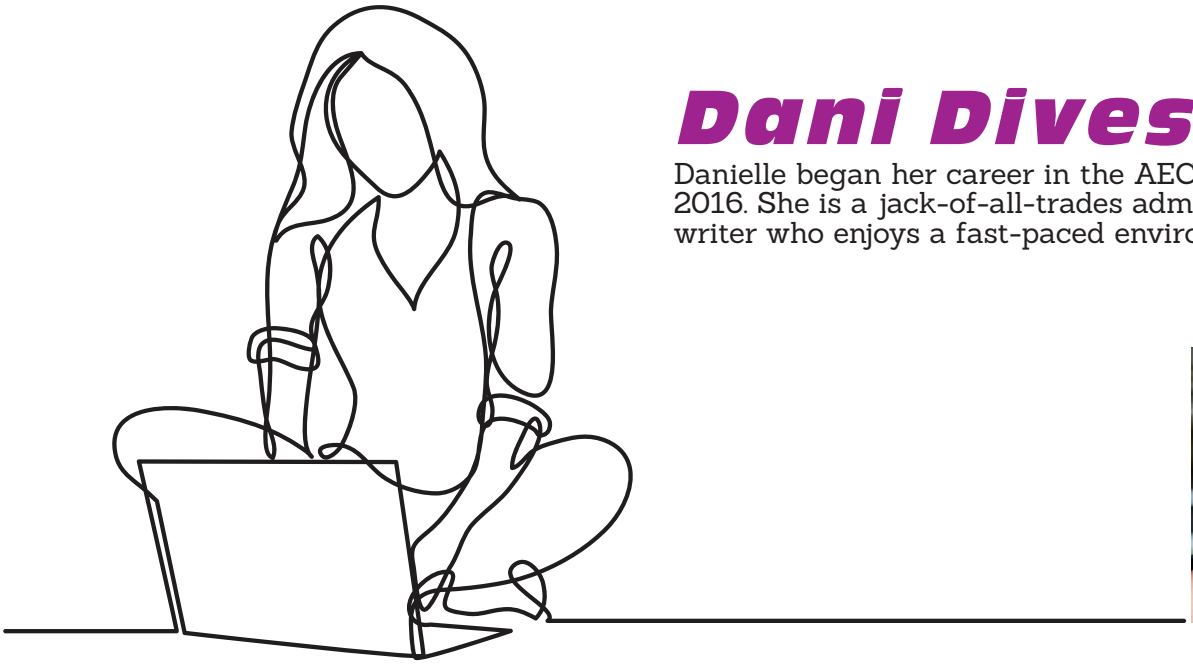


Dani Dives In

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Organization Takes Time

We've all seen techy reinventions of the classic organizational tools working people have used for decades. Handwritten day planners are now color coded with notifications. Your Rolodex is now a searchable contact list, or possibly an entire database – Cosential anyone?! Even posting your scheduled social media content has evolved to be hands-off & automated. These techy tools are a merciful relief to the always-busy Administrator; so, we'll pick up & learn anything that could make our tasks easier & faster to complete.

Now let's be real – we all love & appreciate how these organizational tools intend to improve our workflow, BUT…we've all seen certain, sometimes high dollar, apps & programs collect digital dust, sitting on your desktop waiting to be used once the initial glamour wears off. Maybe you synched all of your contacts & tried that new team chat widget a few times, but by the end of the week your team is back to their old ways. I get it. The old ways are familiar, convenient, and have been working up until this point, anyways!

This process of losing interest in an exciting new computer program is something most management teams see over & over again. A 2013 study on project success with organizational tools concluded, "there is more work to be done in order to achieve an integrated, systems approach to Project Management that extends across the entire suite of practices used." (Jugdev, Perkins, Fortune, White, Walker. Pg. 542). I don't see this issue as laziness or an unwillingness to adapt, but more of an integration plan issue. Organization takes time, and you can have all of the tools on the market but they won't work for you unless you set aside time to use them. Instead of expecting your team to jump in blindly, try to create a tangible plan about how you will get your money's worth out of this new tool. It looked great, that's why your company bought it! Now it's your job to put it to work.

A great implementation plan should include:

What & Why: Explain the purpose of that tool within your organization & team. Include new team goals that your tool is intended to achieve. Your team will function better when they know what end result you expect out of using a new tool.

Who & How: List tasks you expect each individual user to perform when using your new tool. Make sure each employee's tasks are listed out for accountability and clarity. You can even start by listing tasks from your old workflow that are now to be substituted by using this new tool. That's a fool proof way to show intent & expectations, like "don't do this anymore, do that instead."

When: Set aside TIME to learn & use your new tool – this is a big one – schedule specific time, whether it's weekly or daily, for each of your staff to login and complete their tasks. Include deadlines or frequency of tasks. Building this kind of "systems approach" is what will bring you success.

If you have a clear plan in place and more importantly, time specifically dedicated to use the program, then you will see much more success when implementing & integrating new organizational tools. Despite obvious growing pains, it just makes sense to create a new system based around the new goals you've outlined for this tool. You have to disrupt what you're used to, throw that old work flow in the trash, and start from scratch to create a new workflow designed around using this new tool/program instead of expecting it to fit into your old way of doing things.