Get paid to organize!

FabJob Guide to Become a Professional Organizer

Grace Jasmine and Jennifer James

Visit www.FabJob.com
Contents

About the Author ........................................................................................................... 9
About the Editor ................................................................................................................ 9
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... 10

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................. 11
   1.1 What is a Professional Organizer? ........................................................................ 12
   1.2 Benefits of the Career ....................................................................................... 14
   1.3 In This Guide ..................................................................................................... 17

2. The World of Organizing .............................................................................................. 19
   2.1 The History of Organizing ................................................................................. 19
   2.2 The Professional Organizer .............................................................................. 25
      2.2.1 Characteristics of Pro Organizers .............................................................. 25
      2.2.2 Are You a “Natural”? ................................................................................ 27
      2.2.3 The Roles You Will Play .......................................................................... 29
      2.2.4 Ways to Specialize .................................................................................... 42

3. How to Organize ......................................................................................................... 48
   3.1 Organizing Systems ............................................................................................. 49
      3.1.1 What Makes a Person “Organized”? .......................................................... 49
      3.1.2 Creating a Basic System ............................................................................. 50
   3.2 Five Key Organizing Principles .......................................................................... 53
      3.2.1 Minimize, Maximize, and Maintain ......................................................... 54
      3.2.2 Condition and Calamity ............................................................................ 55
      3.2.3 Treasure, Trash, Tools, or Toys ................................................................. 57
      3.2.4 Objective, Tools, and Steps ...................................................................... 61
      3.2.5 The C.O.P.E. Strategy .............................................................................. 63
   3.3 Organizing the Individual .................................................................................... 67
      3.3.1 Personal Organization Assessment ........................................................... 67
3.3.2 Determining Priorities .......................................................... 68
3.3.3 Setting Goals ........................................................................ 74
3.3.4 Time Management ................................................................. 80

3.4 Organizing the Home ............................................................... 87
3.4.1 Defining Home Organization .................................................. 87
3.4.2 Home Organizing Products .................................................... 94
3.4.3 Planning, Purging and Storing ................................................ 94
3.4.4 Documenting the Space ....................................................... 96

3.5 Organizing Each Room ............................................................. 96
3.5.1 Bedrooms ............................................................................ 96
3.5.2 Bathrooms .......................................................................... 102
3.5.3 Kitchens ........................................................................... 105
3.5.4 Family/Living Rooms ............................................................ 109
3.5.5 Laundry Rooms ................................................................. 112
3.5.6 Dining Rooms ..................................................................... 114
3.5.7 Home Offices or Dens .......................................................... 117
3.5.8 Attics, Basements, and Garages ........................................... 120

3.6 Organizing for Businesses ......................................................... 124
3.6.1 Assessing the Need ............................................................... 124
3.6.2 Workspace and Equipment .................................................. 128
3.6.3 The “Paper Trail” ................................................................. 132
3.6.4 Digital Information .............................................................. 135
3.6.5 Organizing Workflow .......................................................... 142
3.6.6 Project Management ............................................................ 146

4. Starting an Organizing Business ................................................. 156
4.1 Preparing Yourself .................................................................. 156
4.1.1 Print Resources ................................................................. 157
4.1.2 The Internet ....................................................................... 158
4.1.3 Mentoring ................................................................. 160
4.1.4 Personal Training and Coaching ................................ 162
4.1.5 Get a Certificate ....................................................... 163
4.1.6 Join a Professional Association ................................. 164
4.1.7 Small Business Resources ......................................... 169

4.2 Setting Up Your Business .............................................. 171
4.2.1 Your Business Concept ............................................. 171
4.2.2 Setting Business Goals ........................................... 174
4.2.3 Your Business Plan .................................................. 180
4.2.4 Financing Your Business .......................................... 189
4.2.5 Choosing a Business Name ....................................... 194
4.2.6 Legal Matters .......................................................... 196
4.2.7 Your Office ............................................................... 207

4.3 Operating Your Business .............................................. 213
4.3.1 Scheduling Your Time .............................................. 214
4.3.2 Pricing Your Services .............................................. 216
4.3.3 Getting Paid ............................................................ 222
4.3.4 Client Contracts ...................................................... 228
4.3.5 Keeping Track of Your Finances ................................. 233
4.3.6 Hiring Staff .............................................................. 237

5. Marketing and Sales ....................................................... 241
5.1 Your Marketing Plan .................................................... 241
5.2 Marketing Tools ........................................................... 244
   5.2.1 Printed Materials ................................................... 245
   5.2.2 Your Website ......................................................... 250
   5.2.3 Write an Email Newsletter ..................................... 255
   5.2.4 Social Media ......................................................... 258
5.3 Marketing Techniques ................................................................. 262
  5.3.1 Networking ......................................................................... 262
  5.3.2 Advertising ......................................................................... 266
  5.3.3 Get Media Publicity ............................................................. 270
  5.3.4 Write a Column or Article .................................................... 275
  5.2.4 Write a Tip Book or Booklet ............................................... 281
  5.3.5 Present Speeches, Classes, or Seminars ............................. 285
  5.3.6 Other Marketing Techniques .............................................. 295

