


“A place for everything, everything in its place.”
Benjamin Franklin



Organizing your office can be a rejuvenating (and sometimes overwhelming) task. A lot of work can be spent deciding what to do with each piece of paper, finding the right places (and not piles) for papers, throwing out unused items... the list goes on and on!

Efficiency and effectiveness is the goal with an organized office. Can you get to everything you want to get to, when you want to get to it, all the time? Do you have the ability to “put something away”, and know where it will be when you next need it? Do you have a place for everything and have everything in its place? The less clutter in front of us, the more ability we have to get work done.

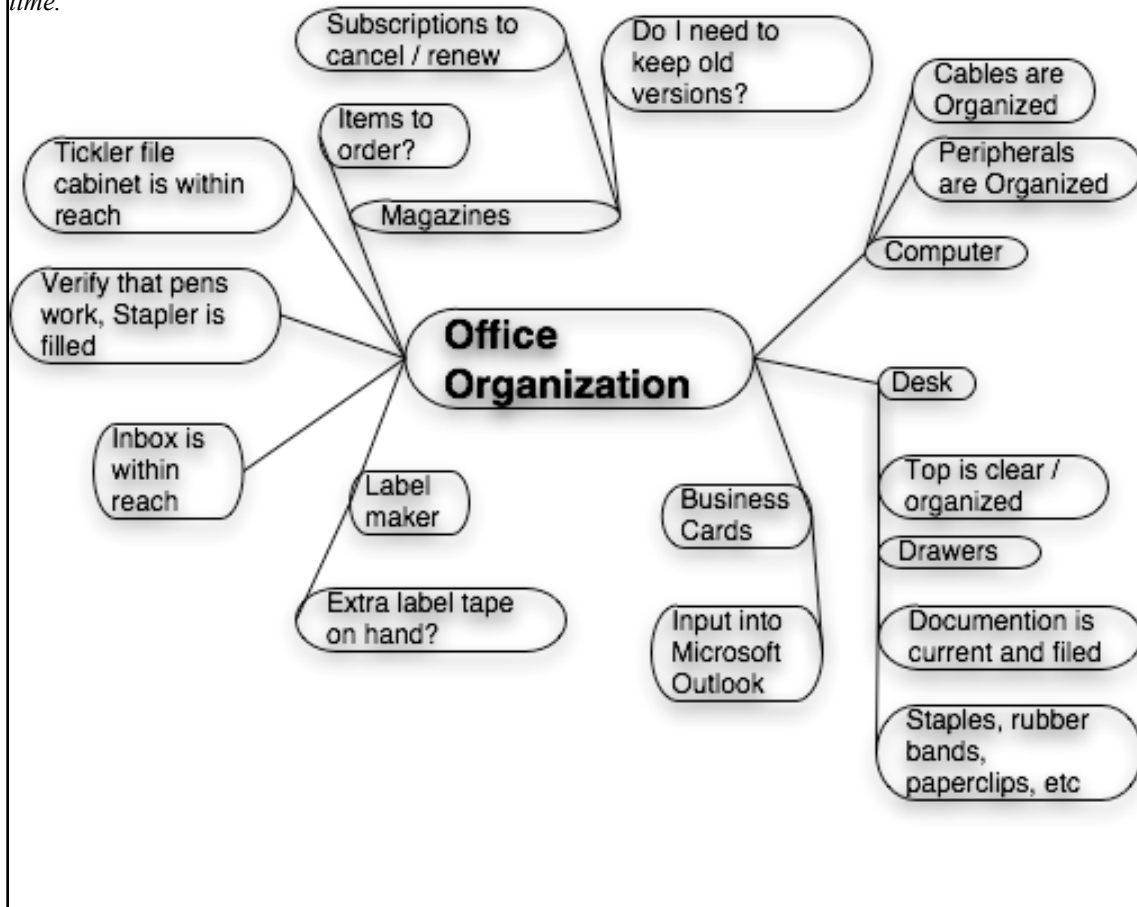
On the following page is a “Office Organization - Objective Worksheet” to show you one example of planning an organized office. This Objective Worksheet walks you through the “Brainstorm, Clarify, Sort” process, giving you a template to use and get ideas from.

