

Desktop Management

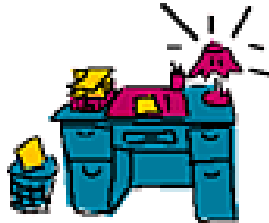


by

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Organizing  *Resources*

Desktop Management



Statistics to ponder:

- **80% of the papers filed are never looked at again.**
- **More than 2 trillion pieces of paper are generated yearly in American offices.**
- **More new information has been produced within the last 30 years than in the last 5,000.**
- **A weekday edition of The New York Times contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in 17th century England.**
- **In one day, Americans generate enough trash to fill the New Orleans Superdome twice.**

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National Clean Off Your Desk Day

Second Monday in January

This special day was originated by Anne Chase Moeller, the daughter of Mr. Chase of *Chase's Annual Events* (the very book where special events are listed). Anne was frequently called upon to help in her father's office and was required to work at his incredibly messy desk. It was insane and most unproductive. Anne took matters into her own hands. In order to create a place where she could work, she would spread a cloth over his mess and then do her work. When she had finished, she would put her things away, including the cloth, and leave.

Around 1982 Anne declared that her father would clean off his desk at least once each year. Naturally, being in the business, they entered ***National Clean Off Your Desk Day*** into the record book for the second Monday in January. The rest is history.

The record book has since been sold to a larger publisher, but the event is still celebrated each year. It is a great time to get a fresh start and a cleared desk for the New Year.

The purpose of a desk

Everything has a purpose, including your desk. Its purpose is to provide an ideal spot to process paperwork – incoming and outgoing. This is the place to perform the business of running your home or office. Look around you. Are there things in the way that prevent you from working efficiently? No matter what you have read or heard, stacks of paper do not create the busy look. A messy desk is not a sign of a genius at work. It signals lack of dependability, lack of control and lack of focus.

Clutter creates lost information, missed opportunities, tasks undone, and decisions unmade. A cluttered desk leads to a cluttered mind and clutter interferes with productivity and efficiency. Clutter creates waste in terms of time, money and energy.

Consider your desktop as prime real estate – the foremost spot for the project you are working on at that moment. It is neither a storage depot nor a junk table.

Resolve to get organized!



Enhancing your energy level

The physical décor of your surroundings has a strong impact on your mood and work habits. With a little sprucing up, you can enhance efficiency, productivity and energy. It starts with imagery – a clear mental picture of where and how you work best. Once you have a picture of ideal conditions for you, resolve to make the necessary changes to achieve your ideal workplace. If you are going to spend time at your desk, then make it a quality place to work.

Feng Shui is the ancient Chinese art of placement that creates balance and harmony. The idea is to keep positive energy (Chi) flowing and deflect negative energy. Clearing clutter, rearranging furniture and adding or removing specific elements can have a dramatic effect on your total life.

Ambience says a great deal about you. Pay attention to your surroundings in order to reflect the kind of image that is important to you. Experts relate that there is an immediate physical, emotional and psychological payoff when you take the time to put your surroundings in order. The impact of simplifying and organizing renews the spirit and builds confidence. Order is the foundation upon which to build inner peace, contentment and joy in life. Getting your desk in order is a great place to start.

Imagine what your desk will look like

As one of my colleagues wrote, "If you don't know where you are going any road will do." So, I ask you: Where are you going with the desktop management project? What end results are you seeking? Start dreaming! This is your desk and it can be anything you want.

Picture entering your office, either at home or at work, where your desk beckons you to come and start your day. Just imagine sitting there and feeling a sense of peace, knowing you can work with a clear mind, knowing you can tackle all the important paperwork ahead of you.

Get it down on paper!

The following section is dedicated to your dream desk. You can write out exactly what you want to do and how the finished product will look.

Or, if you are artistic, start drawing.

Or, you can cut a picture out of a magazine.

Do anything you like that will demonstrate where you are going. The objective is to get the ideas out of your head and down on paper.

Start now – dream, then write, draw, or cut and paste!

Dreaming

1. Goal: In order to get what you want (what you are dreaming), you need to set the course by putting your goals in writing. When you list your goals on paper, you are much more likely to achieve them. Remember **SMART** goals: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timely. Make sure your goal has some type of measurement so you can determine whether you have been successful.

2. Resources: Consider the amount of time, energy, money and other resources you will need to accomplish this goal.

3. Benefits – List potential benefits you will receive when your goal has been reached.

- Will important documents have a home?
- Will you be able to focus on a project until completion?
- Will you work more efficiently and effectively?
- What is it that you hope to achieve by getting your desk organized?

Remember, this is more than a cleaning process; this is organization – being able to find what you want when you want it!

