

## The Business Times – May 2022

### **Inside the Mind of a Professional Organizer - By Jessi Bushman aka "Organizer Jessi" Kitchen, Office Supplies & Common Areas**

As we kick off May 2022, I wanted to write about “fun” organization in the office! My favorite spaces to improve are business common areas – kitchen/break room, office supply storage and 1<sup>st</sup> Impression/Reception area.

These three areas are frequently forgotten when it comes to creating and maintaining organization. This task typically overflows to the Owner, Office Manager or Receptionist. I'm not sure of your position at work, but, do you know who maintains these spaces? If your initial thought is the cleaning staff, you may misunderstand the difference between cleaning and organizing.

Most cleaning services cover the basics: vacuuming, taking out the garbage and washing floors and bathrooms. When it comes to creating and maintaining the organization of your common areas, its likely this upkeep has been neglected. Presenting an organized and functional space is a way to show gratitude to your employees, guests, clients, patients and visitors.

#### **Let's start with 1<sup>st</sup> Impressions...**

If the front desk serves as someones work station, what is the overall 1<sup>st</sup> Impression you get? Is this clearly a “multi-task” zone with, you know, lots going on?! I'm talking piles of papers, unopened mail, miscellaneous boxes, etc. What about the stacks of outdated magazines covering a small side table next to chairs that could possibly use an update?

#### **If you view the front desk in your office with outside eyes, what does its appearance and overall flow tell you?**

- Does it change your perspective of the business efficiency?
- Do you feel welcome or possibly overwhelmed?
- Is there an opportunities to help yourself to things?
- If someone were to snoop, what information would they see?

I view a front desk the same way I view a service vehicle. I believe a service vehicle's front-dash and overall presentation represents how my personal service experience will be. I'm sure you have all seen a van or two where the front window is littered with papers, wrappers, and whatever else can be wedged into that space. With that said, that impression will likely encourage me to look elsewhere for service.

My dad was a contractor and he's had a few male homeowner question his daily progress, because the house **wasn't** a mess! What does that say about our overall standards and how

we spend money?? Truth is, my dad was very considerate of his clients possessions and made sure to lay drop cloths, clean up and put tools away every night to respect their space. Living in a construction zone is hard enough, people don't need the additional stress of things that are out of their control.

That said, your front desk and 1<sup>st</sup> Impression can translate so much in a **matter of seconds** to your current and potential consumers, as well as employees.

### **Moving into the Kitchen/Break Room...**

The role of this space to offer a welcoming area for employees to relax for lunch or take a break. Regardless of your staff number and the size of your space, it's appreciated when there is a place to sit, an area to stash their daily treat with access to a fridge and microwave. Having the correct number of units to meet the needs of your staff is very important too.

Some break rooms offer dishes and utensils for employees to use, along with a dishwasher.

- With that said, who takes responsibility of the break room inventory?
- Do you use disposable items?
- Who orders, picks up (if not delivered) and puts supply items away?
- Who puts clean dishes away?
- Who maintains the fridge to prevent a science experiment?
- If someone leaves behind a personal item, how long does that sit around?
- How do you inform others where to find stuff or where to put things away at?
- Is there clear communication with your staff regarding expectation for this area?

We all know our mother can't come to work and pick up after us; we're adults! The best way around this situation, is to clearly identify where things go. Clear labels on cabinet doors and drawers is a helpful tool when it comes to organizing a kitchen. Assigning someone, (who actually enjoys doing this) to monitor this area on a weekly basis will save time by spending a few minutes vs. hours in the long run when spaces are neglected.

### **Office Supply Closet/Room:**

This space has become the ultimate dumping ground for ½ used pens, wore out folders, outdated equipment, 3 ring binders and stacking trays galore! It's easy to put an entire day's effort into organizing this space, so eliminate the problem by taking it back.

#### **Start with the essentials and remove the rest!**

Let employees know there will be office supply downsizing. Set up a specific time/day to give away/sell/donate/dispose unused items. Once you have eliminated the excess, identify accessible homes for all of your repeat supplies. Not only will everyone save time looking for something, it will actually enhance your inventory rotation. An added bonus is saving money while understanding your supply needs better.

I'm betting I've provided a new perspective for the common areas in your workplace, and the importance of stepping back and seeing spaces through fresh eyes. Delegate this task to

someone who enjoys organizing or hire a Professional Organizer to create purpose within your space.

**Website:** [organizerjessi.com](http://organizerjessi.com)

**Facebook:** OrganizerJessi

**Email:** [organizerjessi@gmail.com](mailto:organizerjessi@gmail.com)

**Member of the Iowa Professional Organizers Association**