

Order in the office

KEEPING AN ORDERLY church office is essential for a productive and peaceful work environment. Consider these steps to create and maintain order.

Determine what you genuinely need. Are those piles of files essential? Follow standard guidelines for keeping corporate, legal and personnel files and consider shredding files you don't refer to often—especially if the information is already stored in computer files.

Consolidate supplies. Gather paper, pens or envelopes into one area.

Contain the loose stuff. Clearly label plastic shoeboxes, mini-drawer systems and baskets to contain loose items such as pens, markers, tape, and so on.

Clear surfaces. Keep surfaces of common areas clear of clutter. Not only does this make the office more attractive, it provides room for temporary projects that need to be spread out.

Centralize ordering. Assign one office staffer in charge of ordering supplies. This helps you obtain discounts for bulk purchases. Discourage hoarding in individual work spaces.

Cooperate with others. Schedule "office organizing" in-service days once or twice a year and involve your whole team. Bring in lunch and create contests to reward efforts to de-clutter and organize. Hire a shredding company to pick up and shred material that is no longer needed.

Reduce, reuse, and recycle.

RIP&EQUIP

- Pastors
- Office Administrators
- Ministry Assistants

CLICK&EQUIP REV! subscribers can now download digital versions of this page. Go to rev.org and click on the **CLICK&EQUIP** logo.

Provide bins to recycle paper, cardboard, plastics and cans. Check your local recycling services—some offer donations/rebates for participating. Properly dispose of electronic devices and other hazardous waste. You should be able to cut down on trash pickup costs.

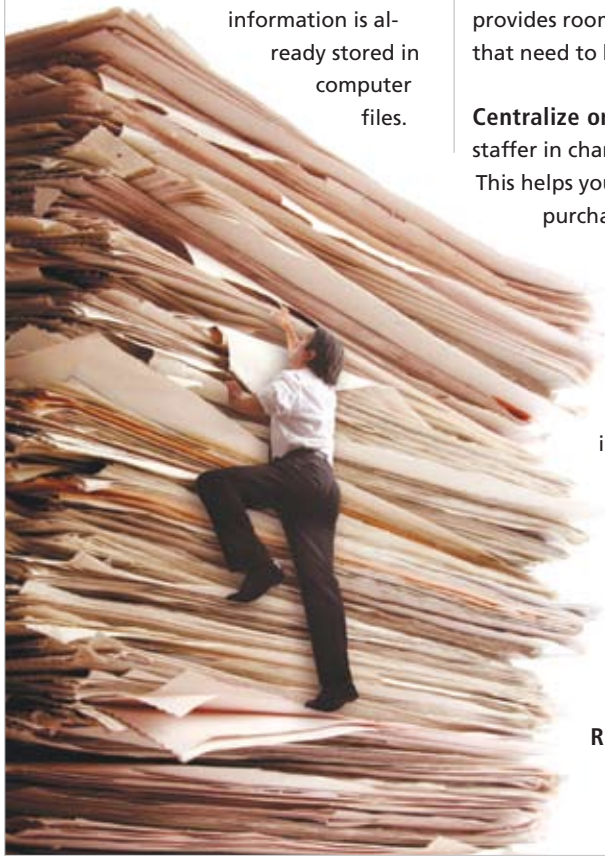
Check the mail area. Are you using solid, attractive mail organizers that can bear daily use and weight? Metal mailbox stations, while sometimes pricier, hold up longer. Magnetic labels are easier to change when staff changes.

Finish the project in stages. Organizing an office all at once can be overwhelming. Work on a section at a time, even 10 minutes per workday. You may be surprised how far you get.

Using these hints will help you keep a "decent and orderly" office space that lends peace to your working hours.

BEST PRACTICE

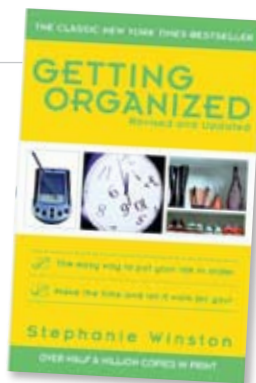
Judi Denney of Capital Christian Center in Sacramento, California, reports that its accounting office devoted an entire day to organizing. "We rarely close the accounting office, but found that this focused time was very valuable. We purged files and got reorganized without the interruptions common on regular workdays. This project helped us be better prepared to serve our congregation with excellence," she said. While not every church is large enough to have an accounting office, this principle can be applied to any church office. Maybe call it a "quarterly sabbath" day dedicated to organizing the office. Turn on voice mail, turn off email, lock the door, and get organized.



RESOURCES

Frieze Consulting (friezeconsulting.com) offers a number of excellent resources to help an office be organized in terms of paperwork.

Getting Organized by Stephanie Winston (Grand Central Publishing) is a venerable and very helpful resource for the "organizationally challenged" person.



BETH BEUTLER (beth@hopeunlimiteforyou.com) is creator and editor of Christianprofessionalwomen.com, which offers a special section for ministry assistants. She has more than 20 years' experience in church and nonprofit office administration.