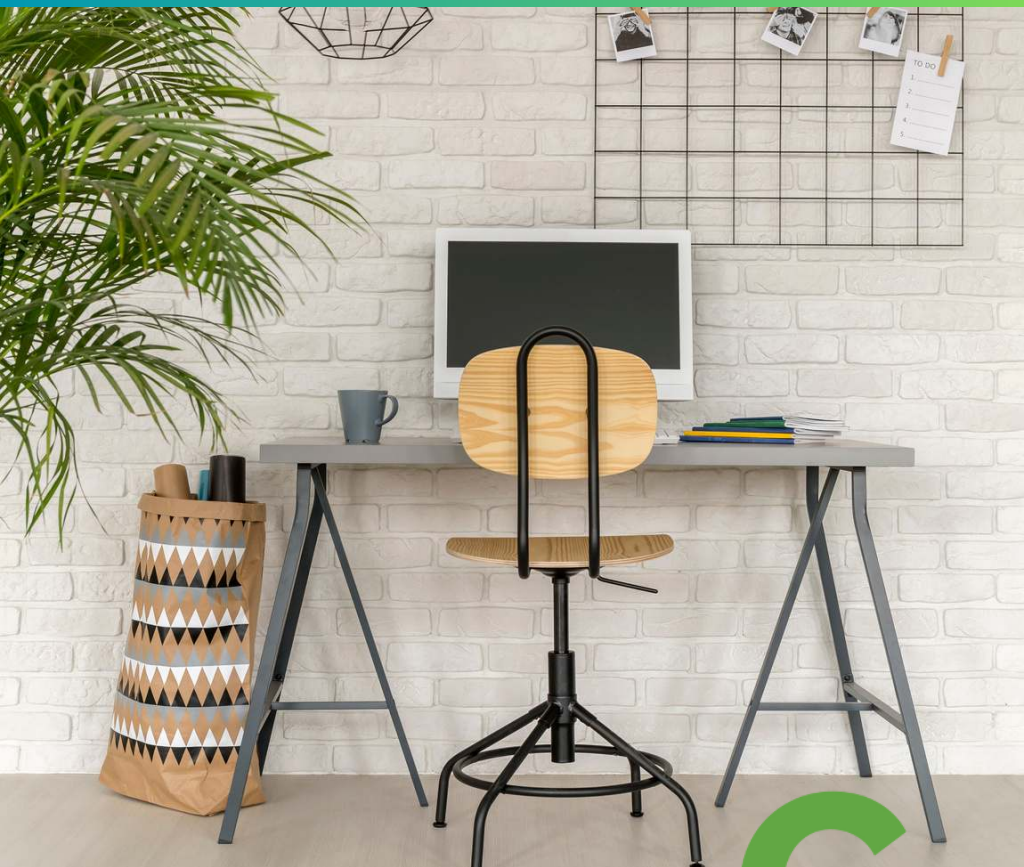


# The Ultimate Guide to Organizing Your Office:

## 10 Steps to a More Efficient Workspace



Lisa S. Griffith, CPO®



Griffith Productivity Solutions

# » Table of Contents

**Step 1** Assess Your Current Workspace..... 3

**Step 2** Set Clear Goals..... 8

**Step 3** Gather Your Decluttering Tools..... 3

**Step 4** Sort and Categorize Items..... 16

**Step 5** Implement the One-Year Rule..... 21

**Step 6** Organize with Purpose..... 39

**Step 7** Create a System for Paper Management.... 47

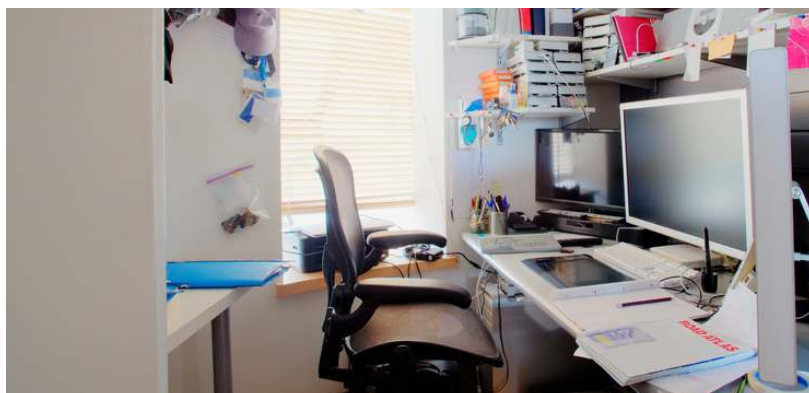
**Step 8** Optimize Digital Clutter..... 57

**Step 9** Establish Daily Maintenance Habits..... 67

**Step 10** Celebrate Your Achievements..... 71

## STEP 1

# Assess Your Current Workspace



Before diving into the organizing process, it's crucial to take a step back and assess your current workspace. This initial evaluation sets the foundation for your entire organizing journey. Here's how to effectively assess your office:

### 1. Take a Visual Inventory

Start by taking a good look around your office. Stand at the entrance and observe your space. What do you see? Make a mental (or physical) note of areas that look cluttered or chaotic.

Consider the following:

- *Desk Area:* Is your desk piled high with papers, office supplies, or personal items? A cluttered desk can lead to distractions and decreased productivity.
- *Shelving Units:* Are your shelves overflowing with books, files, or knick-knacks? Identify items that are rarely used or no longer needed.
- *Filing Cabinets:* Are your filing cabinets jam-packed? Is there paperwork piled on top or on the floor because you've run out of filing space? Check if they contain outdated or unnecessary documents or items that could be digitized.
- *Digital Space:* Don't forget to evaluate your digital workspace. Check your desktop, documents folder(s), cloud storage, and email inbox for signs of digital clutter.



## 2. Identify Pain Points

Think about how your current setup affects your work life. Are there specific areas that frustrate you and affect your productivity the most?

