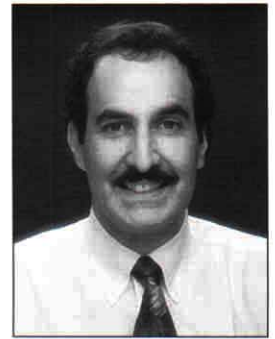


# CONDITIONING YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT



By JEFF DAVIDSON

**L**ife is a desk. To prehistoric man, life was a spear and fire. To the frontiersman, life was a rifle. Today, especially to entrepreneurs, life is a desk. Your desk has to be a comfortable place for you. What does it say if your desk is a continuing mess? You met the din, and the din won.

The quality and ambience of your work space works best when it demonstrates the quality and ambience of your life or how you would like your life to be. What do you want and need on your desk, in it, and near it? It varies for each of us.

*Suggested for the top of your desk:*

- Electronic desktop publishing equipment
- Clear, open space
- Telephone or communication device
- Items used frequently

Periodically assess different items that support your desktop arrangement, such as computer trays, hanging lamps, and swivel mechanisms to conveniently move equipment as needed.

To create more surface space, you could create a mechanical arm that hoists your PC monitor over the desk. It swings forward and back, and left and right. I have one and don't know how I lived without it.

One of the benefits of product overload is that you can find exactly the item you need or want to make you feel more comfortable and be more productive at your desk.

Whatever the item, as you begin reaping the benefits, you will quickly forget the cost. Would you give up your fax machine to get the money back?

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Joe Sugarman, in his book, *Success Forces*, explains that by clearing your desk every evening, you automatically have to choose what to work on the next day. Though such reasoning is contrary to the advice of "time management" experts, I wholeheartedly endorse it. It is a discipline that yields a marvelous sense of breathing space with which to start each day.

Every evening after you've cleared your desk, acknowledge yourself for what you accomplished that day. Don't beat yourself up for what you didn't do. You're doing the best you can. If you can do better, you will, maybe not at once, but soon enough.

Use the end of the day, slow periods, or periods of low personal

energy to revamp your files, keep your desk orderly, and better prepare yourself for high octane output when you're ready to get started again.

What else do you need? I keep a pitcher of water nearby. For me, dehydration, more than anything else is the major grounds for low productivity. In half of the cases when you think you're tired, you're really only thirsty.

To create my own workout, I keep some items on the far end of the my desk so that I have to reach to use them.

Fresh air: You may need two desks. "Two desks?" I am not suggesting that the solution to the clutter that you face is more filling and desk space. Indeed, more space is seldom the answer to being better organized. You may need the second desk, or clear surface area to do creative work, if your present desk is primarily an administrative outpost.

Administrative outposts are useful and necessary for coexisting with the din. Yet, often they are not conducive to ground-breaking tasks, original thinking or emergency projects.

What about inside your desk?—Include frequently needed supplies, but remember: a desk is not a supply cabinet. Maintain a drawer of personal items—your desk is there to support you. Tissues and Velamints are okay.

Include any needed forms or heavily used items, but leave a 20 percent vacancy. To manage the "beforehand" means reserving space

for what is coming. Constantly review what you're holding and decide to retain or toss it.

Near your desk—near but not on goes the loving and familiar—pictures, plants, and motivators. Also install any supporting account-rements, from VitaLites to ocean wave music, if they support your productivity, efficiency, and creativity.

If Moses went to the top of Mount Sinai today, here's what he might bring down to us:

### The 10 Commandments of Deskmanship

1. Thou shalt **CLEAR** thy desk every night. Yes, every night.
2. Thou shalt continually **REFINE** what goes on thy desktop.
3. Thou shalt **NOT** use thy desk as a filing cabinet.
4. Though shalt predetermine what belongs **INSIDE** thy desk.
5. Thou shalt keep 20 percent of thy drawer space **VACANT**.
6. Thou shalt **FURNISH** thy

surrounding office to support thy desk.

7. Thou shalt take **COMFORT** when at thy desk.
8. Thou shalt keep **CLEAN** thy desk and thy surrounding area.
9. Thou shalt **LEAVE** thy desk periodically.
10. Thou shalt **HONOR** thy desk as thyself.

"Thou shalt continually refine what goes on thy desktop," implies that what you used to keep on your desk because it was convenient and useful, may no longer be so.

"Thou shalt keep clean thy desk and thy surrounding area," is important for maintaining control. "Thou shalt take comfort when at thy desk," means that your desk needs to be a comfortable place for you, not a war zone.

### "Conditioning" Investments

To ensure that your desk and office environment supports you invest in yourself. If you need them, room dividers and sound barriers are available in a wide variety of shapes

and sizes and can improve upon any existing sound barriers.

The gentle, rhythmic "white noise" of a small fan's motor serves as a sound buffer to many of the sounds that may distract you. Maybe you want a couch for quick cat naps during the day.

When it comes to technology, buy!—Phil won't spend \$500.00 to double his PC storage capacity. So he shuffles floppy disks all day and loses productivity. What is it, right now, that you know will increase your efficiency? A modem? A fax machine? A desktop copier? A laser printer?

Rule of thumb: Any item that saves you one hour per week for a minimum of one year and costs \$1,000 or less is an excellent buy.

Rule of forefinger: Never mind if you purchased the latest or fastest model; there will always be later and faster models.

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