

## SUPERCOMPETENT KEY 4: ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is the ability to organize the inputs and outputs in your life.

Being productive nowadays requires many different competencies, one of which is being organized. If you excel in this competency, you have systems, rather than piles of paper and piles of files. You can find what you want, when you want it, in thirty seconds or less.

Organization is your ability to sort, filter, and process all types of information effectively. Being organized means controlling the paper, email, reading material, and inputs into and out of your office and life. It's how tidy your office and home look, inside and out. It's how in control you look and feel, inside and out.

Being organized will give you more control over your life and time, so you need to find the time and the self-control to achieve organization through proper systems. Everything in your work life must be easily *accessible*.

If Accessibility is a Key you have issues with, keep these suggestions in mind as you move forward:

1. **Invest a little time in developing simple systems, so you know where everything is at all times.** Despite the popular saying, a clean desk is *not* a sign of an empty mind. It's a sign of a productive one. Experiment with various ways to become more productive; it's worth the time you'll spend on it.
2. **Set up a logical, easy-to-follow scheduling system, and stick to it.** Highly productive people always know where they're supposed to be at any particular time, so learn to effectively manage the three distinct scheduling components: 1) Appointments and meetings, 2) Things to do; and 3) Reminders.
3. **Don't let yourself get distracted by the technology you use to stay organized.** You're the boss, not your PDA or smartphone. If you'll take a little time to handle, organize, and track your files, emails, and other communications as they come in, you're unlikely to be overwhelmed later on.
4. **Keep careful track of your contacts and communications.** We communicate with more people than ever these days, by means of more media than ever before. Fortunately, there are many effective ways to track contact information, histories, and pending communications – if you're willing to put in the necessary time.



5. **Don't waste travel time.** A second saved is a second earned; so instead of taking things easy while you're traveling, use the time to get ahead so you'll have more free time later. You can also save plenty of annoyance and time simply by preparing for your trips in advance.

When you tame your Accessibility monster, you're saving time – a precious commodity that you can't get any more of. If nothing else, accessibility makes it easier to get the little things done without having to relinquish your all-important focus on the task at hand.

Don't think that accessibility is limited to systems and files; it's just as important in how you deal with potential time-stealers like travel. Most workers don't worry much about travel preparation – and they should. When you're well-prepared and everything is in its place, you're less likely to forget things if you have to spring into action at a moment's notice.

And rather than just sit back and relax, work a bit while you're in the air or riding the train. Even a few minutes here and there can let you spend more time enjoying your life and your family when you're back home.

© 2010 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker whose mission is to build high-performance productivity cultures in organizations by creating Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations and the 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of four books: *SUPERCOMPETENT*; *The Exhaustion Cure*; *Find More Time*; and *Leave the Office Earlier*. Laura has been a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot. She is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the *New York Times*. Her clients include Starbucks, Cisco Systems, Wal-Mart, and Bank of America. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401 or visit [www.TheProductivityPro.com](http://www.TheProductivityPro.com) to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.