

JANE VELDHOVEN

GET ORGANIZED! PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Nova Scotia

Clean Sweep, Mission Organization, Neat Simple Living—no matter where you look, there are magazines, books and television programs dedicated to getting our lives in some sort of order. People have too much stuff, too little space and too little time. This is where a professional organizer like Jane Veldhoven comes in. But do the same organizational techniques apply when she is running a business from her own home, or does chaos rule supreme? Let's see.

"I was always talking about having my own business, at what I didn't know, but turning 40 spurs you on to take chances," says Jane. After reading a magazine story on professional organizers and with an "if I am going to do it, I better do it now" attitude, Jane started her company, Get Organized! Professional Services (<http://www.get-organized.ca>), on a part-time basis to test the marketplace, the way many others venture into the entrepreneurial life. Then the business took off and Jane was working full-time shortly thereafter.

Being super organized herself, Jane tackled the organizational side of things first—things like business plan writing, company registration, studying, joining professional associations and determining which services she wanted to offer. The companies Jane has worked for in the past provided her with an opportunity to work from home so that aspect wasn't new to her.

On the contrary, the real challenge was sharing office space with her husband who also works from home. "With two people trying to operate two separate companies out of one home, you can sometimes find it difficult to concentrate." Particularly when your husband is

a recording artist. So what they did was separate – office space that is.

With two home-run businesses, they also had to determine how they would work out tax deductions. Some typical tax write-offs include percentages of mortgages, heat, power, telephone bill, Internet, etc. Jane and her husband had to work it out with an accountant, devising a percentage measure. For instance, Jane uses the sole vehicle more than her husband so she claims a higher percentage.

Working from home with no wee ones underfoot can have its downside. "I sometimes find it hard to stop working because the phone is always there, the computer is always on and without children to interrupt I can work as long as I want," says Jane. This can be bad since she tends to work longer hours. So Jane has organized her week: she does most of her work from Monday and Friday and the weekend is completely her own. "If this means I have to work at night to have the weekends free, then so be it."

Before Jane launched her business, others in the service industry told her that she would only be able to bill for 150 days a year and she didn't believe them. Part of the reason for this is accounting for holidays, vacation, weekends, travel to and from client sites and downtime. "Once I heard this, and didn't believe it, I had a goal of 200 days," says Jane. Turns out that her average billable time has turned out to be around 180 days. "This was one of the hardest lessons for me."

Jane found taking a self-employment course invaluable when writing her business plan because she knew it would force her to do it—otherwise there was always something else she could do.

"Taking courses is a great way to increase your learning, refresh skills as well as make new contacts, especially if you work from home." ■

• Jane Veldhoven



Get Organized! Professional Services

Location: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Industry: Professional Organizing

Years in Business: 2

Tel: (902) [REDACTED]

janev@get-organized.ca

Website: www.get-organized.ca

Jane's likes and dislikes:

- I think the #1 thing is the convenience factor—whenever I get the urge to work everything I need is right here.
- You never get to 'leave it at the office'. If you want to get away from work you literally have to pack your bags and get out of town!

To be continued on page 48