

A Clutter-Free Workplace

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The workplace is filled with clutter. Piles add up, files overflow and e-mails need to be deleted. But who has time for that? It's time to make time, says Janet Barclay, the Organized Assistant (www.organizedassistant.com).

"Many (business professionals) feel they are too busy to do this, but in reality, the time you'll save once everything is organized will more than make up for it," says Barclay.

Don Aslett (www.donaslett.com) author of The Office Clutter Cure, says the biggest thing you lose from a cluttered, messy desk or office is respect.

"Your desk is you," says Aslett, who suggests coming in early, staying late or possibly coming in on the weekend to clean the clutter. That way you won't get disrupted with work-related responsibilities that hinder the de-cluttering process. Barclay recommends setting aside an hour a day or couple hours a week until you are clutter free. Find the method or plan that works and stick to it.

The best place to begin de-cluttering your office is with your desk, says Barclay. There is no reason to keep anything in your work area other than the things that you are currently working on.

"Your current projects should be kept where you can access them easily, but rather than keeping them in piles on your desk, they should be organized into clearly labeled file folders," says Barclay.

When dealing with e-mail make a practice of handling each document only once, if possible, adds Barclay. When you open your e-mail, deal with it immediately. If it's about an upcoming meeting or other event, copy the information into your planner, then delete it. If it's a quick question, answer it immediately, then discard it. If you need the information in the future, file it and add it to your to-do list.

When it comes to clutter "the important thing is to get it, target it, attack it, come to terms with it or trash it," says Aslett

Barclay agrees, "When your work environment is clutter free, you'll be more productive, because there will be fewer things to distract you from the task at hand."

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