

The Musician's How-to Series Presents...

ORGANIZING

To Maximize Your Time

by Marty Buttwinick

(SAMPLE)

This is an excerpt from the title:
HOW TO MAKE A LIVING AS A MUSICIAN
So You Never Have To Have A Day Job Again!
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**What the trades say about
“How To Make A Living As A Musician”...**

“...remarkably thorough... ..he delivers worthy advice concerning matters that we musicians tend to think we’re too cool to confront.”

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MIX BOOKSHELF

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Introduction

There is more to being a musician than fingering notes on an instrument. There are the subtleties of group interaction; musicianship; repertoire; the business side, if you are a professional; and many additional subjects.

The Musicians' How-to Series consists of short- to medium-length booklets/articles about a variety of music-related topics. This series provides musicians and singers with supplemental information that for the most part isn't taught in schools, and might or might not be learned on one's own or from a private instructor. Much of this information has never before been in print.

Organizing To Maximize Time shows you just that. These time-proven techniques can help you with goal planning, time management, priority setting, handling distractions and more. Want more gigs? Want to get the original scene moving more quickly? Want to start making more money playing music? This info can help you speed the way to your musical goals.

M_B

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Organizing

To Maximize Your Time

What is Organization?

Organization consists of coordinating activities, things and people so you can achieve your goals.

Whether you're filing papers, arranging rehearsal schedules or spending time with your relatives on Saturdays, some degree of efficient planning needs to occur. Priorities must be set, schedules need to be made, other people need to be worked with and things need to get done. The more you do, or want to do, the more organized you need to be.

People natively have varying degrees of organizational talents and tolerances. Some people enjoy organizing while others don't. Some love to make future plans while others would *much* rather do anything else. Well, the bottom line is, you organize and plan as much as you need to get and keep the show on the road the way you want.

Organizing can keep activities stable and expanding.

I've worked with people who are very organized, and people whose lives are like hurricane wreckage. I've also worked with people who *think* they are incapable of organizing, when they're just *not*-organized. It's not always a matter of *being* unorganized but a matter of either just not knowing how, or not spending the *time* to organize.

Time is a little culprit that cuts across everybody's life in one way or another. Too much time, not enough time—and is there really enough time to do it all? This entire chapter aligns with the time factor quite well.

The English word “time” comes from an ancient word *daimen*, which means to part, or divide up. Three *Webster’s Dictionary* definitions of the word “time” that pertain are:

1. *A known, fixed, or anticipated period of existence or duration.*
2. *A period set apart in some specified or implied way from others.*
3. *The length of the period required in performing an action or going over a course.*

Did you ever not get things done because you didn’t have enough *time*? Well, according to these three definitions you could propose that either: (1) you didn’t have enough known, fixed or anticipated periods to do things in, (2) you didn’t have enough activities correctly coordinated with each other, or (3) the length of the periods required to do what was needed was too long—so you didn’t have enough time! Well, if these things amount to not having enough time, might implementing these things in your life create *more* time? Much of this article addresses these points.

If you had five things to do and did them all you had enough time. If you had five things to do and couldn’t get them done you didn’t have enough time, or were just being lazy.

By organizing you not only create smooth flowing activities—but actually *create* the time in which to do them.

Check it out—it works for me.

Getting Organized

GOAL ALIGNMENT

PLANNING

PRIORITIES

SCHEDULING

DISCIPLINE

ORGANIZING PHYSICAL OBJECTS

Many success stories come from goal setting and efficient follow-through.

Once you’ve worked out your goals, plans and priorities you need to start scheduling your life.

Activities that Need Doing and Scheduling

Here is an overview of the things that need doing to *really* have all bases covered. There are more topics than the ones I mention, but this will give you the idea. Not all of these items need to be constantly addressed, and certain things might not pertain to you at the moment.

(38 Items)

Programs and To-do Lists

A program is a series of steps designed to get you to the goal. You could have a program to get your band working, find more work as a musician, or whatever it is you need to do. Depending on the magnitude of the activity, a program can be long or short, simple or involved. Programs are the steps that bring your plans to reality.

