




Remembering Names

Find methods that work for you — By Beth Braccio Hering

What's inside

This PDF works like a webpage. If you roll your mouse over **orange type**, your cursor will change to  and you can click to move to a new destination.



Though most people are gracious when someone forgets their name, don't let forgiveness be an excuse to slack off on trying to remember. Your extra effort will pay off. As Dale Carnegie once said, "If you remember my name, you pay me a subtle compliment; you indicate that I have made an impression on you. Remember my name and you add to my feeling of importance."

Commitment is the first step; the next is to find memorization techniques that work for you. For clues, think about how you remember other important items, such as passwords or things to pick up at the market. Chances are, you employ some or all of these methods:

Repetition

Perhaps you need to repeat a name in your head 10 times before it finally sticks. You also can make a point of saying the person's name several times within your conversation so that it starts to roll off your tongue: "Nice to meet you, Jill Black. What business are you in, Jill?"

Visualization

Do you remember things you see better than things you hear? Try this idea from Marlene Caroselli, a corporate trainer in Pittsford, N.Y., and author of *Memory Tips for the Forgetful*: Imagine the person's name written in a huge magic marker right across his or her forehead.

Association

Making an association to something with which you are already familiar can help with retrieval. "If the person's name is Elizabeth, immediately conjure up an image of Queen Elizabeth," Caroselli suggests. Does the person share the same first name as your cousin? Imagine the two of them shaking hands.

Reminders

Finally, don't be afraid to take notes and study. On the back of someone's business card, jot memorable characteristics—such as "wears red glasses" or "has a dimple"—that might help you recognize the person at a later date. Need a refresher before a big event? Look at the LinkedIn profiles of people you may encounter, as most contain a photo.

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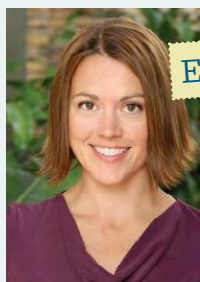
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Editor's Notebook

With spring in full swing and summer just around the corner, the seasons of change are upon us here, too. After 18 years, Diane Moore stepped down as sole editor of *The Office Professional*. Over the years, through her articles and advice, she has helped admins confidently embrace their changing roles. We thank her for her many years of service and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

It has been great working with Diane over the past few months. While I'm sad to see her go, I'm also delighted to be part of this new chapter. Experts in the field and talented writers from across the country contributed to this issue of *The Office Professional*. We're already researching and writing new and exciting articles for future issues. Our team will continue to provide you with engaging, entertaining and educational content.

Thanks to everyone who took the e-survey earlier this year. It helped our team gauge your interest in the types of articles we offer. Based on your feedback, we're including more writing and grammar tips and expanding features to provide more in-depth coverage. You'll also notice some new additions, such as the section on page 6 that highlights useful technology tips and tools.

The Office Professional wouldn't be possible without loyal subscribers like you. We appreciate your dedication and hope you will be a part of our community for years to come. Drop me a line and let me know what you think of this issue or what articles you'd like to see in upcoming issues. You're a vital part of this new chapter. I hope to hear from you soon!

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Respect in the Office

Temperature wars and other common office disagreements — By Elaine Stattler

Mary sat seething at her desk, knowing that at any moment, her co-worker Pat would stroll into the office and head straight for the thermostat. No matter what the season, Pat complained of being too warm. As a result, she either turned the heat down or the air conditioner up.

The problem was, while Pat was always too warm, Mary was always too cold. So within minutes, Mary would storm up to the thermostat and readjust it to raise the temperature.

This became known as “the temperature wars” in the office because the battle was waged on a daily basis, never to be resolved. Instead of talking to each other and reaching a compromise, Mary and Pat continued the standoff for as long as they worked together.

Is it really about the temperature?

Whenever people are working in fairly close quarters, it’s inevitable that squabbles will arise. It’s how they are handled that matters.

Respect in the workplace benefits everyone, and it’s really not that hard to accomplish. All it takes is a little consideration and communication in dealing with others. That is perhaps easier said than done, but why not make the effort and become a peacemaker and role model in the office? If others don’t demonstrate respect, perhaps you can lead the way.