Common pain points might include:

- Difficulty finding important documents or supplies
- Feeling overwhelmed by the amount of stuff on your desk
- Limited desk top space for working
- No space for new projects or tasks
- Distractions caused by visual clutter

## 3. Reflect on Your Work Habits

Consider your daily workflow and how your current environment supports or hinders it. Ask yourself:

- What items do I use most frequently? Are they easily accessible?
- Are there tools or resources that I need but can't find?
- How does my workspace make me feel? Is it inspiring and comfortable, or does it feel stressful and chaotic?

## 4. Gather Feedback

If you work with others in the same space, ask for their input. Ask colleagues for their observations on the office setup. They might notice things you haven't considered or suggest improvements that could enhance collaboration and efficiency.

## 5. Document Your Findings

Take notes on your observations, pain points, and reflections. This documentation will serve as a valuable reference as you move forward with your decluttering project. See below for a checklist of areas to address, goals to set, and items to prioritize.

## 6. Visualize Your Ideal Workspace

Before you start decluttering, take a moment to envision what your ideal workspace looks like. Picture it organized, functional, and beneficial to your productivity.

Consider elements like:

- Clear desk space for focused work
- Organized storage solutions that make sense for your workflow
- A calm and inviting atmosphere with personal touches that inspire you

By thoroughly assessing your current workspace, you'll gain a clearer understanding of what needs to change. This initial step is crucial for setting goals and making informed decisions throughout the decluttering process. Remember, the goal is to create an environment that supports your productivity and encourages your professional aspirations.

To help clarify your thoughts, next is a simple form for you to use to assess your current workspace based on your findings in Step 1.



*Below is a simple form for you to use to assess your current workspace based on your findings in Step 1.*

## Workspace Assessment Form

### 1. Visual Inventory

- Desk Area
  - Describe the current state of your desk:  

---

---
- Shelving Units
  - Note any overflowing shelves or areas of concern:  

---

---
- Filing Cabinets
  - Describe the condition of your filing cabinets:  

---

---
- Digital Space
  - Assess your digital workspace (desktop, document folder(s), cloud storage, email):  

---

---

### 2. Pain Points

- Identify your top three pain points in your workspace:
  1. 

---
  2. 

---
  3. 

---

### 3. Reflection on Work Habits

- What items do you use most frequently?

---

---

- What tools or resources do you struggle to find?

---

---

- How does your workspace make you feel?

---

---

### 4. Gather Feedback

- Notes from colleagues (if applicable):

---

---

### 5. Document Your Findings

- List areas to address and prioritize:

---

---

- Goals to set for decluttering:

---

---

### 6. Visualization

- Describe your ideal workspace:

---

---

## STEP 2

# Set Clear Goals



Setting clear and achievable goals is a critical step in your decluttering process. Without defined objectives, it can be easy to lose focus or become overwhelmed. Here's how to effectively set goals that will guide you toward a more organized workspace:

### 1. Identify Your Purpose

Begin by determining the primary purpose of your workspace. Consider what you want to achieve through decluttering. Are you looking to:

- Increase productivity?
- Reduce stress and distractions?
- Create a more aesthetically pleasing environment?
- Enhance collaboration if you work with a team?

Understanding your purpose will help you establish meaningful goals that align with your overall vision.



## 2. Make Your Goals SMART

To make your goals actionable and measurable, consider using the SMART criteria:

- **Specific:** Clearly define what you want to achieve. Instead of saying, "I want to declutter my desk," try "I want to remove all unnecessary items from my desk and create a designated space for essential tools."
- **Measurable:** Establish criteria for measuring progress. For example, "I will sort through and organize my paper files, reducing them by at least 50% within two weeks."
- **Attainable:** Ensure that your goals are realistic. If you have a lot of clutter, don't try to tackle everything at once. Instead, break larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks. Your disorganized office didn't materialize overnight, it probably took a long time to get that way. It will take a while to restore order, so be realistic about how much time and work it will take to get it the way you want it to be!
- **Relevant:** Choose goals that are meaningful and relevant to your overall objectives. Those designer workspaces you see on Instagram and Pinterest with one pen perfectly aligned next to a clean notepad on an otherwise empty desk with one single, perfectly potted orchid is probably not realistic, or relevant to improving your productivity! Ask yourself how each goal contributes to your vision for a more efficient workspace.
- **Time-bound:** Set deadlines for your goals to create a sense of urgency and accountability. For instance, "I will complete my workspace decluttering project by the end of the month."

### 3. Break Goals into Actionable Steps

Once you've defined your goals, break them down into actionable steps. This makes the process less overwhelming and allows you to track progress. For example, if your goal is to declutter your desk, your steps might include:

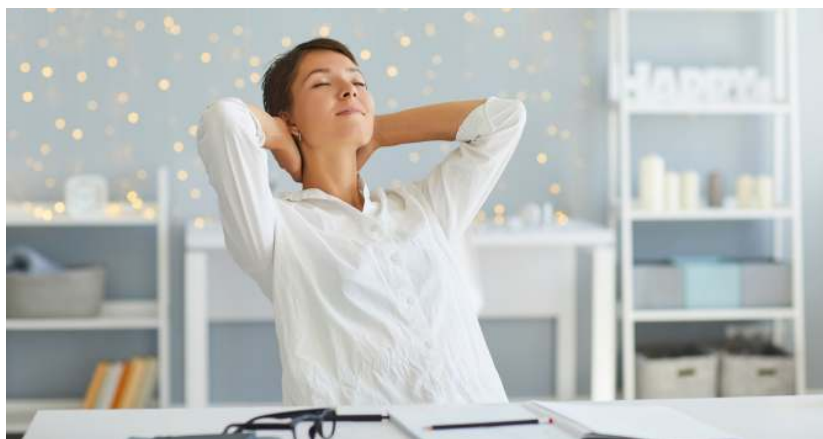
- Remove everything from the desk and sort items into categories.
- Clean the surface and assess what items are essential.
- Organize frequently used items within arm's reach.
- Implement a system for managing incoming paperwork.

### 4. Prioritize Your Goals

Not all goals are created equal. Determine which goals are most urgent or impactful, and tackle those first. Prioritizing your goals helps you focus on what will make the biggest difference in your workspace.

