

Compass Heading

Keep Your Business on the Road to Change



Lloyd Williams

Number 2

*A single concept
you can apply
to your life and
business today.*

The Four Box Clean-Up

Before attempting to think about the future of your business, it is often necessary to clean-up all the clutter collected from the past: the stacks of paper on the desk, credenza, or shelves. Taking time to handle the clutter, makes time to contemplate your future.

Schedule a Saturday morning at the office and bring four banker's boxes. Label each box separately: act, delegate, file, and trash. Set the boxes on your office floor and start with your desktop. Pick up each piece of paper and ask yourself, "Does this require action?"

Act

If you answer "yes" to the above question, place the paper in the box labeled "act." Do not worry about dealing with that paper immediately, because you will process it quickly in the coming days.

Delegate

If the item requires action, but is best done by someone else, write the name of the person in the upper right corner of the document with today's date and the date you would like a response, if necessary. If you need to wait for a response from this person, label the top of a ledger pad "@Waiting For" and list the person's name, what you are waiting for, today's date, and the date you would like a response. Then place the item in the "delegate" box.

File

If the document does not require action and needs to be kept because you can not replace it easily if needed in the future, write the subject you would like to have this filed under in the upper right corner and place in the "file" box.

Trash

If it does not require action and is not needed for reference then place in trash.

Next Action

Continue with the rest of your office, placing each item in one of the four boxes. When completed, set the "file" box next to your filing cabinets and bring in a temp to file the documents using your system, and purge your files annually. Place delegated items in the individual team member's "in box" with a post-it note explaining you would like a response by the second date. Set the "act" box next to your desk and schedule a 1-2 hour block of time daily until every piece of paper is processed. Throw the "trash" out.

