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Tech Tools

By Darol Ware, Massachusetts Paralegal Association

As paralegals we are expected to juggle a multitude of tasks in the most efficient ways possible. To help meet these expectations, many of us have turned to a plethora of free and low-cost tech tools designed to make work life a little easier. One very popular option that has become a must have is the ability to store data online via computer networks that are in the “clouds”. What this really means is that rather than store copies of work-related documents on your own storage device (e.g., hard drive and flash drive), you can store them

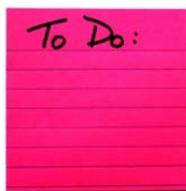
on servers (computers with absurdly large hard drives) maintained off site. Two of the most popular examples are [Dropbox](#) and [Box](#). The benefits of cloud computing are immense. For example, not only can a small law firm lower their overhead cost by storing all their digital records using a tool like [Google Drive](#) but they can also access those same files from anywhere in the world. A really exciting feature of Google Drive is the ability for staff to collaborate on documents in virtual real-time. Sounds great, right? Not so fast. Before transferring confidential client related information to any third party, it is critical that the privacy policy of that company be carefully scrutinized. Their written policy should be able to answer two key questions: Who has access to the data you store on their servers and under what conditions will they share your private information? So, if you’re considering making use of cloud computing to make your life as a paralegal a little easier, keep the following excerpt from Dropbox’s privacy policy in mind:

“We may retain and use your information as necessary to comply with our legal obligations, resolve disputes, and enforce our agreements.” - Dropbox

Advancements in online technology have generated a treasure chest of tools that have revolutionized the quality of service we provide our clients but the potential drawbacks must continually be considered before entrusting any sensitive data.

10 Tips to Tame That To Do List

By Vicki Voisin, ACP

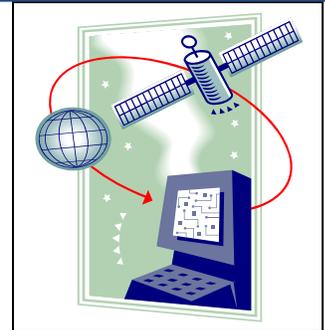


Do you run out of day before you run out of list? Does your to-do list just get longer and longer? Are you overwhelmed by what you think you have to do tomorrow and the day after and the day after? It never ends, right?

If this sounds like your story, then you need to heed these 10 tips to get that list under control:

1. **Ask: How can I make my to do list more user friendly?** One way is to use action words to describe your tasks. Instead of “Sharon” write “Call Sharon” and add her telephone number. You’re more likely to do a task faster if you already have the information you need.
2. **Ask: What has to be done?** Be sure you understand the task and exactly what has to be done. What is really expected of you? How far do you need to take the task for it to be good enough?

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10 Tips to Tame That To Do List . . . (continued)

3. **Ask: What would happen if I took this task off my list?** If your answer is "Nothing," strike it off and move on.
4. **Ask: Have there been any negative consequences because this task hasn't been done?** Would it be so terrible if it didn't get done? If your answer is "No," it probably doesn't have to be done and you can cross it off.
5. **Ask: What really needs to be done?** How far do I need to take this task? Aim for simplicity and do only what has to be done.
6. **Ask: When does this need to be completed?** Always establish a deadline when you're given a task. This is the No. 1 consideration for prioritizing your list.
7. **Ask: Am I the only one who can do this task?** Lighten up! If someone else is available, better suited or more qualified, delegate.
8. **Ask: How long has this task been on my list?** If your answer is 6-12 months (or more), you probably will not do it. Further, it probably doesn't need to be done. Save yourself the guilt: cross it off!
9. **Ask: Is this task worth doing?** Are the costs (in time, money, stress, etc.) associated with doing this task worth the reward? No? Remove it.
10. **Ask: Is this something I said I'd never do?** Create a list of things NOT to do. Say "NO" to tasks on that list. This way, a lot of things won't make it to your list in the first place.

Always remember: You are in charge of your to-do list.

- You decide what goes on it.
- You decide when things will be done.
- You decide if something really isn't important.
- You decide how much and how well a task will be done.

The bottom line? You have to pay attention to your to-do list so it doesn't overshadow the things you really enjoy in your life. You get to decide that, too!

Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor", delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by setting goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She is the co-author of *The Professional Paralegal: A Guide to Finding a Job and Career Success*. Vicki publishes *Paralegal Strategies*, a weekly e-newsletter for paralegals, and hosts *The Paralegal Voice*, a monthly podcast produced by Legal Talk Network.

More information is available at www.paralegalmentor.com where subscribers receive Vicki's *151 Tips for Your Career Success*.

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