The next time you see a situation like Mary and Pat’s, step in and help resolve the issue. Try these simple, yet powerful, actions:

Always treat your co-workers with courtesy and kindness.

If there is a conflict, see what you can do to help. Listen to all sides of the issue. Be careful not to insult people, diminish them or disparage their ideas. For example, in Mary and Pat’s situation, acknowledge that there

is a point of concern. Volunteer to help them find a solution.

Allow people in conflict to constructively express their opinions and ideas.

In the case of Mary and Pat, listen to what they have to say before expressing your viewpoint. Pinpoint the issues. Never speak over, interrupt or cut them off. Discover what is of most concern for Mary and Pat. Is it the temperature or is there a perceived lack of respect?

Nip disrespect in the bud.

If in your discussion, Pat says, “I don’t think Mary respects how uncomfortable I am when it’s too warm in the office,” acknowledge the sentiment, but try to get an acknowledgment from Mary that she can see Pat’s point. This shifts the intangible issue of “lack of respect” to something that can be addressed concretely—an issue of uncomfortable working conditions. Once both parties see the real issue at hand, you can move forward and find solutions.

Use people’s suggestions to change the situation and find solutions.

Perhaps, in discussing the issue with Mary and Pat, Mary suggests that a space heater for her cubicle might alleviate the temperature issue. You could approach upper management with this idea to see if one could be purchased. If your request is approved, let your co-workers know right away that you have acted to implement the idea.

These are just a few simple ways to set an example of respect in the workplace. These tips represent a foundation from which to demonstrate your leadership and to model cooperation and communication in the office. Once you establish an atmosphere that encourages respectful interactions, you will foster a considerate and professional workplace.

MOST CONTENTION IS CAUSED BY LACK OF CONSIDERATION

When we really consider the types of issues that cause tension in the office, most of them are seemingly petty and inconsequential. Yet, the tension can have far-reaching ramifications and even cause risk in terms of human resource compliance. HR expert Dawn Rosenberg McKay, writing for About.com, presents some of the most common causes of squabbles. Here is a sampling:

- Having loud conversations that disrupt work
- Not cleaning up after oneself in the staff kitchen
- Taking supplies from a co-worker
- Wearing too much perfume
- Chewing or cracking gum loudly
- Humming
- Taking the last of something without replacing it
- Talking behind someone’s back
- Blaming someone else when you are at fault
- Asking a subordinate to do something unrelated to work, such as running errands
- Telling offensive jokes
- Not pulling your own weight
- Having a condescending attitude toward others

“Being respectful is about demonstrating positive intent and acting in a way that promotes good working relationships,” reveals another expert source, Global Compliance, a provider of governance, risk management and compliance services. “Employees should understand what it means to create a culture of respect in their organization, how to recognize unacceptable behavior among colleagues, and how to report offensive and disrespectful behavior.”



Self-Assessment

Test Your Writing Skills

Mastering your pronouns — By Bobbi Dempsey

Pronouns are frequently used in writing for a variety of reasons, including showing ownership (his, hers, mine) or to ask questions (who, whom, whose). Pronouns can be tricky, but the easiest way to figure out which one should be used is to find the noun being replaced (known as the antecedent). This quiz tests your mastery of pronouns.

1. Barack Obama frequently asks questions to his Cabinet members because he values (its/their) advice.
2. *Rolling Stone* is my favorite magazine. (It/They) always entertain(s) me.
3. The police officer saved the kittens while grooming his moustache. (He/She) should get a medal.
4. I lost my box of doughnuts. (It was/They were) right here on the table.
5. My family went to the Super Bowl to watch the Dallas Cowboys. (It is/They are) our favorite team.
6. I love macaroni and cheese. I could eat (it/them) every day.
7. I need a woman who is skilled in carpentry, photography and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Where can I find (them/her)?
8. I can't get enough of *The Simpsons*. I watch (it/them) every Sunday.
9. I watched the Grammys last night. (It/They) get(s) better every year.
10. I want to show you my collection of Spider-Man action figures. It took me forever to complete (it/them).
11. I bought a new Maroon 5 song. Let's start up iTunes and listen to (it/them).
12. I helped Peter and Lois paint the shelves and closets. (They/We) all worked really hard.
13. We need to be more focused on the customer. It is (his/their) needs that drive our business.
14. I have to wear that ugly sweater on Christmas and Easter. It doesn't stop me from celebrating (it/them).
15. We have to paint five houses, three churches and a barn. Painting all of (it/them) will take forever.