4. Commitment – Now, make the commitment to take this organizing project from beginning to end. Open your calendar and block off an appointment time to work on getting your desktop organized. It is advisable to work in blocks of time (no more than 90 minutes) so that you remain focused on the task. Do not expect to get it all accomplished in one sitting. Break down the total project into manageable bite-size pieces. *How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!*

Desk Designs

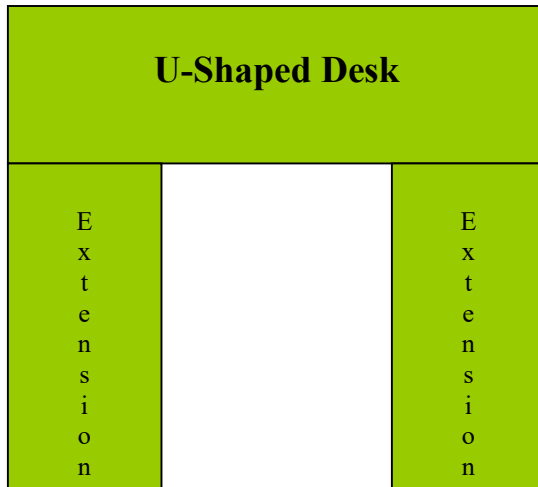
Rectangular Desk

A simple rectangular-shaped desk is the most common layout. Because it provides minimal space for necessities, it is important to keep extra items off the top to allow for efficient work space. Utilize other sources for storage and displays.

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L-Shaped Desk

The traditional L-shaped desk provides an extension for the computer, telephone and other equipment. The main desk area can be used as the workspace. This arrangement allows for a few necessities on the desktop and handy to the work area without crowding the space.



The U-shaped desk is common in large offices using modular furniture. This configuration provides maximum work area in the smallest amount of space. Here the worker has an open area for daily work, plus two extensions. One can be used for the layout

while the other could hold the computer and other equipment. Most often this setup allows for wall partitions and overhead cabinets.

Getting Organized ~ Is it for you?

Getting organized involves the positive steps in getting rid of clutter, deciding what is important in your life, establishing systems for effective control, and obtaining and maintaining a balance of life management skills. There is no better time to let go of the unnecessary and discover tools and resources to facilitate change.

Frequently asked questions

- Am I the only one with this dilemma?
- How do other people manage to keep their desks cleared?
- Is there something wrong with me?
- Is there hope?

- I don't know why I bother! Won't it just be a mess again after a while?

Answer

You are not alone! Having a cluttered desk is not uncommon and many folks just work around the situation. Some even say, "I know where everything is!" or "A messy desk is the sign of a genius at work." If you are one of these folks you are only kidding yourself. Precious time is wasted searching those piles on your desk, floor, counters and chairs. With a well-developed filing system (either in file drawers or utilizing cubbies), important papers are more accessible than with the PHD system—piles high and deep. And, the only sign a messy desk signals is confusion -- mentally and physically.

Thinking that getting organized is a waste of time leaves you with nothing gained. You lose control. The vicious circle of procrastination only causes more discouragement, dissatisfaction, distress and despair. If you lead a busy life then it is imperative to learn the fundamentals of organization; otherwise you cannot control the expenditure of your time, money and energy.

There is a direct correlation between your environment and your well being. All your senses are on high alert to what surrounds you. You breathe, feel, smell, see and react to your environment and that reaction is both psychological and biological. Experts strongly suggest that you take a close look at what your environment is communicating. You **can** create harmony and comfort within your home and office, which ultimately will be reflected in the work you perform. All it takes is a commitment to change.

Solution

Obtain the necessary tools that will empower you to create and utilize systems that work for you. Getting organized is a process of learning life management skills. Release those shoulder muscles, unclench your jaw, take a deep breath and get ready to begin the journey. You have a choice. You can make this fun for yourself or consider it a laborious task. It is your choice. Why not have fun!

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.
The secret of getting started is breaking your complex
overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks,
and then starting on the first one.”

~ Mark Twain

It is time to begin

Desktop management does not need to be complicated. So, let's begin. Roll up your sleeves and put on some inspiring music. This is a journey and it is up to you where you are going and how far you will travel. The long-term goal is *a place for everything and everything in its place* (a very good resolution to adopt.)

Psychology of Organizing 101

1. Remember that 80% of what you find as you clear your desk will be too old to deal with, expired data, illegible due to food stains, or just not as important as you thought several months ago. Start tossing!
2. You need to make decisions. As expert organizer Barbara Hemphill said many years ago, "*Clutter is the by-product of indecision.*" Be selective and save what is truly valuable and irreplaceable. Be aggressive and toss the rest.
3. Ask yourself, "If I had not found these papers, then just how important can they be?"