5.4 Selling Your Services ............................................................... 296
  5.4.1 It All Starts With You .......................................................... 297
  5.4.2 The Process ......................................................................... 300
  5.4.3 Sales Leads .......................................................................... 301
  5.4.4 Telephone Sales ................................................................... 302
  5.4.5 In-Person Sales ................................................................... 306
  5.4.6 Creating a Winning Proposal .............................................. 312
  5.4.7 On the Job ........................................................................... 315

5.5 Success and Change .................................................................. 318
  5.5.1 Profitability ........................................................................... 318
  5.5.2 Evaluating Your Results ...................................................... 319
  5.5.3 Your Recognition ................................................................. 320
  5.5.4 Implementing Change .......................................................... 320

6. Conclusion .................................................................................. 322
  6.1 Profiles of Successful Organizers .......................................... 323
    6.1.1 Arranging It All ................................................................. 323
    6.1.2 Complete Organizational Services .................................. 324
    6.1.3 Get It Together LA! ........................................................... 324
    6.1.4 Ramona Creel .................................................................. 325
6.1.5 Organize Me 101 ...............................................................325
6.1.6 Student Success Services ..............................................326
6.2 Resources ...........................................................................326
1. Introduction

Welcome to the world of professional organizing!

Perhaps since the first day you realized you had a knack for organizing, you have been dreaming about a way to put your talents to good use. You love to create functional and beautiful surroundings and you always seem to know just how to improve the way tasks are completed and things are done. You have always thought it would be wonderful to be your own boss.

Being a professional organizer allows you to use your talents to teach others to get their lives in order. You will help people live personal and professional lives full of peace, beauty, and most importantly, organization!
As a buyer of this book, you probably got here one of two ways. Either you have always been passionate about order and have a talent for organizing things that began as early as you can remember, or you had an organizational “metamorphosis” in which you suddenly realized that the chaos and the clutter in your life was hurting you, and you changed.

However you got here, there is wonderful news. Even if you have never organized anyone but yourself, you can learn how to be a professional organizer. And there has never been a better time to pursue this career. You have chosen a rapidly growing and relatively young profession that continues to change and progress.

This guide will take you from the first moment you realize you have the organizational skills to create your own business, to the day you have a schedule full of appointments with clients who rely on you to help them get their lives, their homes, and their businesses organized to perfection.

We’ll start by introducing you to the job a professional organizer does. And why would someone want to organize for a living? You’ll find out about the many benefits of this exciting new career that is attracting thousands of new people every year.

### 1.1 What is a Professional Organizer?

A professional organizer is an individual who helps other people get organized for a living. You will apply your advanced understanding of organizational systems and processes to other people’s chaotic situations, and help them develop solutions that work in their lives. So essentially, you are a professional troubleshooter and problem-solver. In many cases a professional organizer is also a:

- Consultant
- Counselor
- Information systems expert
- Home economist
- Office manager
• Teacher
• Time management coach
• Space designer
• Speaker

If this list looks a little daunting right now, you will soon begin to see that many of these skills are untapped and unrefined skills that you already possess. Others can be learned with a little study and practice, which this guide will lead you through.

**A Typical Day**

A typical day for a professional organizer can be many things — or anything he or she chooses. They are the ultimate organizational entrepreneurs. On the job, they are often working hands-on with clients who need their help to get their lives, their homes, and their businesses organized.

As you’ll read more about later, people hire organizers to help with things like choosing, purchasing, and installing organizing equipment (filing cabinets, storage containers, racks, etc.), designing time schedules that help them get things done, sorting out files on a computer that have gotten overwhelming, purging an overgrowth of knick-knacks, paper, and other clutter from room to room, or developing systems that maximize the use of time and resources on a personal or business level.

Depending on your specialty, you might be the one to physically rearrange furniture and computer files, or you might simply provide your knowledge and give your clients systems they can implement themselves. You offer guidance, support, and you might even hold the garbage bag!

Professional organizers also spend their days:

• Thinking about organizational challenges
• Listening to clients
• Creating solutions with tools and ideas
• Communicating organizational concepts to clients
• Planning organized systems
• Testing and refining new ideas
• Meeting people and explaining what they do
• Making a difference to their clients

There are so many different ways to be a professional organizer that you can easily refine your own skills to create the sort of business that fits you, your strengths, and your personality. If you have the desire to help people get organized in their homes and businesses, you can learn to be a professional organizer.

**A Not-So-Typical Day**

Professional organizers are people with motivation and passion about what they do. Quite often they are designing their careers as they go along. You have the luxury of making your business as unique as you want it to be. The organizers interviewed for this book have taken their careers in specialized directions that might be of interest to you too.

For example:

• If you are Barry Izsak, you might spend your day developing training and education programs for other organizers.

• If you are Laurene Livesey Park, you might be co-authoring a book on organizing, or talking on the radio.

• If you are Chris McKenry, you might be facilitating a workshop or speaking at a civic group.

• If you are Rozanne Hird, you might be representing yourself and your company at an important charity event.