Answers: 1. their 2. It 3. He 4. It was 5. It is 6. it 7. her 8. it 9. It 10. it 11. it 12. We 13. his 14. them 15. them

GRAMMAR NITTY-GRITTY

Using “a” or “an”

When choosing whether to use “a” or “an” as an article, you probably automatically look at whether it will be followed by a consonant or vowel. But really you should go by whether it will be followed by a consonant or vowel *sound*.

Typical consonant

A porcupine is a prickly animal.

I was enjoying **a** glass of lemonade on the back porch.

Typical vowel

An octopus has eight legs.

The kids were preparing to go on **an** Easter egg hunt.

Consonant with a vowel sound

It's **an** honor just to be nominated.

The student made **an** honest mistake.

Vowel with a consonant sound

He recently accepted a new job with a company that has **a** unionized workforce.

My grandfather used to play **a** ukulele in a band.

— By Bobbi Dempsey

Networking 101 for Introverts

A no-excuses guide to making connections — By Beth Braccio Hering



Have you ever sat alone drinking punch at a conference while a colleague seemed to effortlessly work the room? While some people may be inherently more social, don't sell yourself short by believing that an introverted nature automatically makes you a lousy networker.

"Many people think extroverts rule the networking world. This isn't necessarily true," says **Patti DeNucci**, author of *The Intentional Networker: Attracting Powerful Relationships, Referrals & Results in Business*. "Introverts can be great networkers because they are often good listeners and choose their words carefully."

Ready to up your game? Try these tips:

Consider your timing

If entering a room that's already buzzing leaves you weak-kneed, go early and converse with people as they arrive. If you must enter a crowd, approach someone standing off by himself. "Smile and introduce yourself," DeNucci says. "Once you've exchanged names, ask a friendly, open-ended question, such as 'What brings you to this event today?' Then, let the conversation flow."

Display confidence

Networking is hard enough without donning a

frumpy suit. DeNucci recommends investing in up-to-date and industry-appropriate hair, makeup, attire, shoes and accessories. "This will boost your confidence in ways you can't even imagine. Sure, we believe people should judge us based on what's inside, but the fact remains that our appearance precedes our personalities and speaks volumes about us."

Practice

"Know how to respond to the question 'So, what do you do?'" DeNucci says. "Think about how you will answer this question, but don't go so far as to concoct and memorize a long-winded 'elevator speech.'"

Other good things to practice include your handshake and looking others in the eye. Learn to say your name slowly and clearly so it's easier for others to remember, and work on appropriate volume and pace of speech.

Follow up

Finally, don't just file away an interesting person's business card. Email is a godsend for introverts. Compose a thoughtful message about how much you enjoyed your conversation and add pertinent tidbits about yourself, your industry or an upcoming event. The receiver—perhaps also an introvert—will be glad you made the first move!

PRODUCTIVITY TIP OF THE MONTH

Block sites that distract you

For an office worker, the Internet is both a blessing and a curse. It helps you research data and find important information quickly. But it also is the source of many tempting distractions that make it tough to concentrate on work.

If you've ever had a moment when you realize that you've spent an hour online and haven't accomplished anything besides checking and updating your social media profiles, you know all about online productivity pitfalls.

If willpower (and the possibility of losing your job) isn't enough to help you resist these distractions, you may need to take measures to make it more difficult for you to access time-wasting sites. Most browsers have a plug-in that allows you to block certain websites.

Programs such as **Freedom** allow you to block sites temporarily (or as long as needed) so you can focus on work. — *By Bobbi Dempsey*



‘Remember Everything’

Learn about an application that keeps you organized — By Julie Perrine

What do you do with all your good ideas? If you see something of interest on a website or sketch an idea during a meeting, what do you do with it? How do you save it? Where do you file it? Will you be able to find it again?

