

My Total Obsession TOOLKIT



The tools and resources that I use to stay organized, get inspired, run my business, and rock Hollywood at the same time!

CREATED BY

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*As seen on NBC, ABC, CBS,
Fox News & on HuffPo, INC and Forbes.*

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Introduction

People always ask me:

*“Melissa, how the *%\$^\$! do you get so much done?”*

“How do you come up with new ideas for your newsletter every single week?”

*“How do you manage to run a successful business while writing TV screenplays on the side?
How can you possibly do both without dropping dead from exhaustion?”*

The answers to those questions... are all contained inside this toolkit. ;)

These are my secret obsessions: the tools and resources that I use to stay organized, get inspired, run my business, and rock Hollywood at the same time.

I hope you peruse this toolkit while getting a deluxe pedicure—or while sipping a Smoked Butterscotch Latte. Or both! Because I don't know about you, but I always get my best ideas—and feel way more productive and inspired—when I schedule little pleasure-breaks throughout my day. Maybe you're long overdue for a pleasure break, so how about taking one right now?

Without further ado...

Here are the tools and resources that I'm currently obsessed with!



Business Tools

SendOwl

sendowl.com

If you want to sell a digital product (like an e-book), a physical product (like a t-shirt), or a service (like “10 weeks of consulting”), SendOwl is a super easy system for selling pretty much anything online. It’s easy to set up (even if you’re not super techie) and very customizable.

PayPal

paypal.com

Pretty much everyone has a PayPal account these days. It’s widely-recognized and trusted. You can use it to send out invoices to your clients, create monthly invoices that blast out automatically to certain people every month, accept mobile payments, and lots more.

MailChimp

mailchimp.com

If you get my weekly newsletter, then you’ve experienced MailChimp! It’s a great system for creating and blasting out email newsletters. Over 10 million people use it. Plus it’s so cute! I can’t resist the little chimp high-fiving me for sending a newsletter. Adorbs.

LeadPages

leadpages.net

Let's say you just created a new e-book that you want to give away for free. You can use LeadPages to create an online "landing page." That's a page where you can describe your book and explain how to get it. ([Here's an example of a page](#) that I made using LeadPages. So pretty, right?)

Instant Teleseminar

instantteleseminar.com

As part of my business/marketing training program—which is called OBSESSED—I host monthly Q&A calls where my Obsessors can dial in, share stories, ask questions, and get advice. This conference system is simple and seamless. It's got lots of cool features: you can record each call, you can "mute" guests if you don't want to hear any chattering on the line while you're speaking, and you can have up to 50,000 participants on any call! Daaamn!

Schedule Once

scheduleonce.com

Tired of playing email-tag, back and forth, trying to find a good time to meet with a client? Schedule Once solves that annoying dilemma. Just create a profile with dates and times that you're available and let your client select an appointment online. So easy!

Vocaroo

vocaroo.com

Use this site to record a quick audio note that you can download, email to someone, or share on social media. Want to record a spontaneous 20-second love note for your Twitter followers and tweet it out instantly? Done and done.

Canva / Wordswag / PicMonkey

canva.com

wordswag.co

picmonkey.com

Turn that rectangular photo into a heart shape! Add text to create a banner for your blog! Create a sexy collage with 4 images that you can use on Instagram or plop into your next newsletter! Oh, the options!

Canva, Wordswag, and PicMonkey are three amazing photo-editing websites that allow you to tweak, crop, combine, and prettify your photos in all kinds of ways. No graphic design skills required. Seriously. If you can use Facebook or Instagram, you can use these sites, too.

Keynote

apple.com/mac/keynote

I am really not a “slideshow presentation” kind of person (they give me horrific flashbacks to my corporate ad agency days—blech) but when I “have” to do a slide deck, this is my preferred tool.

Screenflow

telestream.net/screenflow

OMG. This is one of those tools that makes me think, “We’re living in the future and everything is magical!”

You can use Screenflow to record anything that you’re doing on your computer screen. Typing into a Word document? You can record that as a movie. Teaching an e-course and doing some kind of demonstration on your screen? You can record that, too. Want to record whatever’s happening on your screen and also insert a little square in the corner with a video of your face, providing instructions for your students—or whoever is watching? You can do that, too! #TechnologyIsAmazing

CourseCats

coursecats.com

A super easy-peasy tool for creating online courses. I'll definitely be using it to roll out something top secret in 2017. Shhhh.