Some example programs are:

A “Get More Gigs” program for an individual could be:

1. Call all my musician friends and let them know I want more gigs, and tell them what kind of gigs I’m looking for. Get some leads and follow them up.
2. Register with a referral agency and go look at the union bulletin board.
3. Practice a lot so I’m ready for any upcoming auditions.
4. Clean my gear and get my amp fixed.
5. Look for gigs every day until I have enough work.

A program can have five steps or twenty-five steps, depending on how involved things are. The idea is to have a series of *very specific things* to do that can be completed and marked off as DONE. Once all the steps are completed, the program should have a specific end-result, such as “A Clean House,” or “A Month of Booked Gigs.” Then you have a completed program... and you do another.

If you’re used to “getting more gigs” you probably don’t need to make a list. If you’ve been through the motions dozens of times there might not be the need. You don’t need to organize for the sake of organizing. But if what you’re doing involves many steps, or you’re squeezing another activity into a busy schedule, or are unfamiliar with what’s happening—make a list.

The idea is to program things that can be done in a relatively short period of time and *knock them out....*

... After aligning goals, making plans and drawing up programs, the next step is to get everything scheduled into your daily life.

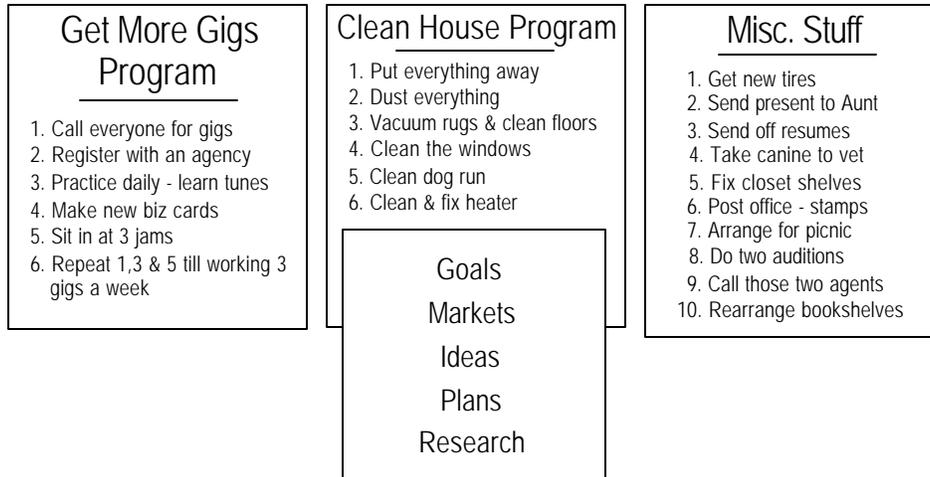
Activity Organizing Sequence

Since the whole reason for organizing is to get things done, whatever paperwork methods you use should promote that result. Getting things done is what matters. If you successfully do what you’ve planned, chances are your paperwork methods work for you. If you don’t do what you’ve planned, chances are they don’t.

There are many ways to create daily and weekly to-do lists, and the following example is just one out of many possibilities. This planning sequence is best done either at the end of a week or at the very beginning of a week. This way you get your life set-up to go, and can just go for it without thinking about what to do next.

STEP 1

Have on hand all of your paperwork, including your goals, programs, ideas and projects. Look it all over to get the big picture.



STEP 2

You can list items by basic subjects:

You can list items by types of activities:

You can list items by complete subjects:

The idea is to clearly define the *exact* activities you will do in the time period of one week. The more precise your activities are, the easier it will be to schedule things into your life and get them DONE—not just thought about or “tried to do.”...

STEP 3

Take your weekly list of things-to-do and write them in some kind of daily or weekly calendar. Depending on how busy you are, you might or might not need to write in specific times for everything. I usually need to.

The idea is to start with any preset activities, like work or gigs, and schedule things around those. If you don't have any preset activities, take one thing, schedule that in, then *align things around that*.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8		New tires					
9	Register with an agency	Call agents	Call printers		Vet Post ofc Fix heater	Bizcardideas	Picnic
10						Practice	
11						Audition	
12						Audition	
1							
2	WORK						
3							
4							
5							
6	Bank	Finances Personal calls			Practice		Practice
7	Shop						
8							
9	Gig calls	Gig calls	Gig calls	Gig calls	Jam session	Date	
10	Practice	Practice	Practice	Practice			
11							
12							

STEP 4

Throughout the week adhere to your schedule....

