

Everyday TRIZ – Filing with TRIZ

Those who know me know I like to try TRIZ out on everyday things, and the other day I thought I would tackle TRIZ and filing!

You may be like me and hate filing, and hate all the accumulation of stuff that is sometimes interesting to nostalgically look over but otherwise, despite its category in your head of, 'might be useful one day' in fact you never look at it until you are thinking of throwing it away - and so you don't, and the mess gets bigger and bigger.

So, I wondered how to represent this as a problem or wish. I want to keep things but I do not want to increase the weight or number of materials I have in my store. This sounds like a **Contradiction**, and I identified what I wanted to improve as Loss of information (I keep it because I do not want to lose it), against three worsening factors of Amount of Substance, Loss of Time and Harmful Effect of Object (it takes up more space).

If you are new to TRIZ you can obtain a free copy of the Contradiction Matrix and the 40 Principles that TRIZ Masters found were ways of solving these kinds of Technical Contradictions. Just go to Ellen Domb's article in the July 1997 edition of the TRIZ Journal – www.triz-journal.com

The features to change are the Parameters of the Matrix, and more can be found in Ellen's October 1998 article and a business version of the same in September 1999.

The Principles that the TRIZ Matrix suggests are reassuringly on the right track, and some, of course, we may employ already.

- **Mediator:** File things in a temporary storage box very quickly and after some time you will have a better idea whether you want to keep them or not.
- **Replacement of a Mechanical System:** File them in your computer.
- **Transformation of Properties:** File them in your computer.
- **Copying:** File them in your computer (as this has come up three times it seems to suggest this does answer the problem, but does it?)
- **Change the Colour:** Colour code when filing, so have a green box for efficiency stuff, blue box for wild ideas, red box for safety and so on.
- **Prior Action:** This prompted the thought that I could carry out an “un-filing” activity prior to every filing activity!
- **Rushing Through:** Just one big dump box (as I seldom look for stuff and can't find it anyway, why not?)
- **Convert Harm to Benefit:** Choose to have two dump boxes, one for stuff that you will eventually recycle and one that just goes in the bin.

Although storing material in my computer is possible through scanning I do not think at the moment that it would save me time, though of course some companies are doing this where they have masses of material. But a combination of the other ideas looks worthwhile. So I now have

some red, green and blue boxes, and for each of these colours there are two boxes for recycling and for dumping. But also, and the boxes are helping here, I now carry out prior action, dumping at least twice as much as I file away every time. This may seem very time consuming but in fact initially it is not so hard as you are picking things which you dump on the criteria of easy to decide and weighs a lot! And I took prior action prior to this action by starting with an hour going through the pile picking out anything that was easy to decide to get rid of! At some point the harmful effect will lessen so the ratio will change, but for the moment, it is looking better every day!

I also thought about my computer and mailing list! It gets longer day by day, so I have now chosen to reconfigure all new additions in a new listing, and dump two addressees for every one I add, not forgetting to say hi as I do so, so if someone is really interested in keeping in touch then they can do so, which of course will prompt me to dump two more! So, at last the hoard is going down in volume, the address book slowly looks cleaner, and I have another Everyday TRIZ story to tell.

So, have fun with Everyday TRIZ and please post here at the TRIZ journal if you want to add to an Everyday TRIZ collection of Stories or post to me at Graham@dagr.demon.co.uk
PS - my collection now includes: TRIZ and decorating, food hygiene, washing up, gardening, planning a holiday, cleaning the house, waste removal and disposal, and shopping.