Dropbox

<http://dropbox.com>

You know when you try to attach a photo or a song to an email and it's too big, and your email system is like, "Error, cannot attach, that file is too gigantic..."?

Dropbox is the perfect solution for those moments. Create an account, upload your big-ass files (you get TONS of storage room) and then click "Share" and you can share your materials with whoever you want. Life-saving!

Ban.do Agendas

bando.com/pages/2016-agenda-notifications

I cannot deal with electronic calendars—I need my old-school ink and paper planner or I will perish!! This year I converted from the Whitney English Planner to the Ban.do Agenda mostly because it had cute stickers. Both are great options though!

Haute Chocolate

<http://hautechocolate.ca>

Nope, it's not a chocolate company (if you want delicious chocolate, I recommend [Vosges](#) and [Mouth](#). You'll thank me later.)

Haute Chocolate is a company that provides gorgeous stock photos and images that you can use on your blog, website, and in your social media accounts. (You can also hire them to create custom images—I've done that in the past!)



Writing Tools

Grammar.ly

grammarly.com

Check your spelling and grammar online. Super easy to use.

The Idiom Dictionary

idioms.thefreedictionary.com

Search for classic and commonly used sayings to sprinkle throughout your writing. They also have a legal dictionary, a medical dictionary, and a few other word-nerd tools. (Just in case you're working on writing a legal thriller set in a hospital. Or something.)

Thesaurus

thesaurus.com

Because you just wrote “Wow, great!” for the hundredth time today... and you really want to find a more creative way to express your enthusiasm.

TheSEXaurus

amazon.com/TheSEXaurus-Words-Writers-Stefanie-Olsen-ebook

A special thesaurus booklet filled with sexy, racy, salacious and seductive words for people who love to write erotic stories—or anyone who loves to write teasing, tantalizing material of any kind!

Microsoft Word

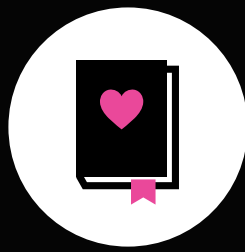
products.office.com/en-us/word

Uh, yeah. It's probably already on your computer. I wish I had a more exciting recommendation for word processing software but nope. Just Word. When I'm getting ready to work on most writing projects, I just open a fresh Word doc and goooo.

Final Draft

finaldraft.com

I use Word for pretty much every writing project... unless I'm working on a screenplay. Then I use Final Draft. It's the "industry standard" for screenwriting, and it automatically formats your screenplay in the exact format that TV execs and their staff want to see.



Books, Classes & Heroes Who Inspire Me

***The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield**

amazon.com/The-War-Art-Steven-Pressfield-ebook

If you've been sitting on a "great idea" for a screenplay, a novel, or a new business project for years and you never seem to get around to it, read this book. Every single page is like a fresh kick in the ass to get shit done.

***Expectation Hangover* by Christine Hassler**

amazon.com/Expectation-Hangover-Yourself-Change-Present-ebook

The best book I've read on how to set personal and professional goals WITHOUT getting attached to a specific outcome. Releasing rigid expectations about what is "supposed" to happen = sooooo much freedom and happiness.

***Why Not Me?* by Mindy Kaling**

amazon.com/Why-Not-Me-Mindy-Kaling-ebook

Major inspiration for aspiring screenwriters—or anyone with a big creative dream. Must read: the chapter on how celebrities "actually" get ready for the red carpet. It is hilariously honest. (I want to be her BFF and brainstorm story ideas while we braid each other's hair and watch vintage Ben Affleck movies.)

Simon Sinek's TED Talk: *"How great leaders inspire action"*

ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

In this talk, Simon asks every business owner: "Why does your organization exist? Why do you get out of bed in the morning? And why should anyone care?"

Before you worry about how you're going to promote yourself or build a fanbase, Sinek says, start by getting very clear about your mission or cause—what he calls your "why." (Sinek's book, [Start With Why](#), takes this TED Talk and dives even deeper, with lots of interesting business case studies. A must-read.)

Shonda Rhimes' TED Talk: *"My year of saying yes to everything"*

ted.com/talks/shonda_rhimes_my_year_of_saying_yes_to_everything

I mean... it's Shonda. 'Nuff said.

Amy Porterfield

amyporterfield.com

She's an online marketing genius and her trainings are off the chain! I've been around the block when it comes to "experts" in this field but Amy is the real deal. I ALWAYS learn something fresh and fun from Amy whenever I visit her site.

