



SPRING CLEANING YOUR OFFICE

For many of us the very idea of spring cleaning our offices makes us very nervous. We have a system to our piles. But we would like to see the bottom of our desk sometime soon, or have some order to things. We would like a place for everything and not have to spend three days looking for one document! According to Gayle Gruenberg, President of *Let's Get Organized*, there are easy ways to organize effectively.

First, gather all of the papers on your desk and put them into one pile. Go through the pile and sort each paper by a category (for example, financial, sales, marketing, clients etc.) that makes sense to you. Gayle suggests that you try to limit the number of categories to between five and seven. The next step is to create a filing system for your newly categorized documents. One system Gayle uses often is to color code each category, as this makes it easier to sort and retrieve your documents when needed. Be sure to give a meaningful file name to each folder within your categories. If you want to get a bit more creative you can add a picture to the file labels. Consider wall pockets, binder sorters, and tiered sorters as options for containing files you use frequently.

The final and most important step is to maintain your system. To do this, Gayle suggests that at the end of each day you put away all of the paperwork you used; if you still need any of it the next day you can always pull it back out.

Those of us who are super-networkers have tons of business cards collected from networking. Gayle suggests either manually organizing them in a business card binder or scanning them into your personal computer using readily available card-scanning software. An added benefit of electronically storing your cards is that you can sync your contacts to your smart phone and have access to them when you're on the road.

This is also a good time to think about organizing your computer. The very first and most important thing to remember is to back up your computer files regularly -- once a day, once a week, once a month -- choose the interval that works best for your business. Here's an idea to free up storage memory -- go through your computer files and move any file you have not used in over 3 months into a "to delete" folder and then revisit it in 3 months. If you still don't need it, send it to the trash can! Of, course this does not apply to documents you must keep for legal, tax and regulatory purposes.

Another organizing tool to consider is going "paperless." With the technology available today it is not that difficult to do. All you need is a good scanner, a hard drive with sufficient memory and time!

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