Preparations

1. Gather three large boxes, several trash bags and magic markers.
2. Label the boxes. 1) **Immediate** – for those items that absolutely need to be dealt with right away. 2) **On Hold** – for items that can wait for a week or so before you start tackling this box. 3) **Not Sure** – for the papers that *might* be useful someday and you are not quite ready to part with them.
3. The trash bags are available for the obvious reason – trash.

Begin Sorting

1. First of all, eliminate all food items. Gather up the dishes, utensils, wrappings and everything that was used to feed your body. Now is the time to nourish your soul.
2. Magazines, journals, periodicals and catalogues are bulky items that take up a tremendous amount of space and accumulate faster than you can read them.
 - Start weeding through these items (but, remember this is not the time to start reading articles or perusing the table of contents). Begin to eliminate those older than six months. Realize that if you have not read them yet, you probably will not find the time to read them in the future.
 - Pile the 'keepers' in a separate area. Utilize a reading basket or magazine organizer to hold those items you realistically have time to ponder through. Another suggestion is to put them in a tote bag that you can grab as you leave the house. There is always waiting time where you can catch up on your reading.
 - The point of a reading basket or tote is to have some type of container that will create a boundary. When it is full there is a visual awareness of your inability to keep up with all the reading that comes your way. Maybe it is time to reevaluate your subscription list.
 - Journals that are to be kept for reference material need to be organized chronologically or categorically. Store them in an out-of-the-way closet, cabinet or in a magazine organizer on a shelf.
3. Weed through the remaining papers and sort according to urgency.
 - When you locate something that needs to be done sooner rather than later, put it in the box labeled **Immediate**.
 - If it is something that needs to be filed or action to be performed at a later date, put in the box labeled **On Hold**.
 - When you are not sure what to do with it, consider the trash or put it in the **Not Sure** box.
 - If you pick up a piece of paper, do not put it down until you have made a decision as to which box to put it in. Shuffling

piles is not allowed. Decision-making is the name of this stage.

- Remember that this portion of the process is just sorting. This is not the time to act on those items you are finding. Simply place them in the **Immediate** box and you will start working on them when the desk is cleared.
 - Be diligent in tossing outdated stuff. Key words are *maybe*, *someday*, and all the *should've*, *could've*, *would've*s. Let go of those things that do not serve a purpose in your life today. Realize that once they were important, but today they are not.
4. Persistent weeding and sorting is a must to recover your valuable workspace. When this step is finished you will have a clearer vision of all that needs your immediate attention.
 5. There truly is important data roaming around your desktop (and other places as well). Make sure you are able to locate this information when you need it. When you are thinking about the filing process, think retrieval – what will you be thinking about when you are looking for a particular piece of paper.
 6. It takes 21 consecutive days to make or break a habit. You are the one in control. Don't let paper influx crowd your spaces. Process each and every piece of paper that comes across your desk.



This is the best decluttering device.
Use it!

Clean desk vs. Organization

Ok, so now you have a clean desk, or at least that is your goal. Nothing is on the top surface – no pens, notepaper, clock, coffee mug, flowers, pictures, files... Nothing!

Nothing? Then, where are these things? Hiding in closed drawers? Think about it. Whenever you answer the telephone you need to open (then close) a drawer in order to get a pen and paper. Not very efficient especially if it is the top center drawer of the desk that requires you to push your chair back just to retrieve a pen.

Being organized has nothing to do with a sparse desktop. An organized desk is functional, not bare. Some things are necessary to have at your fingertips. Arrange those items that are used daily in a convenient spot on the desktop or nearby shelving, but out of the pathway of the workspace area. Those items that you do not use every day, but need to have handy, can be stored in nearby drawers, shelves or cabinets.

And, while we are on the subject, hiding clutter behind closed doors does not mean you are organized. Being organized means ***finding what you want when you want it*** and not having to spend time searching. Searching takes precious time and time cannot be replaced. Searching creates bottlenecks and panics. Searching is a waste. Organization is efficient and effective.

Summary

Your possessions, including paperwork, reflect everything you have ever been or hoped to become. There is a strong attachment to those things that symbolize your personal vision. It is up to you to discern what is *truly* important. The clue that your stuff is out of control is when you begin to experience more grief than joy with those things around you.

Remember that it takes 21 consecutive days to make or break a habit. So, start today. You are the one in control. If you let down your guard the information highway will inundate you with more and more paper plunging you into chaos, again. This is your space to work and your choice as to how it will function – efficient and effective, or chaotic and confused.

If your goal is to simplify and stay organized, then you need to find peace and comfort in your surroundings. To develop positive energy in your environment it is wise to do everything in your power to create a personal paradise. Your health, happiness and prosperity are dependent upon a true balance within your life. In order to manifest your goals, hopes and dreams for the future, you need to make changes today.

Happy organizing!

Ask for Help



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