The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 13 – Organize Your Projects

Done	Aspects of Project Management
	A project can be anything from writing a novel to establishing a presence on Twitter/Facebook or planning a workshop. Each project you begin should have a timeline (starting point and finish point) and milestones (interim goals). Most of us work better with deadlines: they give us something to aim for.
☐	First, determine how many projects you have. Make a list. (E.g. write novel, build a Twitter following, increase number of 'likes' on Facebook, start a critique circle, write a blog post every week/every day, etc.)
☐	Determine how much time you want to give to each project. (You can do this on a weekly or daily basis. (E.g. of daily time allocation: 3 hours fiction, 1 hour articles, 1 hour blog posts, 1 hour social networking.)
☐	Identify, in a logical order, the different things you will need to accomplish for each project. (You may find some of the other checklists in this book useful for this. Create your own checklists if you need to, so you won't forget a step.)
☐	Decide how much of the project you can accomplish yourself, and which parts of it you may need help with. (This may be in the form of training courses, pre-reading, or paid help.)
☐	Make a list of the resources you need for your project. This may range from software to 'how-to' books to a new computer.
☐	Decide whether you need to outsource any part of your project. (Example 1: if your aim is to create a website and you don't want to spend the time to learn, get someone else to build it - but in a way that gives you control of the content. Example 2: If you want to create a book trailer to promote your book, you may want to outsource it.)
☐	Look at the cost of the project. If you are doing it all yourself, the only cost may be time. If you are outsourcing, or paying for a critique, how much are you prepared to invest? Decide on the project COST at the outset and try to stick to it.
☐	Create a timeline for each project, based on the amount of time you have allocated to each one. The timeline will include the following: Start date, milestones, deadlines, and a finish date. BE REALISTIC. (Example: a novel may have one deadline for the first draft and another for delivery to an editor or upload to Kindle. A Facebook business page may have deadlines of so many status updates and so many 'likes'. Aim to reach deadlines for different projects at different times. Stagger the starting and finishing dates.)
☐	Create a master calendar for your projects, beginning with the start date of the first project begun and ending with the finish date of the last project. (You can buy a calendar for this, or use a personal organizer, or create your own calendar on your computer. Do an online search for downloadable/printable calendars.)
☐	Leave room to add new, smaller projects as you go along.
☐	If you find a project timeline blowing out, STOP. Take the time to sit down and analyze the problem (e.g. Has it blown out because you're taking on too much? Because of a family emergency? Other factors beyond your control?)
☐	Step 2 for a project that has blown out: **come up with a solution**. Your main choices are (a) abandon it (b) revise the timeline (c) get help or outsource some of it.
☐	*Other Aspects of Project Management:*