The third page offers you several questions that you may then use to fill out your own Office Organization Objective Worksheet.

Taking just a few minutes today could eliminate searching through piles for documents when called upon by your boss or peers, as well as building your confidence and increasing your sense of control.

Enjoy.

1. Brainstorm (about the objective): Look at the objective from all angles. Think about the beginning, middle, and end. Write as fast as you can, knowing that you can add to the brainstorm at any time.



2. Clarify (the final outcome): Clarify the objective. Define “success”; what will be “true” when this objective is complete. Include a timeframe of six-months or less.

By 200x/xx/xx, I will create a fully functional office. This office will allow me to work in an effective and efficient manner. It will be limited from distractions, yet have everything I need to perform my work. I will have a place for all items in my office. I will first assess my storage needs and then I will purchase functional items such as: desks, cabinets, shelves, bookends, and other office supplies.

3. Sort (into tasks): List the tasks (that do not have dependencies) and where they can be completed. Limit the time needed to complete the task to 10-20 minutes.

- Office - Collect business cards into a folder so that I can input them into Microsoft Outlook.
- Office - Look at cables and determine if they can be better organized or need to be replaced. Do I need to purchase cord wrap?
- Office - Locate three items that do not belong where they are and put them away.
- Office - Review three magazine subscriptions. Do I want them? Do I need to cancel/renew? Is there anything I need to order from them?
- Office - Verify peripherals (printer/scanner, storage devices, PDA, speakers, etc) are functioning.
- Computer - Input two business cards into Microsoft Outlook contacts.

Now that you have reviewed a pre-created template for organizing your office, it's time for you to go through the process yourself. The following page has a blank Objective Worksheet for you to fill out.

Using the brainstorming trigger-list of questions below, fill out the "BRAINSTORM" section. Then, "CLARIFY" that goal so specifically that you have a crystal clear idea of just what it is you are working to complete.

Finally, "SORT" tasks that are do-able now, listing their location and specifying who is responsible.

Step 1: BRAINSTORM

- Get all ideas out on paper, don't judge or over-think. Remember, *quantity* is desired.

Whose input do I need to complete the organization of my office?

To whom am I accountable (myself, my boss, my significant other)?

What resources do I have available (work supplies, cleaning supplies)?

What resources do I need to complete this goal (my own cleaning supplies, my own organizational tools, shelves, trays, a new desk, filing cabinets)?

What will this cost (do I need to replace any items? do I need to refill anything?)?

What is my budget

Who can help me (co-workers) or where can I buy equipment?

Who will get in my way (co-workers, bosses)?

What are some roadblocks that I will face (work commitments, distractions, interruptions, phone calls, meetings, budget)?

Who can I talk with to gain insight in organizing an office (friends, co-workers, boss)?

What items in my office are unused/not applicable that I can remove/relocate (furniture, books, supplies)?

What items in my office are broken/non-functioning (pens, cables, furniture, notebooks, computer peripherals, supplies)?

What personal items can I remove (coffee cups, tupperware containers, plants, clothing)?

STEP 2: CLARIFY

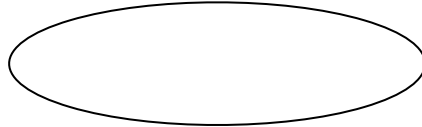
- Define what "done" really means. What is the end state you want for your office?
- Explain what you want to have happen, and give yourself a timeline.
- Create a statement that defines exactly what you want your office to do/be.

STEP 3: SORT

Identify do-able tasks.

- Gather the do-able tasks from the BRAINSTORM step and write them down.
- Select only the tasks that are not dependent on something else being completed.
- List the context (who, what, where) of the task.

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