

Check List Mania



They are essential. Not just for abandoning ship.

Two basic opinions jump out of the woodwork when the word CHECKLIST comes up: they are essential, or they are not for me. Who needs them?

Let's take this example: Unusual noise. That is the alarm clock, light on to find mute switch. Today? Tuesday. London first call? Yes. Clean shirt. Ironed? No? Bother. Early train. It is the 13th. Something else? Ah yes, supermarket on the way home. Um, there was something I wanted to get specially. Must remember. Ah, it's someone's special birthday today too. You have just used a number of checklists. In your sub-consciousness. Differentiation, elimination, safety, prioritisation, and lastly, catching an event that might have caused a ruckus if forgotten. (Risk analysis)

Unfortunately, the word CHECKLIST has got itself a bad name. It conjures up clipboards, yes/no answers, arbitrary backstops where brains are not available. Books have been written on what they are, the pros' and con's, even different 'types' such as READ-DO, DO CONFIRM etc. In fact after reading a 300 page volume about checklists it might turn off the almost convinced.

So when do I need one? Whenever duties exceed the memory bank, the delegation of the memory bank is not possible, and the risks of missing a duty too high. You need a recordable form of ensuring duties will be, or have been completed. Imagine forgetting those flowers? Or the ballast valve?

So, some points to help you:

1. Don't call it a Checklist if that sounds wrong, call it a prompt schedule, a To-do jogger, Task Aid. Anything as long as it works for you.
2. Assess the risks of missing a point but avoid over-complication.
3. Be prepared to improve it, add to it, modify it. Then reference and date it. This prevents using an old one.
4. Keep it simple but thorough. Go careful choosing a pre-made template. There are thousands out there, and more time can be spent un-designing their catch-all detail.

Need more advice, need time doing front-end duties? Get info@gotago.org to assist. It is my job. The service is personal. The designs are endless, the result will increase your efficiency. Your reliability. Your credibility. Time to buy flowers.

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