Evernote is an application that captures ideas you want to save and allows you to access them from anywhere at any time. The Evernote website sums it up best: *Remember everything.*

You can save almost anything in this application, and it works with nearly every computer and mobile device. Plus, it is free up to 100,000 notes and 250 synchronized notebooks.

Here are a few terms you'll need to know as you get started:

- Note: A single item stored in Evernote.
- Notebook: A container or folder for organizing your notes.
- Sync: The process by which your notes and notebooks are kept up to date across all of your computers, phones, devices and the Web.

To get started, visit evernote.com and install the software on your computer, phone and other devices you regularly use. It works on both Windows and Mac platforms, and is available for iPad and iPhone, Android and BlackBerry phones.

To create your first note, click “new note,” enter a title and start typing. You can also create a note by snapping a picture, recording an audio, firing up your webcam, uploading a file from your computer, or choosing an “ink note” where you write using your mouse (on your PC) or your finger (on a touch screen). When you’re finished, you can select



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the notebook to file it in, add tags for easier searching later or just save it to the default notebook until you decide where it should go. You can access your notes from anywhere by logging in to your account through Evernote’s website.

Here are just a few additional features:

- The Web Clipper tool saves content from the Internet to your Evernote account quickly and easily. As you browse websites, you can right click or highlight text on a page and click a button on your browser’s toolbar to save a note.
- Collaborate on projects by easily sharing notebooks with multiple users. You set the privileges, allowing users to view or edit specific notebooks.
- Every Evernote account comes with a personalized email address. Email notes directly to your account and designate the title of the note, the target notebook and the tags in the email subject line.
- Social media compatibility is built in so you can post items to Facebook or Twitter from Evernote. You can also send notes by email.

As you capture articles, ideas, links, resources, photos and whatever else you come across in Evernote, you can search for it again later by keywords or tags. Even handwritten text inside images is searchable. You never have to worry about not being able to find something. Your file pile is significantly reduced. You don’t have to rack your brain trying to remember that bright idea you had. You’ll be able to instantly recall with a simple search that will make everyone wonder how in the world you “remember everything.”

To learn more technology and productivity tools, attend Julie’s audio conference **Web-Based Tools for Innovative Admins** on May 9. She will cover the countless applications available for file sharing, collaboration, photo and video sharing, calendar management, teleconferencing, Web and video conferencing, audio creation and editing, meeting coordination, and much more.

About the Author—Julie Perrine is CAP-OM and MBTI certified and the founder and CEO of **All Things Admin**. She applies her administrative expertise and passion for lifelong learning to serving as enthusiastic mentor, speaker and author who educates admins around the world on how to be more effective every day.

UPCOMING TRAINING SESSIONS

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WEB-BASED TOOLS FOR INNOVATIVE ADMINS



60-MINUTE WEBINAR

May 9, 2012

Noon ET

theofficeprofessional.com/tools

Innovative admins know they must stay current on the latest technology and productivity tools if they want to be successful in the 21st century office. Join **Julie Perrine**, founder of All Things Admin, in this 60-minute audio conference to learn about all of the free Web-based applications available to help you work more efficiently and stay connected more effectively.



ADVANCED MINUTE TAKING



60-MINUTE WEBINAR

May 22, 2012

Noon ET

theofficeprofessional.com/advanced-minute-taking

Join **Rhonda Scharf** in this hourlong live webinar to learn advanced minute-taking skills that can make you an even better communicator. If you have attended any of our minute-taking webinars or workshops, this is a perfect way to review and perfect your minutes. She will give lessons in live minute taking, teach a shortcut that eliminates the “rough copy” step altogether, and introduce timesaving techniques so you can go to final copy faster than ever before.



INTRODUCTION TO MINUTE TAKING



90-MINUTE WEBINAR

June 14, 2012

11:30 a.m. ET

theofficeprofessional.com/minute

Take away the pressure, confusion and fear that taking minutes creates. Minute taking is a skill high in demand yet high in anxiety as well. Many people never learn how to take good minutes and simply copy what was done before—even if it was done badly. Don't allow a bad example to sabotage your career. Join **Rhonda Scharf** for this 90-minute webinar that will teach skills that you can use immediately to take accurate minutes.

