old and making room for the new.

Just so you know, I am not just talking about your physical space either.

Spring is the time to clean out all those outdated tools, procedures and systems that you use to generate business. Does your database need some spring-cleaning? It's the foundation of your business. If your list is old and poorly maintained, it can result in a huge drain of your time and energy... maybe it's time to do a little purging.

Use this time to evaluate the situations, systems, tools, and people that you use to grow and nurture your business. Having the space to add the "new" is essential to reaching your goals. A good spring-cleaning can free up the space that you need to make it all work.

Here are 10 Spring Cleaning areas for your consideration:

1. Your databases. Your goal is to create at least three lists: Begin with a short list of the 20% who give you 80% of your referrals and business. These are the people who are your biggest supporters and with whom you'll form the deepest relationships. Then there are the people you want to stay in touch with, less often perhaps, but regularly. And finally, the people we call "suspects" that someday may turn out to be long-term potential clients. Remember, your database is the lifeblood of your business. In addition, if you ever want an "escape" from your business, this valuable information is what you'll have to "sell" or negotiate your business value.

2. Your customer/contact directory or Rolodex. As you organize, update, and segment your databases, this is part of the spring refurbish process. Take out people who make your life difficult. There are many other folks who would love to be in your database.

3. Your files and folders. Are your file drawers stuffed with no room for the new stuff? It's time to clean out, throw out or store it. Dedicate an hour or two each week to tackle this. Place it on your schedule and continue to work at it until it's done.

4. Your systems. Reviewing, creating and adding new systems to automate your business are critical to your business. What systems need fine-tuning? What new systems need to be developed? How can you use what you already have to bring your business to a higher standard?

5. Your stuff. Do you need a Professional Organizer to come in and get you squared away? Clutter drains your energy. It literally makes you tired. Free up your space and get organized.

6. Your attitude and your thinking. Take down the storm windows and put up the screens... let the fresh air come in. Review and if needed, re-establish your business goals. Set-up milestones so you can measure your progress. Post your goals where you see them every day.

7. Your workspace. Give yourself a fresh point of view. If at all possible, change its location or at least the way it faces.

8. Your bad habits. Do some of your habits get in the way of you doing your best? Do you procrastinate? Refuse to delegate or let go? Let the clutter and piles render you ineffective? Make a list of the habits you need to eliminate and then attack one of them each month. It won't be long before the changes you have made improve your success.

9. Your tools and equipment. Are you tolerating tools and equipment that really need to be replaced or upgraded? Take a look at your budget...make a list of what you need to replace because of its inefficiency. Even though this may cost money, there may be huge savings of time or other resources to offset this investment. Or maybe that investment is required to take you to the next level in your business.

10. Last but not least...your clientele. One of the reasons top producers are successful is because they can "cherry pick." They don't need to take every account that comes their way. Because of the systems they have in place, they have a choice. They have a choice of originating the easiest contracts and working with the nicest people. Let go of all of your "bad" contacts as quickly as possible. Choose the people with whom you want to work, and who understand the contribution you make to them.

Now, if you can think of other areas...add them to the list. Print it out and review it. Make note of those areas that you feel would make the most difference in your business and situation. Then, put actions on the calendar and set a time limit to make your changes. You'll be surprised at the progress you'll make and the improvement in your business.