Improv Classes

Google "improv comedy class" + your city to find a local school

I recently started taking classes from the [Upright Citizens Brigade](#) in Los Angeles (you may have heard of some of their alumni like Amy Poehler, Aziz Ansari, Donald Glover, and like a million other famous actors). Doing improv makes me feel barf-ishly nervous every single time, because standing onstage and "improvising" is totally NOT in my comfort zone. But studying improv is one of the best ways to become a better listener, a more confident public speaker, and a more creative, resilient person. Doooo itttt.



Prezzies

I love doling out presents to all-star participants in my programs who go above-and-beyond with their assignments. Sometimes I even choose one mailing list subscriber—at random—and I send that person a special “thank you” note (on cute stationery!) or a surprise gift just to say, “Thank you for being part of my business community.” Nobody has ever complained about this. ;)

I mean, who doesn’t love presents??

Sesame Gifts

sesamegifts.com

Oh how I love thee! Beautiful curated gift boxes. Select a box, add text for a personalized note, and they’ll ship the box to your lucky gift recipient asap.

Kikki K

kikki-k.com

Ummm, the most adorable diaries, calendar, stationery and office supplies ever! And they ship internationally pretty much everywhere.

Jeni's Ice Cream

jenis.com

Order gourmet ice cream online. Ship it anywhere in the USA. When it arrives, the pints are packed in dry ice that floods out dramatically upon opening the parcel (creating a spookily chilled fog-rolling effect). Ooooh! Your gift recipient will be stunned with amazement and smiling all week long.

Art by Kent Youngstrom

experience.kentyoungstrom.com

His artwork is gorgeous and I love that he describes himself as an “artist, but not the tortured kind.” Check out his [Shop](#) and get something pretty for your workspace or bedroom walls.

50 Ways to Say You're Awesome by Alexandra Franzen

amazon.com/50-Ways-Say-Youre-Awesome

A sweet little book filled with 50 notes that you can tear out, customize with a personal message, and then give to someone who is awesome. I mean, who doesn't want to be told, “You're awesome”?



Office Prettification & Inspiration

I swear, I am 200% more focused and productive when my workspace is neat and beautiful—filled with notebooks, fragrances, fresh flowers, and other things that make me happy.

Ban.do

bando.com

OMG. I literally want every single thing they sell. It's a good thing I have some degree of self-control or I would be bankrupt from excessive Ban.do shopping binges.

Kate Spade

katespade.com

Stripes, bright colors, and polka dots are my world.

See Jane Work

seejanework.com

Stylish desk accessories, filing units, magnets, scissors... a huge inventory of adorableness.

Poppin

poppin.com

More cute desk and office supplies! Just browsing around their clean, colorful site makes my brain happy.

The Target \$1 bin

target.com

You know that discount section right by the entrance of your local Target? I totally found a set of cuuuuute polka dot pens there one time. Sometimes you can find some serious treasures!

Voluspa Candles

voluspa.com

Expensive but so worth it. The scents are unbelievably luxurious. Makassar Ebony & Peach? Whaaat? I don't even know what that means but I'm pretty sure I need my home office to smell like that.

Customizable coffee mugs

etsy.com/listing/62357783/your-text-my-handwriting-custom-mug

Order a cute mug with your favorite saying, quote, or maybe your business tagline. Then fill it with your fave hot beverage (coffee for meee!!!) and get to work. It's showtime!

And... that's a wrap!

This concludes... My Total Obsession Toolkit.

I hope you enjoyed reading about what helps me to stay organized and inspired—and I hope you discovered at least one new business obsession while skimming through my list.

How about you?

What are your go-to tools and resources?

Over the next couple of months, why not create an ongoing list in your notebook—or in a document on your computer—to keep track of whatever you're currently obsessing over. Your fave books, songs, sites, tools, office decor and systems. Create your own business toolkit!

Then share your toolkit on your website, in your newsletter, with your current clients or customers, or anywhere else that you want. People will LOVE it. (Seriously: if there's one thing I've found to be true, it's that pretty much everybody loves discovering fun, helpful new resources. A curated toolkit is always a generous, thoughtful gift to offer to your business audience/community.)

Thanks again for reading!

Whatever you're working on this week, I hope diving into it feels like indulging in your favorite guilty pleasure. :)

xo.

Melissa