

## +++In Touch

### **How to Get to the Bottom of the Clutter In Your Life**

**Pamela Mims** is the 2005 recipient of the “Most Inspirational” Woman In Business Award, presented by California State Senator Jack Scott. She is the go-to person to assess, organize, and customize your office, your home, your business, or your corporation. She can turn your piles into files, and help you successfully manage your firm providing practical solutions to increase productivity, efficiency, and maximize your time and money. I sat down and talked with Ms. Mims about the tendency we sometimes have to overwhelmingly clutter our lives and how to get a handle on it.

#### **Why do we have so much clutter in our lives?**

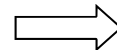
**PM:** So many times we are inundated with paper. Between the junk mail, regular mail, emails, faxes, scans, photos, and the list continues, technology has truly added to the amount of “stuff” we acquire in our lives.

#### **Can you think of anything else that contributes to it?**

**PM:** Fear is a factor as well. Many times people are just afraid to get rid of paper, thinking they may need it at a later time. True, there is a period of retention, a time period when we should hold on to things, but you’d be surprised how much we really don’t need to keep when it comes to paper and paperwork.

#### **Where does that stem from, that fear?**

**PM:** Well, I’m no psychologist, but many times I think it’s an inherited or learned quality. I find that people who grew up in certain eras, with very little in the way of material possessions, or even lacking the basic necessities, may tend to stock up on things, accumulate a lot of things. Sometimes, that tendency is passed along to the offspring. That’s just my speculation, however.



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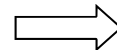
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### **How did you get started in your business?**

**PM:** In 1991, I started an executive secretarial services company called In A Word. But with the advent and availability of personal computers, I found I needed to diversify my business scope. I saw a need, a need for businesses and people to be or get more organized. Many times I found they didn't have the knowledge or resources to do it by themselves. Believe it or not, my first client was a businesswoman who used to keep telephone numbers on small pieces of paper. Needless to say, it didn't contribute to organization in her business, her personal life, or in the purse where she kept the little sheets of paper with information written on them. I developed a system for her to index and track her business associates and contacts in an organized manner. That's the key, having a system in place, developing a routine of conducting business, that's what I help my clients to do.

### **Why should we be organized in our businesses?**

**PM:** Time is money, and that's a true fact. If you have to take long periods of time to search for a client's documents or a particular file, that is a time waster and doesn't give a good impression either. For example, one of my clients got a phone call from a former customer who wanted her to do some work similar to what she had done for him in the past. She couldn't find his file promptly, so she gave him a quick quote off the top of her head over the phone. He readily accepted it. When she eventually found the customer's previous paperwork she realized she had underbid the job by a thousand dollars as compared to what she had charged for him in the past for her services. Her lack of organization caused her a great loss financially.



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#### **What are other ways businesses are impacted by clutter and disorganization?**

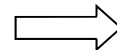
**PM:** It's embarrassing when a business owner can't find the needed paperwork. In addition it looks bad if a client comes in and sees your stuff everywhere, disorganized and disheveled. It can cause the customer to question your capability and professionalism. Not to mention the frustration it causes as well as affecting productivity.

#### **How about organization a personal level?**

**PM:** On a personal level, we each need to ask ourselves what would happen if we were to get sick, become incapacitated or, worse, die. Are our papers organized in way so that someone would be able find, for example, your advanced directive, will, or power of attorney? Then, what about banking statements, and other legal or health care information? It really helps our loved ones when we organize our lives and files in a way so that if someone else needs to help or take over our personal business they can do so without extreme hardship.

#### **Do you have some basic suggestions for our readers to organize and get rid of clutter in their homes and offices?**

**PM:** It's important to realize that everything needs a home. That doesn't mean an item won't move around, but it needs to have a place where it should be once we are done with it. One way to do this with all our electronic items, for example, the cell phone, IPOD, pager and their cords, and the like, is to put them all in a basket once we are done with them. That way we don't have to go around looking for them, we know where they are because we know where their home is, in the basket.



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### **How about the accumulation of clothes, for example?**

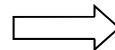
**PM:** Every so often, we need to analyze and review our closets, exercising honesty and discipline at the same time. When we look at an item we haven't worn it in six months, we need to get rid of it. Sometimes we promise ourselves we are going to lose weight and fit into that outfit again, but that is not good reasoning. Also, look at the fabric, and the style, is it still current? Or do we remember how it felt the last time we put it on? Did the shoes pinch? Were they uncomfortable? If so, reassure yourself you don't want that kind of misery. You can always donate your clothes and shoes to a homeless shelter that way you feel they are being put to good use.

### **What about the nicknacks in our home?**

**PM:** It's easy to accumulate decorations in a variety of themes, whether it be a rooster, turkey, or duck collection. But it's not necessary to have all the items in your house at one time. Put some of them in a box and label it, storing it away. In six months, rotate your items. If you are desiring to eliminate some items, you don't have to do all of it at once. You can get a box or trash bag. Each day put one item in that box or bag. By the end of the week, dispose or give away those items. That way it won't seem as overwhelming to clear out the clutter.

### **Those are great suggestions for the home, how about the office?**

**PM:** Offices need to develop an organized a universal filing system that works for them, one that makes sure their records are readily available. Creating an indexing system is a great way to help business function in a timely matter. If a person or business has a difficult time getting that started, that's where I come in.



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#### **What do you generally do for businesses?**

PM: First, I make an assessment of the business or company itself. Then, I review what is falling through the cracks, so to speak. I develop a system or solution and make a report to the agency regarding my assessment of the problem(s) and my recommendation to solve them. My services not only include organization but also analyzing a company's productivity. I've worked for law firms, small businesses, and large corporations. My level of expertise is not limited to just filing or organizing your clutter, but I provide practical ways to improve output, efficiency, and to help you make the best use of your time and money.

#### **How do you feel about your job?**

PM: I love it. It is so rewarding to help people and to see the before and after. It gives me great pleasure to assist my clients and see them happy with the results.

**Pamela Mims' mission is to create and refine business procedures to enhance your image and productivity. She provides information, resources, services and training to assist individuals, staff, companies and organizations in creating a more organized, positive and successful business.**

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