

# Organizing for success


by Lilian O'Meara

Creative people who are also entrepreneurs need many things to succeed—imagination, discipline, and organization to name a few. What they definitely need is a space to create, a place to be comfortable, where the mind can be clear, and unhindered by thoughts of chores not done or by time wasted searching for lost items. With a few simple organizing ideas, a great workspace can be easily achieved.

If you don't have a suitable office, choose a relaxing place with a chair you can occupy for long periods; be sure the area has sufficient lighting. You'll need a desk (for the computer) and some supplies (books, pens, paper), as well as a filing cabinet. A productive office requires a home for everything, especially paper that can be retrieved when needed.

The first step is to clear the clutter. Have a recycling bin and wastebasket on hand. This eliminates the urge to hold on to paper that will quickly become a stack that you'll eventually have to throw out. Set aside some time to declutter. One hour of clearing goes a long way, but deal with only one surface at a time. Make decisions about paper right away: toss it, act on it, or put it in a to-file pile. Once you organize paper into one of those three piles, you are left with the items to keep (the to-file pile) and they need a home. A simple filing system is a good method of putting paper away and finding it later.

Make piles for subjects or categories. For example, an editor might have piles for publishers, articles about editing, and tax information. Put these documents into folders, according to category, in your filing cabinet and name them so they make sense to you. Place the folders in alphabetical order. Have information you use often on or near your desk. A basket or container should be readily available for items such as articles to read, people to call, your contact list, projects on the go, and act now and to-do folders.

How is all this maintained? Time management comes into play. Once a day or once a week, time must be set aside, even scheduled into your agenda, to declutter paper or anything else that comes into the office regularly, and should be/could be filed. It's amazing what you can accomplish during this daily or weekly time-out session. These simple rules will help you manage your workspace. You'll have a less chaotic and more creative office, and a more productive workday! 



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