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Flexibility and Productivity Often a Balancing Act

A discussion with Barbara Tomitz, Office Manager at Thaler Gertler, LLP

Today's office workplace requires administrative professionals to juggle many roles and master new skills. Office professionals who deal with multiple outside vendors are faced with additional responsibilities. Barbara Tomitz is a 10-year veteran as lead administrator for Thaler Gertler, a busy corporate and bankruptcy firm with six attorneys and six support staff members. Barbara is responsible for managing the firm's operations including HR, benefits, marketing, financials, business development, strategic planning, training and many other tasks.

TOP: Can you describe why you now have more responsibility when using vendors than in the past?

Tomitz: I used to just call our representative to process the payroll or handle any issues. Now, new technology allows me to do it online, but that required me to learn how to navigate their software and web-site. The same applies with banking services. I needed to learn how to navigate each bank's website and terminology. Working with multiple vendors for various services requires me to take time to familiarize myself with their technology and software.

TOP: What are the biggest challenges for office professionals today?

Tomitz: Maintaining a balance between being a flexible employer and maintaining productivity. Almost on a daily basis, I need to consider the personal circumstances of our employees, treat everyone consistently, while at the same time ensuring business needs are met. Also, blocking off “uninterrupted time” for yourself to accomplish your goals for the day can be tough. Another challenge is remembering all my logins and passwords for various services the firm utilizes!

TOP: Any tools or resources you consider a lifesaver on the job?

Tomitz: Good software tools to help you get your job done and a strong IT person to resolve office technology issues quickly.

TOP: What advice would you have for office workers who are reluctant to learn new technology?

Tomitz: We have no choice but to learn new technology. Social media will continue to play a greater role in our business development initiatives. I will be looking to those employees who are more familiar with it and enjoy it to help us utilize it for the benefit of the firm.

TOP: Any other advice or insight you think would be helpful for office pros?

Tomitz: Keep a sense of humor and try to keep a light heart about things. Take pleasure in your work, and engage and enjoy the talents of the people you work with. — By Bobbi Dempsey

Say the Magic Words

The phrase that can transform your career — By Stephanie Taylor Christensen

Being an administrative professional sometimes feels like a thankless job because you're often required to be the background to someone else's foreground. But it also offers one key advantage that other professions don't: access to the "movers and shakers" in an organization and complete control over your experiences with them. How you use that exposure is in your hands, but when done correctly, it can fuel your career potential. Amazingly, it starts by regularly using one simple phrase: "How can I help you?" Here's the science behind these magic words and how to use them to get ahead in your career.

Proactive equals partner

Whether you work with a dream team or a nightmare boss, the key to finding professional success is recognizing that you can't control the moods of others or the day's many events. However, you can control your outward reactions to people and tasks, no matter how frustrated, stressed or overwhelmed you feel inside. When times are challenging, "How can I help you?" diffuses negative situations. During smooth-sailing times, it offers an opportunity to learn new skills and information. In either scenario, the phrase empowers you and allows you to gain control over an interaction and its outcome. Offering empathy and help also improves your perceived value. Instead of viewing you as a person who handles tasks and takes direction, co-workers and superiors will see you as you are: a problem-solving partner.

Boost your competitive advantage

If you possess fewer technological skills, education, work history or training than others in your field, you can leverage other personality traits and skills that are positively associated with career growth, such



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as empathy and good listening. A 2011 **study** published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* also found that demonstrating self-control, along with a positive attitude, is a key motivator in establishing trust. "How can I help you?" simply demonstrates and embodies in one simple phrase all of these important career-building aspects. Few people take the time to sincerely offer their help in the workplace, and it's one of the most powerful, free and virtually effortless changes you can make to your approach.

You'll be more creative

Why should you offer help when your plate has already runneth over? In short, you will help yourself. A 2011 **study** in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* suggests that people who solve a problem on another person's behalf are more likely to succeed. When you imagine that the solution you'll provide benefits a person, purpose or cause outside of your own needs, the mind actually processes differently, putting forth more effort to reach less obvious, more creative solutions.

