



## **Feeling Lost in The Paper Shuffle? Try the F.A.T. System!**

By Sara Caputo, MA

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The Wall Street Journal reports that executives spend an average of 6 weeks per year searching for misplaced information. The cost in salary and productivity levels is enormous when you stop and think about what you could accomplish in those 6 weeks.

If it is taking you more than 15 seconds to locate files and papers in your workspace, then it might be time for a system overhaul. Handling papers and emails effectively comes down to making minute-to-minute decisions. Consider using the F.A.T. system to help you weed through it all. **File, Act, Toss.** Technically, everything that comes across your desk or your computer can be filed on, acted on, or tossed.

**FILE:** If it is either electronic or paper, and is just something that needs to be tucked away in a file for future reference, then do it immediately and move it off your plate. The longer that papers and emails linger around, the more confusion they cause, because sooner or later you'll have to deal with them. Remember that 80% of everything that is filed is never looked at again.

**ACT:** The golden rule is if something can be done inside of 2 minutes, do it now. If not, move it to your calendar or to-do list to be done at a later appointed time. Either way, you have acted on it and it now has a place to "live", other than in the back of your mind.

**TOSS:** It is safe to say that a large percentage of the papers and emails that come across your desk and computer can be tossed. This is especially true if you have acted on them already and retrieved the necessary information that you needed.

So, the next time that you find yourself stuck on what to do with that piece of paper or email that just came across your desk, remember F.A.T. Either file it, act on it or toss it. By incorporating this into your daily system of processing information, you may find that decision making becomes easier and everything moves quicker through your hands.

### About the Author:

Sara Caputo, M.A., is a dynamic productivity coach, consultant, and trainer based in Santa Barbara, California. She has diverse experience in group process facilitation, project management, and healthcare, and understands the challenges that disorganization provokes in clients' professional and personal lives. Sara's approach is facilitative and intuitive. She is the founder of [Radiant Organizing](http://www.radiantorganizing.com) and is passionate in her dedication to teaching clients, in workplaces and in homes, how to create more space in their lives for the things they value. Sara brings that enthusiasm to her popular and successful Conference Workshops and Breakout Sessions. Sara has helped numerous businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individuals garner measurable increases in productivity and creativity - and gain time to participate more fully in all levels of life.