

CZ465: HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR COLLECTION

- 1) UPKEEP STEP
 - 2) MAIN TOPIC
 - 3) TO THE LISTENERS
 - 4) THE END STEP
 - 5) CLEAN-UP PHASE
-

- 1) INTRO JIMMY & JLK

@jfwong - EVERYONE ELSE AT THE OFFICE - @commandcast

If you own one deck or fifty, organizing your Magic cards can be a huge pain point for many players. Today we're going to break down some methodologies and speak to office members about just how to organize your collection in the best way possible.

BUT FIRST:

****CHANNEL FIREBALL.COM/COMMAND****

- **CommandFest Vegas (June 10-12)**

****SHOP.ULTRAPRO.COM/COMMAND****

****PATREON.COM/COMMANDZONE** **Noah Pickens****

2) MAIN TOPIC: HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR COLLECTION

Today's episode will help guide you to organizing your collection whether it's small or gargantuan. Today we're going to talk with our own staff and hear their organizational techniques, but to do so we have to understand Organizing as a whole.

DEFINING THE METHOD

The definition of a "Method" is: a particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one.

A couple key words stand out. **Systematic** and **Established**.

Systematic means acting according to a fixed plan or system. Established means something that exists and works for people. When you're going about the monumental task of organizing a collection, there are so many factors to consider that not establishing or developing a "method" is tantamount to pure chaos. And no one likes playing against a Chaos deck.

Methodologies have been used across all of history. Without the creation of systematic and established methods, nothing would really exist - you wouldn't have the phone you're watching this video on right now, you wouldn't even be in that house, or in your clothes either! Organizing is no different - no method, it's madness.

DEFINING THE PRIORITIES

Collections in Magic are all unique, which means in order to establish a methodology to organizing, we have to understand what our priorities are when it comes to organizing. First up, define the order of priorities for you!

- What is your **primary** purpose of organization?
 - You want to deck build
 - Which format(s); what power level; how many decks total?
 - You want to trade
 - Which format(s); where do you trade at; how do you structure trades?
 - You want to protect / store / display
 - How do you want to display it? Why are you storing it? How much protection?
 - You want to collect
 - What are you collecting?
 - You want to share with someone else / a playgroup
 - What are your shared goals with the playgroup?
 - If you have your own purpose separate from these, great!

- What is your **secondary** purpose of organization?
 - Same questions as above ^

For many of you, it won't get past the primary purpose of organization, and that's totally ok! Many players may have deeper collections and have been playing for years, even decades, and they may need to organize on several levels. Now that you've decided your purposes, let's ask some more specific questions that will lead us into organization philosophy.

HOW BIG IS YOUR COLLECTION?

Specifically, how big is the collection you are *looking to organize*? Since it's hard to gauge this, here are some tips to quantify this number for yourself.

- A pile of 100 cards, unsleeved, on a table is about 3 centimeters or 1 ¼ inches high.
- A pile of 1000 cards, unsleeved, is about 30 centimeters or a foot (12 inches) high.
- A pile of 100 cards, single sleeved, is about 5.5 centimeters or 2 ¼ inches high
- A pile of 100 cards, double sleeved, is about 7 cm or 2 ¾ inches high
- A regular 9-page Ultra Pro binder can hold 360 individual cards.
 - You can also put multiple cards into the pages of most UltraPro binders, so this number conceivably could go as high as 720 cards
 - That means that you can theoretically put 3 FULL Commander decks in a single Ultra Pro 9-page binder, and still have 60 cards leftover.
- Our Game Knights deckbox can hold two double sleeved 100 card decks on both sides, and one 60 card regular deck in its middle chamber.
- A white long cardboard box typically can hold over 1,000 cards unsleeved

Bet a couple of those numbers surprised you - turns out it's really hard to look at a pile of something and know just how much is in there, but more importantly, where it can go FIT INTO when you start organizing. For starters, take a look around and just get *rough* numbers of your collection. Looking at our own collections, we would estimate that a...

