

Making Your Desk A More Workable Space

Life is a desk. To prehistoric man, life was a spear and fire. To the frontiersman, life was a rifle. Today, life is a desk. Even if you're on the road half the time, your desk has to be a comfortable place for you. What does it say if your desk is always a mess? You met the over-information age, and clutter 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. These items are suggested for the top of your desk:

- EDP equipment
- Clear, open space
- Telephone or communication device
- Frequently used items.

Periodically assess different items that support your desktop arrangement, such as computer trays, hanging lamps and swivel mechanisms, and move equipment as needed. To create more surface space, you could add 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 in our society 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 its benefits, you will quickly forget the cost. Would you give up your fax machine to get the money back?

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. Half of the time 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 my desk so that I have to reach to use them.

Near your desk—but not on it—go the loving and familiar pictures, plants and motivators. Also, install supporting accoutrements, from VitaLites to ocean wave music, if they support your productivity, efficiency and creativity.

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 existing sound barriers. Whether or not your organization will pick up the tab, what is it, right now, that you know will increase your efficiency? A modem? A pocket dictator? 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 about purchasing the latest or fastest model; there will always be later and faster models. ▲

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