Every activity you do has a purpose to it. The intention you have for what you want to do will affect how much you work—or do anything. Nothing happens unless you intend it to happen, and underlying that is the decision for something to be. This viewpoint is very important to remember, and operate from.

STEP 5

Five Step Organizing Sequence—Summary

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Scheduling and Time Management

Even if your planning is beautiful, fitting everything into your schedule could be difficult. If you have lots of free time, when to do things might not be a problem. But, if you're pretty busy to begin with and have trouble fitting things into your schedule, here is a trick that might help.

Start with a time-overview of all your personal and business activities to see exactly how much time you actually spend on what you already do; then you can get an idea of how much time you *could* spend on new activities. (The example I use is strictly made up and you obviously have to put your own life into the equation.)

The sequence is: ...

Schedule Irregularities

Have you ever made a great schedule that was destroyed because of some kind of interruption? This is often the most frustrating thing about life. You plan it out so everything fits and *WHAM...*

- Your car breaks down, you lose three hours of your day and get backlogged.
- You stay up too late watching TV or talking to a friend on the phone, so you have to sleep in and miss those "extra" activities you've been wanting to do.
- You finally get the night off to learn some tunes or practice and a friend you haven't seen in four years drops by.
- Your best friend's boyfriend broke up with her and she calls every day crying hysterically for two weeks.
- You volunteered a *few* hours a week to some activity, and it became six.

And there goes the schedule, and very often your new "business."

Here are some tricks to help with distractions, interruptions and emergencies.

DISTRACTIONS

After many years of fighting with distractions, I've realized that they can always be there. There can always be something to distract you from what you really want to do unless you live an isolated life, or a life without much activity. Here are some ways to handle them:

1. *Control them...*
2. *Ignore them.*
3. *Work around it.*

Keep in mind that the object of efficient planning is to do the things that will take you from point A to point B. You need to determine what *must* be done to pull the whole thing off. That's why you need personal policy—policy keeps you on track.

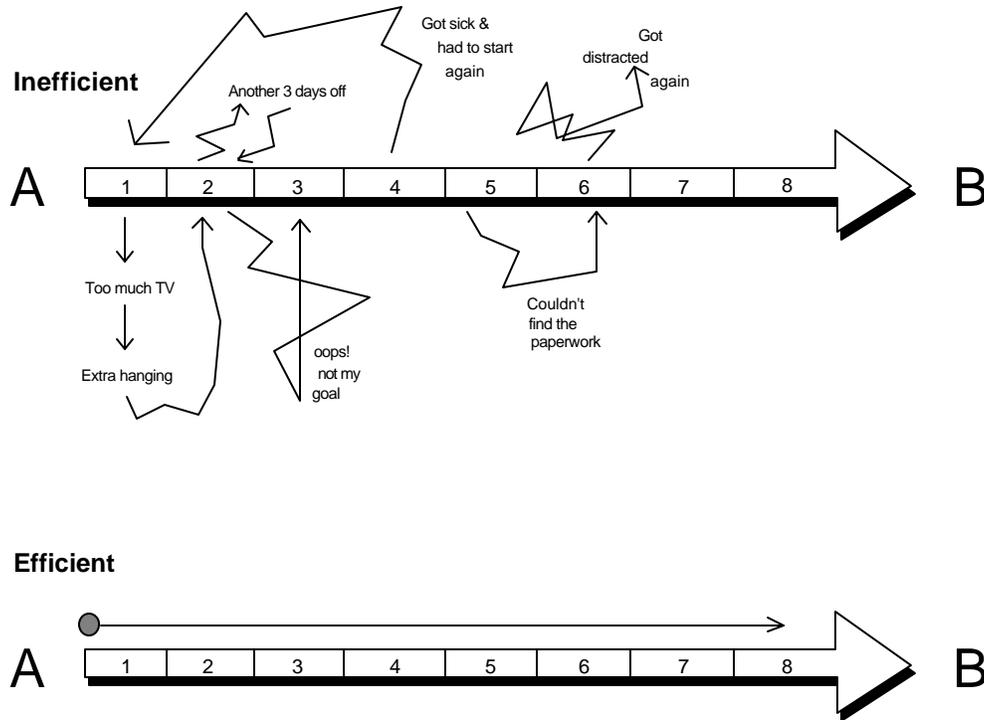
It can take one person three weeks to accomplish the same as it takes another person one week. An individual has a choice of how long it takes to get things accomplished, it's your choice to get a lot done, or a little done...