- Small Collection - anywhere from 100 to 2,000 cards
 - A single Commander deck to a little over 5 binders of cards or 3-4 long cardboard boxes
- Medium Collection - 2,000 to 5,000 cards
 - 3-5 Commander decks, maybe some other formats, and 10+ binders or 8-10 cardboard boxes
- Large Collection - 5,000+
 - You got a LOT of freakin cards!

With a better idea of your collection size, now you can estimate what you will need materials wise in order to organize it all.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PURCHASE?

- What can you reuse?
 - Before you buy anything, there's a good chance you have a lot of stuff that you can recycle and reuse!
 - Old sleeves from conventions and drafting (you often get free sleeves as part of participating)
 - Old sleeves from other trades (often these will be piling up somewhere in a box)
 - Old deck boxes / cardboard boxes / repurposed stuff
- Here's a breakdown on the main ways people organize:
 - Cardboard boxes - these can hold tons of cards, sleeved and unsleeved, and come in different sizes. If you're looking for a place to store bulk or less valuable cards, this is a great place to start. You can get them in different sizes as well. They do get pretty heavy when you load them up however, so be careful moving them around.
 - Binders - there are binders of all shapes, colors, and sizes. Some binders are completely self-contained - you can't add or remove any of the pages, and they're easy to open and flip through. Some binders have removable pages you can buy separately, and as a result are easier to organize without having to take a ton of cards out and shift them down if you have new things to put in.
 - Other containers - plenty of players re-use the boxes you get from Magic Bundles or find other interesting solutions to hold decks and extra cards. There are lots of options out there, and even an old shoebox has been the go-to for many a card player in the past.
 - Make sure you check out shop.ultrapro.com/command for any of your storage needs - you'll find tons of options there that can help you get on your way.
- Sleeves
 - Do you need inner sleeves? Or are you fine with just an outer sleeve? Or no sleeve!?

But wait! Before you go and buy anything, you still have to figure out what your full method of storing cards is, and to give you inspiration, we're going to talk with our office mates and hear how they do it to help you decide YOUR method of organization.

MIDROLL BREAK

METHODS OF STORAGE

In this section we are going to talk with our staff here at The Command Zone about how they organize their personal collections, list out the pros and cons, and help you determine if YOU should organize that way too! Let's get into it with our first guest...

ARTHUR MEADOWCROFT

- Overall Methodology: A system that allows you to access cards quickly and easily.
- Process:
 - Put every card into a large, multi-row cardboard box.
 - Divide it WUBRG down each row
 - Sort lands alphabetically, everything else by Mana Value (0 -> X)
- Pros:
 - Fast - can find a card in under a minute
 - Good for deckbuilding
 - Very little upkeep - easy to put new cards in
- Cons:
 - Not terribly glamorous
 - Not great for trading
 - Not good for showcasing
- Questions for each guest:
 - When you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - Anything you'd improve upon? How do you go about dealing with any of the downsides?

ASHLEN ROSE

- Overall Methodology: Organized to be easily accessible for deck building across multiple formats
- Process:
 - Mythics and rares sorted by color into binders for easy access
 - Uncommons / Commons in card boxes sorted by set, color, then alphabetical
 - Lands by color and art (keeping most full arts) - where do the others go?
- Pros:
 - Binders allow cards to be accessible for multiple formats
 - Great for brewing / flipping through each binder
 - Good for trading / showcasing

- Cons:
 - Sometimes Uncommons / Commons are Commander playable - do they break the rules?
 - Can run out of space over time (how are the Green and Blue binders comparatively?)
- Question for each guest: when you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - When you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - Anything you'd improve upon? How do you go about dealing with any of the downsides?

SHAUNA GILLES

- Overall Methodology: Based on the system from a prior LGS, sorted by set and number to be able to pull tons of cards quickly.
- Process:
 - Separate each card into a different set binder
 - Once set binders overflowed, into cardboard boxes
 - Organized by collector number (bottom of the card)
- Pros:
 - Fast and *set* accurate - get the exact card in the exact printing you want
 - Great for selling and inventory, especially with reprints
 - Reliable - there is a definitive landing place for cards
- Cons:
 - Very utility based and for larger collections
 - Not good for showcasing / trading
- Question for each guest: when you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - When you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - Anything you'd improve upon? How do you go about dealing with any of the downsides?