### 5. Visualize Success

Take a moment to visualize what achieving your goals will look and feel like. Picture yourself working in a clean, organized space where everything has a place. This visualization can motivate you and help reinforce the importance of your organizing efforts.



## 6. Document Your Goals

Write down your goals and keep them visible as a constant reminder of what you're working toward. Consider creating a vision board or using a planner to track your progress and celebrate milestones along the way. You may want to take some before and after pictures after each step in your progress. Often, we work really hard on a specific space, but don't think we're making progress. Reminding yourself of how things used to look can be a helpful motivator to continue the work, and serve as a nice pat on the back when you see how much things have improved! ("Before" pictures can also serve as a reminder of how things used to be and a not-so-subtle reminder not to backslide!)



## 7. Be Flexible

While it's essential to set goals, be open to adjusting them as you progress. If you find that a particular approach isn't working, or if new challenges arise, don't hesitate to reevaluate your goals. Flexibility allows you to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain momentum in your decluttering journey.

**By setting clear, achievable goals, you'll create a roadmap that guides you through the decluttering and reorganizing process. This clarity not only helps you stay focused but also boosts your motivation, making it easier to create and maintain a more efficient workspace.**

*Below is a form designed to help you set clear goals for your decluttering and organizing process based on your findings in Step 2.*

## Goal Setting for Decluttering Your Workspace

### 1. Identify Your Purpose

- What is the primary purpose of decluttering your workspace?

---

---

---

### 2. Document Your Goals

- Write down your goals here and keep this form visible:

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---
4. 

---
5. 

---

### 3. Set SMART Goals

- **Specific**

What specific decluttering goals do you want to achieve?

---

---

---

- **Measurable**

How will you measure your progress? (e.g., percentage reduction, number of items removed)

---

---

---

- **Achievable**

Are your goals realistic? List any considerations or potential obstacles:

---

---

---

- **Relevant**

How does each goal align with your overall vision for your workspace?

---

---

---

- **Time-bound**

What is your deadline for achieving each goal?

---

---

---



#### 4. Break Goals into Actionable Steps

- List the actionable steps needed to achieve each goal:

- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Goal: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Prioritize Your Goals**

- Rank your goals in order of priority:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Visualize Success**

- Describe what achieving your goals will look and feel like:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Be Flexible**

- List any potential adjustments you might consider as you progress:

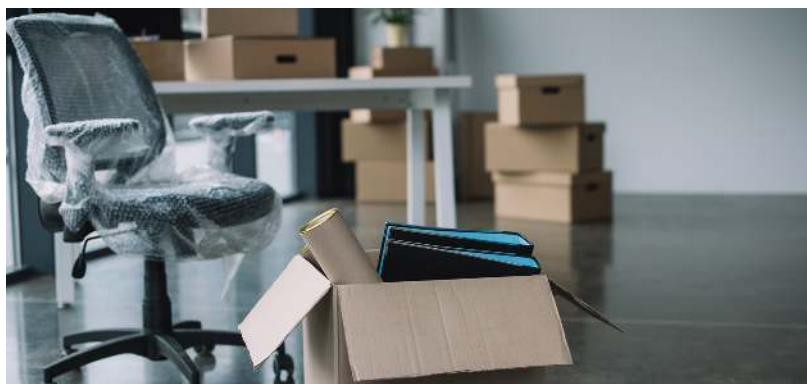
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 3

# Gather Your Decluttering Tools



Having the right tools at your disposal can significantly simplify the decluttering process and make it more efficient. This step focuses on gathering everything you need before you start sorting, organizing, and decluttering your workspace. Here's how to prepare:

### **1. Basic Supplies**

Before you begin, gather the following essential supplies to aid in the decluttering process:

- **Boxes or Bins:** Use boxes or bins to sort items into different categories (keep, donate, recycle, discard). Label each box for easy identification. Use what you have on hand – banker's boxes, laundry baskets, any empty container of a suitable size (like free liquor store boxes...) Don't spend money on this stuff – save that for the fun stuff like attractive bins or baskets or other decorative items you might enjoy when the decluttering process is done!
- **Trash Bags:** Keep sturdy trash bags on hand for disposing of items that are broken, outdated, or no longer useful.
- **Post-it notes:** To temporarily label your sorting containers and file folders.

- **Stationery Items:** Have pens, markers, scissors, and tape ready for sorting and labeling items.
- **Used file folders:** Turn them inside out to hold paperwork temporarily and label with post-it notes.



## 2. Organizational Tools

AFTER you've decluttered all of your physical space and paperwork, you may want to invest in a few organizational tools when you've identified what you're keeping and how much you need. ***(Emphasis on AFTER you've done the decluttering and sorting! Buying organizing supplies before you've done this necessary work is a waste of time and money because what you think you might need will probably change as you purge and sort.)***

- **File Folders and Binders:** Use file folders or binders to organize important documents, papers, and manuals. Consider using color-coded folders for different categories (e.g., invoices, contracts, or personal items).
- **Drawer Organizers:** Use drawer organizers or trays to separate and categorize small items such as office supplies, stationery, or tools. This keeps drawers tidy and makes it easy to find what you need.
- **Shelving and Storage Solutions:** If your office space allows, consider adding shelves, bookcases, or storage cabinets to keep frequently used items accessible while maintaining a clean aesthetic.