I mention this because some people don't make it simply because they don't work hard enough at it. Unfortunately society rewards those who don't work (welfare) and penalizes those who do

(taxes); and many people are raised with the idea that “Well, it’ll get done somehow, I think I’ll take a nap.” What is that famous quote, “Genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration?” It’s true.

The point is: you *can* do whatever it takes to get the job done, you just have to want to enough and go at it.

The following two diagrams demonstrate two extremes of going A – B.



As you can see, the person in the first example might or might not ever make it to point B. You need to do what it takes, or not. It’s all in the decision and the implementation.

EMERGENCIES (How to handle)

Emergency: a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action. [Webster’s Dictionary]

UNFINISHED THINGS

Speaking of unfinished things—accumulated unfinished projects, communications and activities can slow you down like a huge weight wrapped around your neck. No fun. If you’re moving a little slow, despite everything looking good, this might be the culprit at the bottom of it all. Anyone can “acquire” a number of started, yet unfinished activities, even if something was started by just being written down or by having too many unreturned phone calls.

The solution:

- 1.
- 2.

...Organizing one's life to pursue personal goals, especially when working full time, is a skill that can require practice. You don't become perfect all at once. You need to gradiently (step-by-step) get a little bit accomplished, then a little more, then a little more... You are able and you are capable of doing whatever you want...

...If your goals are real and you are actively pursuing them you should be alive with activity. If you are not pursuing your true goals, or if you have true goals that are being neglected you can be tired and lifeless. I think the happiness that comes with true goal achievement sounds more fun.

Physical Organizational Basics

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Object Placement

The two main reasons you need to be physically organized are: (1) so you can do what you need to do without wasting time looking for things, and (2) not be stopped from doing the things you want because you can't find something.

Daydreams don't need a filing cabinet unless you're a writer needing to keep track of potential material. But when you have the physical objects of a business activity involved, they need to be organized or you could find yourself not being able to function...

Paperwork

Some people love it, and some people hate it. It doesn't really matter because you have to do it anyway. Because of the love/hate thing it's very important to set up your files, records and to-do lists in a fashion that works for you. Files and records aren't any good if you don't use them. As I go through some paperwork essentials, keep in mind that you need to get set up for *yourself*.

In-Basket: A basket, tray or file folder where you put items that you get, but still have to be looked at, like your mail that you pull out of the mail box then plop down on the kitchen table. Your kitchen table, at that point in time is an “In-Basket.”

Pending-Basket: A basket, tray or file folder where you put things that you’ve looked at, or started in some way, but cannot be dealt with immediately. There’s still something to do with it.

Out-Basket: A basket, tray or file folder containing things which have been dealt with, and are now ready for their next action, i.e., being mailed, filed or tossed.

Whether you use trays, file folders or whatever, the idea is to have some order to the paperwork that comes your way so you don’t get clogged.

It’s always best to actually take care of the “thing” in your hand, as it *is* in your hand. Need to file something? File it. Need to send out a package? Do it now. But since we don’t always do that, In, Out and Pending areas are very efficient. Did you ever end up with a stack of mused up papers, bills, and things in a drawer and couldn’t find anything? No fun.

Basic Filing Needs

What determines how many files you have..., is how many files you need. The following are some common, music-oriented files:

SALES ORIENTED FILES: Anything to do directly with the gigs themselves.

Contracted Gigs: Signed contracts that you have received from a client.

Pending Contracts: Any paperwork on “for sure” gigs that have loose ends.

Hot Prospects: Good leads that could easily turn into gigs.

Prices: How much you charge for different situations. Driving time? Overtime?

MANAGEMENT ORIENTED FILES: Anything dealing with running the band.

Plans and Ideas: Game plans, ideas, lists of things to do, etc.