You'll lead by example

Administrative professionals are in a unique role, interacting with more levels

of staff and clients than anyone else. Your role often positions you as the "proverbial" glue that holds the rest of the team and department together; your approach and style set the tone for the company at large. When you offer help to others, you set a precedent for teamwork and creative problem-solving throughout the department. Personally, you'll also build valuable skills that you can apply to your current job and future accomplishments. You may even uncover opportunities to get involved in other areas of the company that you didn't know you had interest in, which will further build your professional acumen.

You'll expand networks

Asking the simple question "How can I help you?" can invite you into new social circles, too. You will build not only your knowledge of other areas in the company but also relationships. In turn, you'll expand your reputation and professional networks and find a deeper sense of belonging in the workplace. All these components will prove invaluable to maintaining career momentum, especially when asking for a raise or promotion, professional references or uncovering new job opportunities.

Email Productivity

FOUR WAYS TO CREATE EFFICIENT EMAILS



Forget fancy fonts, colored text and emoticons. (They'll make your colleagues wonder how much time you spend on "real" work.) The best way to get your message across in email is through succinct, easy-to-follow communication. Try these four tips to increase effectiveness:

1. Pack punch in the subject line

Blank subject lines or generic ones such as "hello" force the recipient to guess why you are writing. They also put your message in danger of being overlooked or labeled as low priority.

Instead, establish your purpose immediately. "Be very specific," says Mitzi Weinman, founder of TimeFinder, a professional training company that specializes in improving productivity, effectiveness and focus. "Write clear, concise, subject lines that include deadlines, meeting dates and the like. They stand out amongst other emails and are easier to locate in an overloaded inbox."

2. Create reader-friendly text

"In the body, get right to the point," says Marlene Caroselli, a corporate trainer in Pittsford, N.Y., and author of books such as *The Quality Secretary*. "Starting with the words 'It is the purpose of this email to advise you that ...' is a waste of 11 words and the reader's time."

Caroselli recommends keeping sentences short, noting that "if they contain

more than 15 words, the reader will have to go back and read them a second time to ensure comprehension."

Visual cues help the reader process and remember information. Divide text into headlined topics or use bullets to highlight key points.

3. Summarize

"Reply all," "copy" and "forward" are wonderful features—when used sparingly. "We're always doubling and tripling the number of emails we send to people without really thinking how they are piling up in their inboxes," says Laura Stack, president of the time-management consulting firm The Productivity Pro, based in Denver.

When you bring someone new into an electronic conversation, Stack suggests sending a summary of what has already been discussed and asking for what you specifically need from that person. This gets the newcomer up to speed quickly without having to sift through all previous correspondence.

4. Provide a clear closing

Clearly and politely state whether your message requires a reply (either to you or to the group) or not. And be sure to include your full name and title in the closing. There's nothing efficient about sending someone on a hunt to discover information you could have easily provided! — By Beth Braccio Hering

MY OFFICE PROBLEM

We received an email from Tracy, who has this office problem:

"In addition to all my other responsibilities, it is my job to keep the kitchen looking presentable; however, people seem to think this job function equals a maid service. While I am happy to empty the dishwasher, clean the coffee pots, etc., it becomes rather frustrating when people leave spilled juice to sit and congeal on a countertop all day, or let trash pile up on top of the trash can lid (seriously, just lift the lid, *then* throw the trash away). Similarly, plates of shared food are left sitting on the countertop all day beckoning flies, cups and dishes are left to "soak" in the sink and never put away, and food is left to rot in the shared refrigerators. Recently, someone left the freezer door open all weekend resulting in all the frozen food going to waste.

Confronting people about this issue is difficult, since cleaning the kitchen is in my job description, but it just seems unfair—would people normally go out of their way to make someone else's job more difficult? I'd like to think of staff here as our clients, whom we try to make happy, but a little courtesy from some people would be much appreciated! I've posted signs in the kitchen asking for people to please be considerate and lend a hand, but it doesn't seem to matter.

How can I confront the offenders without sounding like I'm complaining?"

— Tracy, Phoenix



**WHAT DO YOU THINK
TRACY SHOULD DO?**

Submit a comment

online or email editor@theofficeprofessional.com with your advice by May 31. (All material submitted becomes the property of *The Office Professional*.)