



Choosing the Right Planner updated for 2011

This post has been the most popular at My Attention Coach. I am happy to provide you with an updated edition to help you prepare for 2011. Get ready for 2011 by using this checklist to choose the right planner for YOU!

Choosing the right planner for you and your lifestyle is very important, especially if you are busy, overwhelmed by your To Do List and/or have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or ADD). This is true no matter what profession you hold and no matter what your age. By third grade, even elementary school students need some type of planner or way to keep track of assignments.

ADHD creates significant for people when it comes to using a planner and therefore managing their time. Your list might be too overwhelming, you might forget to look at your planner or perhaps there are other reasons. I am frequently asked to recommend the best planner for someone with ADHD. The bad news is that there is not one best planner. The good news is that I can still help you select the best planner, especially if you have ADHD.

Prioritize

If you have determined that you need a better system of planning (or just need to start one!), I first recommend that you prioritize what planner characteristics are important to you. The checklist at the end of this article will help you focus on your priorities and provide you with a template of what needs to exist with your next planner.

To use the checklist, place a check mark next to each characteristic you would like to have in a planner and indicate an A, B or C priority next to each characteristic you check.

A = planner must have this

B = would be nice for planner to have this

C = not so important to me

After you select which characteristics are important, take the list with you to the store or have it next to you while you search on-line. This will help narrow your search and end up with a planner that really works for you.

- If you currently use multiple planners, try to consolidate into one.
- After you purchase your planner, commit to using it for at least one month.
- Keep it in a location where you will review it every day.

Select Your Planner

After you have picked your characteristics, it is time for shopping. A couple of sites to investigate are www.FamiliesWithPurpose.com, www.FranklinCovey.com and www.DayRunner.com. If you are interested in electronic planners, be sure to review free sites (i.e. Google Calendar) in addition to all of the devices that are available. If you have a smart phone, integrate with available on-line tools if that will help you remember to use it every day.



Once you have selected your planner, work with it for at least one month before evaluating it's effectiveness. If it doesn't work for you after trying a new planner for at least a month, you may want to consider something different. Commit to USING it before you discard it though.

The right planner can make a big difference in getting more done, and more importantly getting your high priority tasks done. Share your comments to let us know how the check list works for you. Good luck with your planner search!

Planner Characteristic Checklist

- _____ Month-at-a-glance view
- _____ Week-at-a-glance view
- _____ The ability to see each day separate from all others
- _____ Spiral bound so I don't lose any pages and can have the entire year in one product
- _____ Binder format so I can add and remove pages as needed
- _____ Zippered binder so I don't lose any pages
- _____ Electronic with no need to print
- _____ Electronic with the ability to print a To Do List
- _____ Electronic with the ability to print an appointment schedule
- _____ Paper so I can write in it when needed
- _____ To Do List available for every day
- _____ To Do List for the whole month
- _____ To Do List for each week
- _____ Room to plan for multiple roles (i.e. Employee, parent, spouse, business owner)
- _____ Calendar and To Do List integrated into one planner
- _____ Calendar and To Do List separate from each other
- _____ Small size for easy portability
- _____ Large size for ease of writing and room for more items
- _____ Medium size as a compromise between small and large
- _____ Time slots for meetings and appointments all day
- _____ Specific time slots included in the Calendar section
- _____ Pockets for other items such as cell phone or wallet
- _____ Wall calendar format
- _____ Portable format
- _____ Attached strap so it can be carried like a purse or briefcase
- _____ Price is no object
- _____ Budget = \$ _____
- _____ Add your own characteristics here: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____