DAMEN LENZ

- Overall Methodology: Cardboard boxes, splitting up Creatures / Non-creature spells across colors
- Process:
 - Separate Creatures by color, basic lands, non-basics, artifacts, rares, mythics into boxes
 - Commons and uncommon non-creature spells (everything else) are sorted by type (enchantment, instant, sorcery, etc.) in a box like Arthur's large cardboard box.
 - Simultaneously entering collection into ManaBox
- Pros:
 - Creature / non-creature separation makes a big difference!
 - Building is quick and streamlined
- Cons:
 - Same cons with any no-binder system - not as tradable / flippable / etc
- Question for each guest: when you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - When you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?

- Anything you'd improve upon? How do you go about dealing with any of the downsides?

LADEE DANGER

Ladee is here to help talk about one other important part of organization, one that actually might be useful to many of the collectors we just talked to... graphics! And cutouts! You can get really detailed when it comes to organizing, and sometimes you want to pull out all the stops and keep things visually clean too.

- Overall Methodology: Binder templates, print-outs, cutouts, and label makers
- Process:
 - If organizing into binders or boxes, accompanying it with the right type of label
 - Binders have side labels (there are some cool ones you can download for free)
 - Labels from a label maker
- Pros:
 - It looks great, and you don't have to stress about your handwriting / slipping up
 - Convenient - easy to see what you're grabbing with each binder / box / etc.
 - Adaptable - everything can be labeled
- Cons:
 - It requires extra materials (and you're already working with a lot between sleeves, binders, and boxes)
 - Extra time, and once you start, it's hard to stop.

JIMMY WONG

Finally, me. I have a ton of cards over the years and I was introduced to the game by flipping through Craig's binders, so my system is a mish mash of a couple above.

- Overall Methodology: Detailed binders for everything except bulk / unplayables
- Process:
 - Separate everything into colors - WUBRG and then the Color Pairs, Color Trios, and 5C
 - Separate each color into its component parts: Creature, Instant/Sorcery, Enchantment, Artifact, Planeswalker
 - Separate lands into color-relevant lands (Fetches, duals, etc.) and utility / artifact lands
 - Separate them into as many binders as possible, leaving lots of empty pages
 - As a result, there are 3 binders for each color, and 8-ish binders for everything else
- Pros:
 - It is easy to locate what you want by identifying it by its parts (Color, then Type of card)
 - Looks great and good for building
 - Allows for many more cards to be put in without straining binder spots
- Cons:
 - Requires a *lot* of binders, and is only for a big collection
 - Unable to "pick up and go" with a binder for a convention or trading
 - Upkeep with labeling and space - it consumes a lot of space
- Question for each guest: when you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - When you get new cards, what is your process before it gets sorted?
 - Anything you'd improve upon? How do you go about dealing with any of the downsides?

GO FORTH AND ORGANIZE!

Today we have:

- Understood the need for a solid methodology when organizing
- Understood our own priorities when it comes to our organization
- Understood the size of our own collection that needs organizing
- Understood what types of storage we'll need to organize everything

And heard from multiple Command Zone staffers as to their specific methods and systems. You have all the tools you need to come up with your OWN method to get your collection under control. So what are you waiting for!? Get to it!

3) TO THE LISTENERS:

What are your keys to organizing? Got a method that we didn't think of here? Let us know!

****CHANNELFIREBALL CALL-OUT #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Damen Lenz, Shauna Gilles, Arthur Meadowcroft, Ashlen Rose, Ladee Danger, Manson Leung, Craig Blanchette, Josh Murphy, Jake Boss, Patrick Nan, Jordan Pridgen, Sam Waldow, Gaurav Gulati, Truc Thai, Jamie Block, Mitch Trafford, and Evan Limberger.**

-Special thanks to **Geoffrey Palmer** for the living card animations (**@LivingCardsMTG**)