### 3. Digital Tools

In today's digital world, managing digital clutter is just as important as tackling physical clutter. Gather tools that can help you streamline your digital workspace:

- **Cloud Storage Solutions:** Utilize cloud storage services (e.g., Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive) to store and organize digital documents and files. This also helps reduce the need for physical paper.
- **Scanning Tools:** Consider using a scanner or a scanning app to digitize paper documents, reducing paper clutter and ensuring important documents are backed up.
- **One caveat:** *remember that it takes TIME to scan documents. Be honest with yourself - if you're not willing or able to invest that time yourself or to hire someone to do it for you, don't bother purchasing a scanner or scanning app. It will just be a waste of money if it sits in the box unused (and make you feel guilty in the process!)*



### 4. Personalized Touches

While the focus is on organization, don't forget to consider elements that enhance your workspace's overall ambiance and inspire creativity:

- **Decorative Items:** Add personal touches like photos, plants, or artwork to make your space more inviting and motivating. Choose items that bring you joy and foster a positive work environment.
- **Comfort Items:** Ensure your workspace is comfortable. Consider a good chair, adequate lighting, or a desk mat to create a conducive atmosphere for productivity. Workspace lighting is particularly important. You should have both ambient lighting (overhead or floor lamps that illuminate the room) and focused, task lighting to light your working desk top space.

## 5. Time Management Tools

In addition to physical and digital tools, consider incorporating time management tools that can help you stay on track during your decluttering process:

- **Timers:** Use a timer to set specific intervals for decluttering sessions. The Pomodoro technique, which involves working for 25 minutes followed by a 5-minute break, can be effective for maintaining focus.
- **Checklists:** Create checklists to outline your decluttering tasks and track your progress. This keeps you organized and motivated as you see items being checked off. Some folks like to use a whiteboard with post-it notes for each task – as you complete your tasks, you can remove the notes. The growing white space can be VERY satisfying! (see below for a form that may help.)
- **Time & Task Management Tools:** This can be a digital app (like Trello or Todoist) or a paper planner and whiteboard. Simple is better. You may often find that tools you already have access to (such as Google Calendar, Google Tasks, etc.) may be all that you need. Resist the temptation to download the latest app – again, be honest with yourself. If you're not willing to put in the time, energy and attention into learning how to use it and use it CONSISTENTLY – day after day after day – don't waste your digital space, time, or money on it.





## 6. Prepare Your Mindset

Before starting the decluttering process, take a moment to mentally prepare yourself. This may include:

- **Visualizing the Outcome:** Imagine how your workspace will look and feel once you've completed the decluttering process. This visualization can boost motivation.
- **Setting Intentions:** Set a positive intention for the decluttering journey. Remind yourself that this process is an investment in your productivity and well-being.

**By gathering the right tools and preparing your mindset, you'll set yourself up for a successful decluttering experience. This preparation not only streamlines the process but also enhances your ability to maintain an organized workspace in the long run.**

*Below is a simple form designed to help you gather your decluttering tools based on your findings in Step 3.*

## Decluttering Tools Inventory Worksheet

### 1. Basic Supplies

- List the basic supplies you need to gather:

- Boxes or Bins:

---

- Trash Bags:

---

- Post-it notes:

---

- Stationery Items (pens, markers, scissors, tape):

---

### 2. Organizational Tools

- Identify the organizational tools to invest in AFTER you've decluttered and sorted:

- File Folders and Binders:

---

- Drawer Organizers:

---

- Shelving and Storage Solutions:

---

### **3. Digital Tools**

- List digital tools that will help you manage digital clutter:

- Cloud Storage Solutions:

---

- Scanning Tools:

---

### **4. Personalized Touches**

- Note any decorative items or comfort items to enhance your workspace:

- Decorative items (plants, pictures, artwork):

---

- Chair:

---

- Lighting:

---





**5. Time Management Tools**

- List any time management tools you'll use during the decluttering process:
  - Timers:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Checklists:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Apps/planners  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Prepare Your Mindset**

- Write down your visualization of the outcome:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Set a positive intention for your decluttering journey:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 4

# Sort and Categorize Items



Sorting and categorizing items is a crucial step in the decluttering and organizing process. It allows you to evaluate what you have, decide what to keep, how much you will keep, and where you will keep it. Once you've done that work, you can create an organized system for everything in your workspace. Here's how to effectively sort and categorize your items:

### **1. Start with a Small Area**

To avoid feeling overwhelmed, start with a small area, such as your desk or a single drawer. Clear everything out of that space, then sort items before moving on to the next area. This incremental approach helps you see progress and keeps you motivated.

### **2. Create Categories**

Once you've evaluated your items, categorize them into specific groups to facilitate organization. With your Post-it notes, label the sorting containers you've gathered from step 3 (boxes, bins, etc.) with the following labels:

- *Desktop*: Items you will keep on your desktop
- *Desk drawers*: office supplies, etc.
- *Paperwork* (to be addressed in step 7)
- *Supply closet/shelves*: back-up office supplies, binders, books, etc.



- Elsewhere*: items that don't belong in this space. Examples: things to take home, or things that belong other spaces in your home if you're working in your home office, files back to the file room, supplies or equipment back to storage closet, etc.
- Equipment*: Printers, computers, chargers, and other electronic devices.
- Donate/Sell*: Items in good condition that you no longer need.
- Recycle*: Paper and other recyclable materials.
- Trash*: Items that are broken or unusable.

### 3. Evaluate Each Item

As you sort through your items, ask yourself these questions for each one:

- Do I use this item regularly? If the answer is no, consider whether it's worth keeping.
- Does this item serve a purpose? If it's no longer useful, it's time to let it go.
- Is this item adding value to my workspace? If it creates clutter or distraction, it may not belong in your workspace.

### 4. Decide What to Keep

This should happen in conjunction with step 3 (above.) Focus on retaining items that are essential, useful, or bring you joy.

### 5. Designate Homes for Each Item or Category of Items

For items in the "keep" category, decide where each category of items will be stored. Find a designated spot for each category, ensuring that frequently used items are easily accessible.

LEAVE ROOM FOR GROWTH!

It's not just important to decide where each item, or category of items will live, it's important to determine if the space you've designated will hold everything, and if you may need room to add more in the future. For example: filing cabinets that are already chock-full won't allow for any additions, and the new stuff will just end up all over your desk, the top of the cabinets, or on the floor.

Conversely, limiting the amount of space you assign to each category and resolving not to add any more unless you let something else go will encourage you to keep clutter to a minimum.

