

Cleaning up Messes

By Dan Richards

December 8, 2009

Advisor Perspectives welcomes guest contributions. The views presented here do not necessarily represent those of Advisor Perspectives

A [list of Dan Richards' previous articles](#) appears at the end of this article.

All of us have unresolved issues we know we should address, but we put off dealing with them.

At a time when we need every last ounce of energy, those issues can really drag us down.

Whether it's a phone call to a difficult client, a meeting with a retiree whose portfolio has been hit hard, a tough conversation with an underperforming staff member or getting through a mountain of filing, most of us have at least one issue on which we have been procrastinating for weeks, months, maybe even years.



Unresolved issues sap your energy and undermine our ability to give your full attention to the rest of your job. I recall talking to the CEO of a client organization who started his career as a commodities broker. Every morning when he came in, on his desk was a list of clients he had to contact with margin calls. His experience was that if he didn't make those calls immediately, they would hang over his head and drag him down for the rest of the day..

It's human nature to defer unpleasant tasks. The truth of the matter, though, is that difficult tasks and decisions never get easier with the passage of time. The bad news is that procrastination breeds procrastination – the longer we put off something, the tougher it is to deal with it.

The good news is that getting that tough issue off our plate can be an incredibly liberating feeling.

So here's a thought for you to consider. Take the single task that you dread the most and have been putting off as a result – but know you should deal with. Then open your calendar and carve out two or three hours in the next couple of days to begin addressing that issue. Depending on the task, it may take less time than that or it may take more time – if it takes more time at least you can get started.



By cleaning up the messes in your business, you will clear your mind to focus on the important things in your business – and be more productive, motivated and effective as a result.

** Dan Richards conducts programs to help advisors gain and retain clients and is an award winning faculty member in the MBA program at the University of Toronto. To see more of his written and video commentaries and to reach him, go to www.strategicimperatives.ca.*

www.advisorperspectives.com

For a free subscription to the Advisor Perspectives newsletter, visit:
<http://www.advisorperspectives.com/subscribers/subscribe.php>

Other Articles by Dan Richards

Client Communication

[A Five-part Conversation to Rebuild Market Confidence](#)
[A Mid-Year Letter to Your Clients](#)
[Building Personal Connections with Clients](#)
[Five Steps to High Impact Client Meetings](#)
[How to Consolidate Client Assets](#)
[In Search of Unconventional Thinking](#)
[Lessons from the Loss of a Multi Million Dollar Account](#)
[Tackling Today's Number One Client Challenge](#)
[Thirty Seconds to Better Client Conversations](#)
[Three Powerful Words in Client Conversations](#)
[What to Say When You've Said It All](#)
[Behavioral Finance Traps En Route to Investment Success](#)
[An Alternative Way to Conduct Client Reviews](#)
[The Case for Optimism](#)
[Listening for the ECHO in Client Calls](#)
[Practical Advice for Students Entering University](#)
[Communicating in a Sound Bite World](#)
[The Power of Proactive Client Calls](#)
[Five Steps to an Effective Portfolio Review](#)
[Tapping into Today's Number One Client Concern](#)

Prospecting

[A Prospecting Tip from Barack Obama](#)
[Becoming the Fall Back Advisor for High End Prospects](#)
[Getting Prospecting into First Gear](#)
[Overcoming a Key Barrier to Moving Accounts](#)
[Talking to Prospects about Last Year's Performance](#)
[The End of Prospecting](#)
[Three Easy Steps to Effective Networking](#)
[Three Steps to a Referral Conversation that Works Today](#)
[Turning Corporate Downsizing into Prospecting Success](#)
[A Wakeup Call for Advisors: Turmoil at the Top of the Market](#)
[Tapping into Your Prospect's Hot Buttons](#)
[Turning Intention into Action](#)
[Using Case Studies to Make Your Case](#)

Practice Management

[Developing an Optimistic Outlook](#)
[Lessons from Winning Athletes](#)
[Client Gifts that Stand Out](#)
[Structuring Your Day for Maximum Productivity](#)
[The Pendulum Never Stops...](#)
[The True Cost of Volatility](#)
[Three Myths of Market Underperformance](#)
[Twelve Pieces of Good News in the Gloom](#)
[Tips for Motivation in 2009](#)
[Client Gifts that Stand Out](#)
[Avoiding the Black Hole of Business Planning](#)