Legal Papers: Fictitious name statements, anything legal.

Receipts: Printing, supplies, equipment purchases and rentals, travel costs.

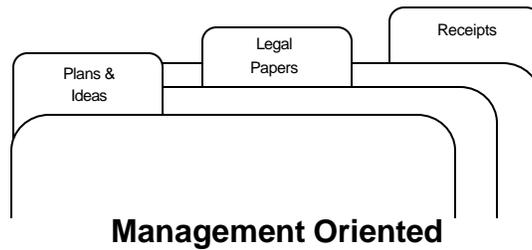
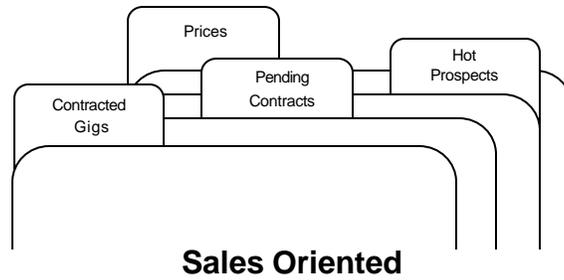
SUPPLIES: ...

MARKETING ORIENTED FILES:...

MASTERS: ...

MISC. FILES: ...

THINGS TO KEEP ON FILE *for future reference....*



Supplies

Marketing Oriented

Masters

Misc. Files

Things to keep on file for future reference

Computers

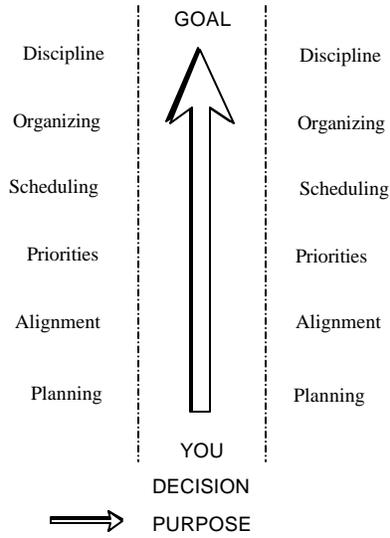
Phone Numbers

Chart Organization

Summary

Organization consists of coordinating activities, things and people so you can achieve your goals. Organizing can keep an activity stable and expanding. When there is lots of activity, things tend to collide and bounce off of each other without a channel for things to flow in, firmly established goals to reach, and a plan of action with which to reach it.

If there's not enough activity in an area, having these points happening will help in the motivation department. When all of these points are truly "in" you should feel motivated, alive and happy.



About The Author

Marty Buttwinick is a veteran musician and band leader. Throughout his colorful career he has played a multitude of venues from clubs to major concert halls, and has recorded for film, records and television.

He's played venues from *Knott's Berry Farm* to *Tokyo Stadium*; performed &/or recorded with original rock acts as well as the *Santa Monica Symphony*; and has played countless dinner houses, casuals, clubs and theatres, including recent performances of the Hollywood musicals, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Reefer Madness*.

Marty has worked with Latin great, Willie Bobo, Motown queen Martha and the Vandellas, as well as with Ray Charles and Edgar Winter. He is also the musical director/conductor for actress/singer Karen Black in her one-woman show. (Los Angeles, San Diego & San Francisco performances).

He has recorded at/for Warner Bros., Capitol Records, CBS and NBC, including work on cartoons, albums, film scores and the soap *All My Children*.

Marty is also an experienced music copyist and conductor, and has spent over 400 hours tightening up bands and teaching professional group-playing skills and rehearsal techniques to musicians of all ages.

He is currently freelancing as a bassist while teaching for the [*Faunt School of Creative Music*](#) in Studio City, where he has delivered more than fifteen thousand hours of one-on-one instruction and career consultations.

The Musicians' How-to Series is drawn from his many years in the business both as a professional musician and an educator.

His book, *HOW TO MAKE A LIVING AS A MUSICIAN—SO YOU NEVER HAVE TO HAVE A DAY JOB AGAIN!*, is currently available from the *Faunt School of Creative Music* at (818) 506-6873. To order by credit card call Theresa between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 PM PST, Mon. through Fri.

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