

Are You Drowning in a Sea of Paperwork?

Are you drowning in a sea of paperwork? Would you like to be able to put your hands on that file/document faster? Do you have a system set up to file expense receipts and tax information? Are the drawers, closets, and furniture in your office arranged to give you maximum efficiency of and easy access to these items? Do you have adequate clear desk space to work? Do you assign a home for everything in your office?

These are some of the questions an organizer would ask a client before deciding on which projects to tackle in an office. If you can relate to any of the above questions, you are like many business owners who struggle to maintain order, especially when it comes to paperwork in the office.



You can overcome many of the organizing obstacles by setting up systems that help you store and retrieve items quickly. Here are some of the organizing systems that I use with clients in their offices.

- **Book shelves:** Store only reference books and books that pertain to the business. Move personal books to another place in the house.
- **Supply Closet:** Store additional supplies that can't be used on the desktop or in drawers. Put them in containers and label them for easy retrieval.
- **Hanging File Folders:** Use these for active and archive files. Color coding is helpful to make retrieval easy.
- **Expandable Files:** These are useful for projects or to put tax information in because you can label them with categories.
- **Active Files:** Use color coded interior folders stored in hanging folders to maintain paperwork that is frequently referenced. It is ideal to have these files within arms' reach of your desk.
- **Archive Files:** These are for paperwork that you need to keep, but it doesn't need to be referenced every day. It can be stored away from your desk in a closet or even in another room.
- **Notebooks:** Consider putting some paperwork in notebooks, especially if it all relates to the same topic. These notebooks can be stored on the book shelves.
- **Letter Trays:** These are great to have on or near your desktop for papers that you reference every day. Label each tray with a different category. Some examples are: To Do, To Read, To File, Pending.

These are just a few of the organizing systems available. You may already have your own. Make sure to maintain them every day so that paper does not pile up. Periodically evaluate each system to see if it is working for you. Purge files yearly. After you have collected information for tax purposes is a good time to do this.

Barbara Boone is the owner of Busy Bee Organizing Services. She specializes in helping business clients with organizing needs in their offices. Many of her clients are home-based businesses. You can contact her at 443-854-3563 or email her at Barbara@BZBeeOrganizing.com.