### **6. Address the “Donate/Sell” Category**

For items in good condition that you no longer need, consider options for donating or selling:

- *Donate:* Research local charities, schools, or community organizations that may accept your items.
- *Sell:* Use online marketplaces, garage sales, or local buy-and-sell groups to list items you wish to sell.

### **7. Dispose of the “Recycle” and “Trash” Items**

Make sure to responsibly dispose of items in the recycle and trash categories. Check your local recycling guidelines to ensure you're recycling materials correctly.

### **8. Maintain a “Maybe” Box**

If you're uncertain about certain items, consider creating a “maybe” box. Place questionable items in this box and set a timeline (e.g., three months) to reassess them. If you haven't used or needed them by that time, it's likely time to let them go.

### **9. Celebrate Small Wins**

As you sort and categorize items, take a moment to celebrate your progress. Acknowledge the work you've done, and recognize how much closer you are to an organized workspace.

**By sorting and categorizing your items, you create a clear picture of what you have and what you truly need. This step not only helps reduce clutter but also lays the groundwork for an organized, efficient workspace that supports your productivity and creativity.**

*Next is a form designed to help you sort and categorize your items based on the content in Step 4.*

## Sorting and Categorizing Items Worksheet

### 1. Start with a Small Area

Which area will you start with?

---

### 2. Evaluate Each Item

As you sort, ask yourself the following questions for each item:

· Do I use this item regularly?

☐ Yes

☐ No

· Does this item serve a purpose?

☐ Yes

☐ No

· Is this item adding value to my workspace?

☐ Yes

☐ No

### 3. Create Categories

List the categories you'll use to sort your items

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



#### **4. Decide What to Keep**

·List the items you've decided to keep:

---

---

---

---

---

---

#### **5. Designate Homes for Each Item, or Category of Items**

·Where will each item/category live:

---

---

---

---

---

---

**6. Address the “Donate/Sell” Category**

·List items you plan to donate and where:

---

---

---

---

---

---

·List the items you plan to sell and where:

---

---

---

---

---

---

**7. Dispose of the “Recycle” and “Trash” Items**

·List items to recycle or throw away:

---

---

---

---

---

**8. Maintain a “Maybe” Box**

·List items you’re uncertain about and will place in the “maybe” box:

---

---

---

---

---

**9. Celebrate Small Wins**

·Write down any small wins you’ve achieved so far:

---

---

---

---



## STEP 5

# Implementing the One Year Rule



A clutter-free workspace isn't just about removing the mess—it's about making intentional decisions to keep only what adds value to your daily routine. The One-Year Rule helps you streamline by focusing on what you actually use.

- **Assess Usage:**

Take an inventory of your workspace, including office supplies, files, gadgets, and decorations. For each item, ask yourself, Have I used this in the past year? For example, if gadgets like an old printer or monitor have been gathering dust, it might be time to let it go.

- **Keep Only Essentials:**

Items you use frequently, like your favorite pen or a regularly referenced notebook, should stay. If an item hasn't been touched in over a year, it's likely nonessential. Consider donating lightly used supplies (like binders or stationery) or recycling outdated materials like old brochures.

- **Create Exceptions Mindfully:**

Some items may hold sentimental or monetary value, such as an award, a unique decorative item, or a rare piece of equipment. Keep these only if they genuinely contribute to your workspace's ambiance or utility. For instance, a decorative plant that brings you joy and reduces stress might be worth keeping.

- **Digitize When Possible:**

Papers and files are often the biggest culprits of clutter. If you haven't accessed a physical file in a year but think you might need it in the future, scan it. Use tools like cloud storage or apps such as Evernote or Google Drive to organize digital copies. Label folders with clear names for easy retrieval later.

- **Set Up a Reminder System:**

Prevent future clutter by scheduling an annual decluttering session. This can be part of your New Year routine or a seasonal refresh, say around tax time after you've filed and can let certain paperwork go. For example, set a calendar reminder every December (or April) to evaluate what has and hasn't been used that year.



- **Example in Action:**

Imagine you have a drawer full of tangled cables and chargers, many of which you haven't used in years. By applying the One-Year Rule: Identify the cables you regularly use (e.g., your phone charger).

Discard or recycle outdated ones (like chargers for devices you no longer own).

For cables you're unsure about but haven't used in a year, consider labeling and storing them in a designated box with today's date on it.

Then put a reminder in your calendar to check that box in a year (or shorter time period – like six months). If you haven't gone to retrieve it to use, or have even forgotten it's there, you can be comfortable letting it go knowing you won't miss it!



**By implementing the One-Year Rule, you'll not only create physical space but also reduce mental clutter. A clean, efficient workspace fosters focus and productivity while leaving room for growth and innovation.**



*Below you'll find a worksheet to help you implement the one-year rule.*

# Implementing the One-Year Rule Worksheet

## Step 1: Assess Usage

Take an inventory of your workspace. List out the items in each category and ask yourself: Have I used this in the past year?

Category	Item	Used in last year? (Y/N)	Action to take (Keep/Donate/ Recycle/ Store Digitally)
Office Supplies			
Files/Paperwork			
Gadgets/Tech			
Decorative Items			

**Example:**

- Old Monitor: Not used in a year - Recycle/Donate
- Favorite Notebook: Used daily - Keep

**Step 2: Keep Only Essentials**

Identify the items you use frequently or that add clear value to your daily routine. List these essentials here:

- Items to Keep:

---

---

---

---

- Nonessential Items: (Consider donating or recycling)

---

---

---

---



### ***Step 3: Create Exceptions Mindfully***

Some items hold sentimental or monetary value. List the items you are making exceptions for and why.

Item	Reason to Keep

***Example:***

- Award Plaque: Sentimental value, enhances workspace ambiance.
- Decorative Plant: Reduces stress and adds joy.

### ***Step 4: Digitize When Possible***

Identify physical files or paperwork you can scan and store digitally.

Document/File	Digitized? (Y/N)	Tool used: (Dropbox, Google Drive,etc.)	Notes

***Example:***

- Tax Documents: Scanned into Google Drive with clear folder labels.

**Step 5: Set Up a Reminder System**

Prevent future clutter with a scheduled decluttering session. Decide on a date and add it to your calendar.

