

CREATING A WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT WORKS!

By Barbara Hemphill

YOUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT directly affects your ability to produce results with the least amount of stress. A functional desk that is ugly can be as much of a deterrent to productivity as a beautiful desk that is not functional. I have spent over twenty years working with people. One thing has become vehemently clear. Your desk can be your greatest enemy or your best friend.

Take a good look at your desk. How does it make you feel? Are you comfortable there? Can you do what you need to do there easily? How does it look to other people? Does it reflect the message you want to give to the world about your work and your values?

Analyze the kinds of activities you need or want to do at your desk. If you use a computer, an L-shape desk is usually the best option. Use the short end of

the "L" for your computer, and the long end for desk accessories, your telephone, and spreading out papers while you are working.

One of the major detractors to an effective and attractive desk are those pesky scraps of paper, which seem to proliferate in your absence and sometimes in your presence!

In my experience, an important component of any desk is space for files. I prefer two file drawers in my desk—one for current projects and another for reference materials I use frequently. If you are an "out of sight, out of mind" person, you may prefer a file holder that sits on top of your desk. You can use Post-it® Flags with colored bars for easy-to-use color-coded labels.

crossed out. Any pending issues are flagged with a Post-it® Flag—a different color for each person. The flag dispensers are attached to the side of the telephone.

Do you spend lots of time talking on the telephone? If so, what do you need? Is your source of phone numbers—electronic or paper—easily accessible? Do have a consistent way to take notes while you are talking? To make filing your telephone notes easier, keep Post-it® 4" x 6" pads nearby. Avoid putting notes from several conversations on the same piece of paper.

The greatest desk in the world will be sabotaged without a comfortable adjustable chair and good lighting. An inspirational piece of art in your natural

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Do you get lots of phone calls? If so, it is important to develop a systematic way to record all those messages. In our office, we leave an open 6" x 9" spiral-bound notebook by the telephone to jot them down. The top of each page is dated, and we put the initials of the person responsible for responding to the call in the left-hand column. When the action is completed, the initials are

line of vision can be a real stress reducer, too!

Most people want to be able to move around in their work area, so a swivel chair on rollers is a big advantage. If there is carpeting, you will need a chair mat so the chair will roll easily.

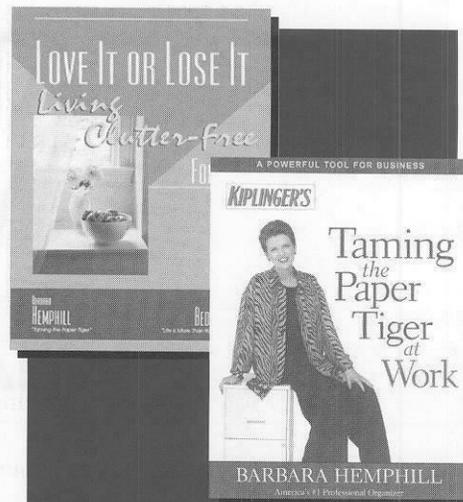
MY DEFINITION OF "ORGANIZED" IS VERY SIMPLE: 1) DOES IT WORK AND 2) DO YOU LIKE IT? IF YOU ANSWER "NO" TO EITHER OF THOSE QUESTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR DESK, DECIDE NOW WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

Most desks I see are too cluttered—paper that could be filed away if you were confident you could find it when you needed it, office supplies you never use, and memorabilia that has been there so long you don't even see it!

Essential desktop supplies for most people include an "In Box" for mail you haven't looked at yet (not a place to put postponed decisions!); an "Out Box" for the things that need to go outside your office, and a "To File Box" for the papers

that need to be filed outside the reach of your desk. Caution: Eliminate any container not designated for a specific purpose or it will soon become a catchall for unidentified objects!

My definition of "organized" is very simple: 1) Does it work and 2) Do you like it? If you answer "No" to either of those questions when it comes to your desk, decide now what you can do about it! 



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