**1.2 Benefits of the Career**

Being a professional organizer is the perfect way for you to be in control of your life, your time, and your income. Here are some of the many
benefits you can expect in this fabulous career… and no doubt, you will discover many more on your own.

**Help People Live Better Lives**

Do you love helping people? Are you someone who really likes the feeling of making an important difference in the lives of others? Being a professional organizer will allow you to make a profound impact on the lives of your clients on a daily basis. People will often think of you as the person who literally “saves” them from a wide variety of problems. Many times clients call an organizer when they feel they are in organizational trouble. You will be the person that helps them to make things right again.

Getting a chance to share your knowledge with people who pay for it, thank you for it, and actually think it is vital to them, is a huge gift. Professional organizers agree that what they do makes an important difference to people, and they get frequent feedback that their clients appreciate their advice and knowledge.

**Work at What You Love**

One of the most amazing things about becoming a professional organizer is that you will have the opportunity to do what you love all day long, every day, and get paid for it. Most professional organizers agree that it is extremely fulfilling to get paid for something they love to do anyway — create order.

You have the freedom to design a business based on your strengths. Are you great at developing filing systems? Then you might focus on helping those with home or small businesses. Are you someone who likes to work with seniors? Then you might focus on helping seniors move into retirement housing. Are you someone who loves to cook and understands how to make a kitchen into a beautiful and well-functioning place? Then kitchen space design might be your specialty.

As a professional organizer, what you do best becomes the focal point of your business.
Be Your Own Boss

Have you always dreamed that one day you would work for yourself? Have you always wanted to have more control over your career — and actually be in charge of how things turn out? Being in control of your daily work decisions and the long-term outcome of your professional life is something you have to look forward to.

Be Seen as an Expert

As a professional organizer, you become an authority about your business. People will look to you for advice and hire you to solve their problems at home and in the workplace. As you build your business and help your clients find solutions to their organizing dilemmas, word will travel and your popularity and reputation will increase.

You will get a chance to interact with members of your community as you develop a professional network. Professional organizers find that networking and public speaking are some of the most important ways to make contacts and gather new clients. As you develop a flair for public speaking, you will find that you may become known in your own area, and certainly in your business community.

Some professional organizers are sought-after speakers, are regularly asked for interviews for magazine and newspaper articles, and appear on local radio and television shows.

Create Beauty and Order

As a professional organizer, you will get a chance to use and explore your sense of beauty. The most successful organizers talk about how they not only create functional spaces, but also beautiful ones for their clients to use and enjoy. If you have always been told you have a “good eye” or a “flair” for making things work efficiently, as well as look good, your talent will have a home in this career.

Meet New Challenges

Do you have a knack for systems? Are you someone who sees a problem and immediately find yourself brainstorming potential solutions? As a professional organizer, your ability to problem-solve and develop
systems will be sought after. Your ability to create order out of chaos will be in high demand.

1.3 In This Guide

By purchasing this guide, you have taken the first step in making your dream of becoming a professional organizer a reality. In the pages that follow, you will find out exactly what you need to do to turn your passion for order into a successful business. You will learn how to package and market the skills you already have, and how to acquire the skills that may be new to you.

Chapter 2 (The World of Organizing) starts by examining the roots of this industry, from home economics to industrialization to downsizing in the workplace, and their effects on organization as a concept. Then we take a closer look at where it has all led to: professional organizing as a career. You’ll read about the characteristics organizers share, the many hats they wear to serve their clients’ needs, and areas you can specialize in.

Chapter 3 (How to Organize) will teach you how to organize anything, using proven systems and strategies. It begins with an awareness of what it means to organize. You’ll be introduced to the five key principles organizers use to create order. Once you understand the systems, then we’ll apply them to the different environments you might choose to work in: personal, residential, and business. We’ll take you through each of these specializations step-by-step and room by room, with helpful checklists and forms you’ll be able to adapt for use with your own clients.

In Chapter 4 (Starting an Organizing Business) you will learn how to set up your organizing business. You’ll assess your skills and be given resources to tap into to help you become an industry expert. Then you’ll get detailed instruction on how you set up and run an organizing business, from planning to licenses to bookkeeping to setting your fees. You’ll be amazed at how inexpensive and simple it really is to get started.

In Chapter 5 (Marketing and Sales) you will learn more about the heart of any successful business: effective marketing and sales techniques. Our
experts have shared their insider tips on how they grew their start-ups into successful organizing businesses, through getting the word out cheaply and effectively with tip books, articles, public seminars, and more. With potential clients calling, the next thing you’ll learn is how to sell your services like a pro… and then how to close the deal.

Finally, Chapter 6 profiles some successful professional organizers to inform and inspire you, and gives you useful industry resources that will help you get started as a professional organizer right away.

Throughout the guide, look for important forms and checklists that will help you successfully organize, run, evaluate, and enhance your business. By moving through the information in the following chapters, you will find that you are soon ready to be a professional organizer!

You have reached the end of the free sample of the FabJob Guide to Become a Professional Organizer. To order and download the complete guide go to https://fabjob.com/program/become-professional-organizer/.