Date	Frequency (Annually, Quarterly, Monthly, Seasonally)	Action Steps

**Example:**

- Date: April 30th
- Frequency: Annually (after taxes filed)
- Action Steps: Review paper files - purge, update folders, move to archival storage, shred, recycle



***Final Thoughts: Reducing Physical & Mental Clutter***

Reflect on how the decluttering process made you feel. Answer the following questions:

- How does your workspace feel after implementing the One-Year Rule?

---

---

---

- What challenges did you face during the process?

---

---

---

- What benefits do you see for your productivity and focus?

---

---

---



**By consistently applying the One-Year Rule, you can maintain a clean and efficient workspace that fosters focus, productivity, and growth.**

## STEP 6

# Organize with Purpose



Organizing your workspace is not just about making it neat and attractive. It's about creating a purposeful environment that enhances your productivity and creativity. Organizing with purpose means being intentional about where and how you store items to support your workflow and minimize distractions. Here's how to approach organization with a focus on purpose:

### ***1. Understand Your Workflow***

Before you start organizing, take the time to analyze your workflow and identify how you use your workspace:

- **Identify Key Tasks:** Make a list of the primary tasks you perform daily or weekly. Understanding what you do most frequently will help you prioritize the organization of related materials.
- **Map Out Your Process:** Consider how you move through your tasks from start to finish. Identify the tools, documents, and supplies you need at each stage. This insight will guide you in placing items where they are most accessible.

## 2. Prioritize Accessibility

When organizing your workspace, prioritize accessibility for the items you use most often:

- **Keep Essentials Within Reach:** Place frequently used items—like your computer, planner, and essential supplies—within arm's reach. This minimizes the time spent searching for items and reduces interruptions to your workflow.
- **Designate Specific Areas:** This is particularly important to keep clutter under control. Designate a specific area to keep extra office supplies – in a supply closet or on higher shelving. Decide what paper files need to be close at hand, and what can be stored away from your desk or in an archive situation like banker's boxes in the attic or store room.
- **3. Create Functional Storage Solutions:** Choose storage solutions that fit your workflow and are tailored to your needs:
  - *Use appropriate containers:* Bins, baskets, magazine holders or drawer organizers allow you to store categories of items, making it easy to find what you need without wasting time searching through drawers, shelves, and folders.
  - *Implement Vertical Storage:* Maximize space by using shelves or wall-mounted organizers to keep items off your desk. This creates a cleaner surface and keeps essential tools visible.
- **Label Everything:** Clearly label bins, drawers, and folders. This not only helps you find items quickly but also encourages others in your workspace to put things back in the correct places.





#### **4. Adopt a Color-Coding System**

If you are sensitive to color and like to be able to identify exactly what category items or paperwork are at a glance, color-coding can be a powerful tool for organization:

- *Use Color-Coded Folders:* Assign different colors to various categories of documents, such as projects, clients, or types of tasks. This visual system makes it easy to identify files at a glance.
- *Color-Coded Labels:* Apply colored labels to storage bins or containers. For example, you might use red for urgent items, blue for ongoing projects, and green for completed tasks.

#### **5. Create a Focused Environment**

A well-organized workspace should also promote focus:

- *Minimize Distractions:* Keep your workspace free from unnecessary items that can distract you. Limit personal items to a few meaningful pieces to create a balance between personal touch and professional focus. When personal items accumulate in your work space, it not only contributes to the clutter, but the visual clutter unconsciously takes your focus away from the task at hand.
- *Incorporate Break Areas:* Designate a specific area for breaks or relaxation. This can help you mentally separate work from downtime and encourage productivity when you return to your main workspace.

## 7. Regularly Reassess Your Organization

Organizing with purpose is an ongoing process:

- *Schedule Regular Reviews:* Set aside time monthly or quarterly to reassess your organization. Identify areas that may have become cluttered or items that are no longer needed.
- *Stay Flexible:* Be open to changing your organization strategies as your work evolves. If a certain system isn't working for you, don't hesitate to try a different approach.

## 8. Reflect on the Impact

After implementing purposeful organization, take time to reflect on its impact:

- *Notice Changes in Productivity:* Observe whether you feel more productive, focused, or less stressed in your organized workspace. Reflect on any improvements in your workflow.
- *Celebrate Small Wins:* Acknowledge and celebrate the progress you've made in creating an organized and purposeful workspace. Recognizing your achievements can motivate you to continue refining your environment.

**By organizing with purpose, you create a workspace that not only looks good but also supports your workflow and enhances your productivity. This thoughtful approach to organization empowers you to work more efficiently, reduces stress, and creates a positive environment for creativity and focus.**



*Here's a form designed to help you organize your workspace with purpose based on the content in Step 6.*

## Purposeful Workspace Organization Form

### 1. Understand Your Workflow

- List your key tasks and activities:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Map out your process for each task:

-Task 1: \_\_\_\_\_

-Task 2: \_\_\_\_\_

-Task 3: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Prioritize Accessibility

- What essential items do you need within reach?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Designate specific areas for tasks:

-Area for Creative Tasks:

\_\_\_\_\_

-Area for Administrative Tasks:

\_\_\_\_\_

-Area for Meetings or Calls:

\_\_\_\_\_

### **3. Create Functional Storage Solutions**

- List storage solutions you plan to implement:

Containers:

---

Vertical Storage:

---

Labels:

---

### **4. Adopt a Color-Coding System**

- What colors will you assign for categories?

Projects:

---

Clients:

---

Tasks:

---

Other:

---

### **6. Create a Focused Environment**

- List items to minimize distractions:

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---

- Designate a break area:

Location:

---

Items to include:

---

**7. Regularly Reassess Your Organization**

- Schedule for regular reviews (monthly/quarterly):

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

- Areas to reassess:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Reflect on the Impact**

- What changes in productivity have you noticed since organizing?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- How will you celebrate small wins in your organization journey?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**More time.**

**More space.**

**Less stress.**



Let me help you conquer the clutter,  
get to the bottom of your to-do list,  
and re-discover that elusive work-life balance!



