

she's completely *organized*



BY CAROLINE TISDELL | PHOTO BY CINDY BELL

January not only marks the start of the New Year, but also it's National Get Organized Month. What better time is there to develop new organizational habits?

Persuaded by a friend, Lisa DeVeau, of Syracuse, started her own business, Completely Organized, Inc., almost 12 years ago. The company provides a variety of services to businesses and individuals, striving to achieve a team approach to organization.

DeVeau enjoys speaking to others about how to get organized and she also focuses on the business-organizing aspect of her company. "I try and speak as much as I can," DeVeau said. "I get to educate people and if they like what I say, but can't do it themselves, they ask me to come help with it hands on."

DeVeau's first product was a phone minder, which was designed to help users remember whom they talked to and when, and more importantly what was promised. "Many people write notes from phone calls on scrap pieces of paper and sticky notes," DeVeau said. "Then they leave the notes out so they don't forget to do what they promised and that can clutter your desk." DeVeau hopes to bring more products to market, and plans to work with friends and business acquaintances to accomplish this goal.

One way that DeVeau teaches organization is by her six-step method called ESCAPE. A person can organize any space based on this method. ESCAPE is an acronym for Evaluate, Sort, Containerize/Categorize, Apply Labels, Plan Maintenance, and Evolve/Educate. "Everything is going to change in the world so be ready to go right back up to evaluate and realize that something is changing and re-evaluate what is going on."

Often people fail to get organized because they are unsure of where to start or how to go about the process. ESCAPE is easy to follow; however, it does not take away the decision-making part, which is the hardest part. People tend to contemplate, "Do I keep this? Do I not? I want to keep everything." This is the mental piece behind it, she said.

In 2003, DeVeau got involved with the WBOC (Women's Business Opportunities Connections). She has served three terms on the board as vice president, membership chair and is currently on the board of directors. "I am probably one of the longest standing board members. What kept me there all these years is the organization. Being an entrepreneur, solo entrepreneurship is great to have a bunch of people to bounce ideas off of and talk to." DeVeau is enthusiastic when collaborating with other women. Joanne DelBalso and DeVeau do a lot of collaboration with business workshops for small business owners. "We came up with ACCORG. It stands for Accounting and Organization. We do a full-day seminar and we teach people who own their own businesses how to do QuickBooks and keep all of their things organized at the same time."

According to DeVeau, the most gratifying thing about being a part of the WBOC is the community involvement. "I like to support women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in general. I feel like I have been blessed and I should give back. I am always trying to give back to the community." In January, DeVeau will present a few free organizational seminars. It's free information for people and DeVeau will talk about "letting go" because it is the hardest thing to do. "Overcoming Procrastination," will run from 6 to 7 p.m. Jan. 18, at the Northern Onondaga Free Library, 100 Trolley Barn Lane in North Syracuse.

The WBOC is a local non-profit organization that has been providing support to women and access to innovative events and workshops for 20 years. Whether running our own business, working for an employer or launching a new endeavor, women are connected through their entrepreneurial mindset. For information on how to become a member, visit www.wboconnection.org.