

Ask SCORE
By Sandhills SCORE

Spring Cleaning For Your Small Business

Small business owners have a multitude of responsibilities to tend to every day. Naturally, as they focus on what's most important in the moment, some tasks will either fall through the cracks or pile up. Over time, that can cause distraction and hurt a business's efficiency and effectiveness.

If you're discovering that what's left undone is thwarting your productivity, why not commit to fitting time into your May schedule to do a little "spring cleaning" for your business.

Here are several suggestions to help you give your business a breath of fresh air this spring. Most are small changes, but they can make a big difference in your ability to focus clearly:

- **Free up space on your computer's hard drive by deleting files/documents you no longer need.** Pay particular attention to your "downloads" folder. If you need to maintain files and documents within it, save them to other folders that are appropriate for them.
- **Reduce clutter at your workstation by doing two things:**
 - Review the pile of business cards you've collected at networking events, and connect with those people on LinkedIn. Then dispose of the cards in the trash.
 - If you have vendors' brochures and the other marketing literature laying around for future reference, consider bookmarking their website addresses instead so you can learn more about them later—and then throw away the paper collateral.
- **Purge your email inbox and folders of messages you've already responded to or that are no longer relevant.**
- **Create a Word document or Excel spreadsheet to store all the blog topic ideas that have popped into your head.** That way you'll have a central place where you can capture your creativity and pull topics from when you need them.
- **Consider backing up all of your files with an automated cloud-based file storage solution.** There's nothing like peace of mind to help improve focus. There are numerous free clouds. Google's Drive works well for us.

Also take a fresh look at your business plan and update anything that's no longer accurate or relevant. This may take more time than the other suggestions, but it's something every

entrepreneur should do regularly in good times and bad. Likewise, review your marketing strategy to assess what's working and what isn't.

A little spring cleaning now can help you maintain focus on managing your business more effectively in all seasons. For more guidance on navigating the many demands of entrepreneurship, reach out to your local SCORE chapter to talk with mentors knowledgeable in all aspects of starting and growing a business.

If you would like to discuss this or need help with the Business Plan, contact the Sandhills Chapter of SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business". SCORE is a nationwide nonprofit association of expert business counselors who provide free and confidential business counseling to small business entrepreneurs and owners. Your local Sandhills Chapter is very active in counseling, mentoring and presenting free business seminars at Sandhills Community College. Please contact us at www.sandhills.score.org or call 910-420-0121 or 910-692-3926. Be sure to visit the website at www.sandhills.edu/sbc for a complete listing of SCORE and SCC free seminars. You may also contact Teresa Reynolds at [910-695-3938](tel:910-695-3938) or email reynoldst@sandhills.edu.

Also you can send your business questions to scorestaffing0364@gmail.com and don't forget to provide a way to contact you. We may not be able to answer all of your questions but everyone will receive a personal response from one of our Sandhills SCORE counselors.

P.S If you are interested in becoming a SCORE Counselor, please call or email us.