Lisa S. Griffith, CPO®

[Contact Lisa today:](#)

401-289-0042

[lisa@griffithps.com](mailto:lisa@griffithps.com)

**Expert guidance.  
Exceptional results.**



Productivity Coaching & Consulting  
Business & Home Office Organizing  
Paper Management  
Digital Organizing  
Speaking & Training

## STEP 7

# Create a System for Paper Management



In a digital world, managing paper can still be a challenge, especially for small business owners and entrepreneurs who rely on physical documents for various purposes. A well-organized paper management system not only keeps your workspace tidy but also improves your efficiency and reduces stress. Here's how to create an effective paper management system:

### 1. Assess Your Paper Needs

Start by evaluating the types of paper documents you handle regularly. This will help you determine what systems and solutions will work best for your needs:

- **Identify Common Documents:** Make a list of the types of documents you frequently use, such as invoices, contracts, reports, meeting notes, and reference materials.
- **Determine Frequency of Use:** Consider how often you need to access these documents. Are they for immediate use, or are they archived for future reference, legal or tax purposes?

## 2. Establish a Filing System

A well-structured filing system is essential for managing paper effectively:

- *Choose a Filing Method:* Decide between a physical filing system, a digital filing system, or a combination of both. For physical files, use cabinets or binders; for digital files, consider cloud storage solutions.
- *Create Clear Categories:* Organize documents into categories that make sense for your business. Common categories might include:
  - Clients/Customers
  - Projects
  - Financial Documents
  - Insurance
  - Legal/Compliance
  - Marketing Materials
- *Home Office Considerations:* Working from a home office will most likely mean you need to keep personal and family documentation there, as well. It's incredibly important to keep business and personal paperwork separate. Depending upon the size of your office, you may consider a separate, smaller filing cabinet, or clearly delineated drawers in a larger cabinet. Common categories for personal paperwork might include:
  - Financial
  - Insurance
  - Health/Medical
  - Autos
  - Home
  - Family members' names
- *Use Subcategories:* Further divide main categories into subcategories for more detailed organization. For example, under "Clients," you might have folders for each individual client or project.

### 3. Implement a Labeling System

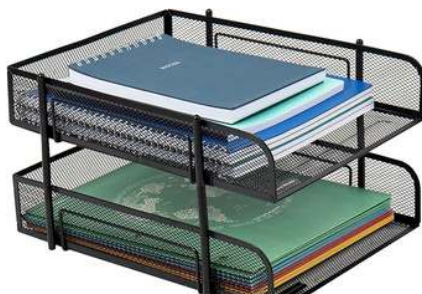
Labels are crucial for easy identification and retrieval of documents:

- *Label Folders Clearly:* Use clear, descriptive labels for each folder or binder, indicating the contents. For digital files, ensure folder names are straightforward and reflect the contents accurately.
- *Subdivided Folders:* Use hanging file folders for larger categories and manila file folders within them for subcategories.
- *Color-Coding:* Consider color-coding your labels for quick visual identification. For example, use one color for financial documents and another for client files.

### 4. Adopt an “Action” and “File” Tray System

Establish a system for managing incoming and outgoing documents:

- *Action Tray:* Designate a specific location for incoming paperwork. This is where you can place items that need action, such as bills to pay, documents to sign, or materials to read.
- *File Tray:* Designate a tray for paperwork that needs to be saved, but doesn't have an action required. This may be paperwork that needs to be kept after an action has been taken on it, or documents that just need to be kept for a certain period of time, like insurance policies or medical documents.



### **5. Set up a “Command Center” for frequently used paperwork**

To keep important paperwork at your fingertips, use a desk top file box with hanging folders for paperwork that require an action that needs to be completed very soon, or information that needs to be saved for SHORT-TERM use.



### **5. Create a Regular Review Schedule**

To keep your paper management system effective, regular reviews are essential:

- *Daily Review:* Spend a few minutes each day sorting through your “in” tray. Process documents that require action, and file away items that are no longer needed.
- *Weekly Review:* Set aside time each week to go through your filing system. Remove outdated documents, archive necessary papers, and ensure everything is organized properly.
- *Monthly or Quarterly Audit:* Conduct a more thorough audit of your paper management system. Assess whether your categories and processes are still working effectively and make adjustments as needed.

### **7. Educate Your Team**

If you work with a team, ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the paper management system:

- *Training:* Provide training on the filing system, labeling conventions, and document handling procedures. This promotes consistency and helps everyone maintain the system.
- *Encourage Best Practices:* Foster a culture of organization by encouraging team members to follow the established paper management practices and regularly declutter their areas.

## 8. Customize for Your Workflow

Every business is unique, so it's essential to customize your paper management system to fit your specific workflow and needs:

- *Be Flexible:* Be open to adjusting your system as your business evolves or as new challenges arise. Regularly assess whether your current setup still meets your needs.
- *Get Feedback:* If you work with others, seek feedback on the paper management system. Collaboration can lead to improvements and enhance the overall effectiveness of your organization.



**By creating a systematic approach to paper management, you'll not only reduce clutter but also enhance your productivity and efficiency. A well-organized system enables you to find information quickly, reduces stress, and allows you to focus on what matters most—growing your business.**

*Here's a form designed to help you create a system for paper management based on the content in Step 7.*

## Paper Management System Implementation Worksheet

### 1. *Assess Your Paper Needs*

- List the types of documents you handle regularly:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Determine the frequency of use for each document type:

Document Type 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Daily/Weekly/Monthly)

Document Type 2: \_\_\_\_\_ (DWM) \_\_\_\_\_

Document Type 3: \_\_\_\_\_ (DWM) \_\_\_\_\_

Document Type 4: \_\_\_\_\_ (DWM) \_\_\_\_\_

Document Type 5: \_\_\_\_\_ (DWM) \_\_\_\_\_

Document Type 6: \_\_\_\_\_ (DWM) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Establish a Filing System**

- Choose your filing method:
  - Physical Filing System
  - Digital Filing System
  - Combination of both
- Create categories for your documents:

Category 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 6. \_\_\_\_\_

- List subcategories for each main category (if applicable):

Category 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Category 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Implement a Labeling System**

- Describe your labeling method:  
Folder/Binder Labels

\_\_\_\_\_

- Digital File Names:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Will you use color-coding?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

- If yes, list color assignments:

Category 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Category 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Adopt an “Action” and “File” Tray System**

- Place in an area within arm’s reach of your chair

**5. Create a Regular Review Schedule**

- Daily Review Plan:  
What will you do daily to manage paperwork?

