

## The Organized Office: Making a Good First Impression



Organizing your office can have more of an impression than you are probably aware. They say you only have one opportunity to make a first impression. Keep this in mind while organizing your office because while most people think that phrase pertains to how we're dressed or how firm a handshake we deliver, it also applies to offices and/or business storefronts.

If a customer or someone else happened to walk by your office right now, would you be embarrassed over the state of your surroundings or is it deemed "tour ready"? Perhaps you're thinking of organizing your home office because you dread an unexpected visit from a neighbor. Regardless of where your office is located, you face opportunities to make that first impression.

In which of the following scenarios do you see yourself?

### Organizing the Office Case Study #1

Even though you're up to your eyeballs on a project and you've got work spread out on your desk, you're able to keep your focus. You avoid multi-tasking and you're able to access your computer, answer your phone and find other items without difficulty. Fellow employees appreciate your organization and often rely on you for documentation they can't find.

### Organizing the Office Case Study #2

Your project has begun to migrate onto other surfaces; perhaps the top of your lateral file cabinet or credenza. Other projects are stacked on one end of your desk in a pile and if someone came along and asked for a piece of information, you could eventually locate it, after some digging. You struggle with focusing on the project at hand and often find yourself drawn to other interruptions such as email. Sometimes your coworkers crack jokes about your "piles of files" and even though you're embarrassed, you shrug it off.

### Organizing the Office Case Study #3



Your desk is completely covered, the files that were stacked on the edge of your desk have now been moved to the floor (temporarily, of course) and losing items has become a daily occurrence. Your current projects are rarely in order and many times you discover misfiled documents. You can no longer hold meetings in your office because your small conference table is also covered. If truth be told, you're operating in panic mode most of the time.

If you find yourself relating to the 2nd or 3rd Case Studies, then organizing the office will help you better manage your work surroundings. Consider doing the following:

1. Label all project folders and/or manila files sitting on your desk.
2. Get rid of the stacks of files by placing them in a step file holder on your desk. You can now see at a glance the various projects that need your attention.
3. Reclaim your floor. By taking a peek under and around your desk you'll probably find items that need to be taken home, returned to others or thrown away/recycled.
4. Eliminate interruptions. Exit out of your email management program when you need to concentrate on another task. Interruptions side-track your thought process and prevent you from being more productive.
5. At the end of the day spend 5-10 minutes putting items away. This is a simple way to guard against things getting out-of-control and you'll love the look of your office upon returning to work.

Getting the office organized by implementing these techniques will take you a long way towards having a more productive work environment and making that rarely-forgotten first impression.

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