---

---

- Weekly Review Plan:  
What tasks will you perform weekly?

---

---

- Monthly/Quarterly Audit Schedule:  
Dates for audits:

---

---

**6. Educate Your Team**

- Will you provide training on the new system?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
- If yes, outline the training plan:

---

---

**7. *Customize for Your Workflow***

- List ways you can customize your system to fit your workflow:

---

---

---

- How will you seek feedback from your team about the system?

---

---

---



## STEP 8

# Optimize Digital Clutter



In today's digital age, managing digital clutter is as crucial as managing physical clutter. An overwhelming number of files, emails, and notifications can hinder productivity, cause stress, and make it difficult to find the information you need. By optimizing digital clutter, you can create a streamlined digital workspace that enhances focus and efficiency. Here's how to effectively manage and reduce digital clutter:

### 1. Assess Your Digital Environment

Begin by evaluating the current state of your digital workspace:

- *Identify Clutter Sources:* Take note of where the majority of your digital clutter comes from. This could include overflowing email inboxes, disorganized file storage, or excessive app notifications.
- *Inventory Your Files:* Conduct an inventory of your digital files across all devices. Make a list of major folders and files, noting which ones you frequently access and which have not been used in a while.

## 2. Implement a File Organization System

Creating a clear and efficient file organization system is vital for reducing digital clutter:

- *Create a Folder Structure:* Design a logical folder hierarchy that reflects your workflow. Start with broad categories (e.g., Projects, Clients, Marketing) and create subfolders as necessary to maintain organization. Keep your main categories broad and subcategorize sparingly. You want to reduce clicks to 3 or 4 at the most to find what you need.
- *Use Descriptive File Names:* When naming files, use clear and descriptive titles that indicate the contents. Consider including dates for easier reference (e.g., "Client\_Report\_2024-10-19"). Name your documents and folders with the first name that pops into your head – that will be the first thing you think of when you go to look for it.
- *Regularly Review and Clean Up:* Set aside time regularly—perhaps once a month—to go through your files, delete what's no longer needed, and organize any new files that have accumulated.

## 3. Streamline Your Email Inbox

Managing email effectively can significantly reduce digital clutter:

- *Use Folders and Labels:* Create folders and labels for different categories, such as Projects, Clients, and Personal. This helps you quickly sort incoming emails and locate them later.
- *Unsubscribe from Unnecessary Lists:* Regularly review your email subscriptions and unsubscribe from newsletters or promotional emails that no longer interest you. Make the decision ahead of time to unsubscribe IMMEDIATELY to marketing and other non-essential emails. Especially with online ordering, you will be re-subscribed every single time you order. BE RUTHLESS! The minute that follow-up marketing email comes in, hit the unsubscribe button. This will keep the email clutter in your inbox down to a minimum.

- *Implement the Two-Minute Rule:* If an email can be responded to or dealt with in two minutes or less, do it immediately rather than letting it linger in your inbox.

#### 4. Utilize Task Management Tools

Employ task management tools to keep track of to-dos without cluttering your workspace:

- *Choose a Tool That Fits Your Needs:* Use apps like Todoist, Trello, or Asana to organize tasks and projects. These platforms help you break down projects into actionable tasks and keep everything organized in one place.
- *Set Priorities and Deadlines:* Clearly define priorities for your tasks and set deadlines. This can help you focus on what needs to be accomplished first and reduce overwhelm.



#### 5. Limit App Notifications

Excessive notifications can contribute significantly to digital clutter and distraction:

- *Turn Off Non-Essential Notifications:* Review your app notifications and disable those that are not crucial to your productivity. Consider keeping only the notifications that directly impact your work.
- *Schedule Check-Ins:* Instead of checking your phone or email constantly throughout the day, schedule specific times to look at email. Keep those notifications off – the little red badge, the audio “ping”, the slider across the top of your screen. Set up specific times during the day to read and answer email, instead of reacting in the moment to every email that comes in. This helps you stay focused on your current tasks.

## 6. Back Up Important Data

To prevent the loss of important documents amidst the digital clutter, ensure you have a reliable backup system:



- *Choose a Backup Method:* It's a good idea to have at least two back-ups to your computer hard drive – one local (a hard disk) and one in the cloud. Set up your cloud back up to function automatically so you don't have to think about it.

- *Regular Backup Schedule:* Set a regular schedule for backing up your data to ensure that you always have a recent copy of important files. Back up on your hard disk every single night. Plug it in at the end of your work day, or just before you go to bed. Consider how much time, energy and stress you may save yourself if something happens to all of your digital information!

## 7. Optimize Your Desktop and Browser

A cluttered desktop and browser can hinder your productivity:

- *Keep Your Desktop Organized:* Limit the number of icons on your desktop. Create folders for different categories (e.g., Work, Personal) and regularly clean up any files that have accumulated.
- *Organize Your Browser:* Use bookmarks to categorize and save frequently visited websites. Organize bookmarks into folders for easy access and consider using browser extensions that help manage tabs and reduce clutter.

## 8. Embrace Minimalism in Digital Tools

Evaluate the digital tools and software you use:

- *Limit the Number of Apps:* Consolidate your tools and software by only using those that are most helpful and user-friendly to your work.

- **Evaluate Tool Effectiveness:** Regularly assess whether the tools you are using are still meeting your needs. If an app is not adding value or enhancing your workflow, consider replacing it with a more effective alternative. Often the best “tools” are the simplest ones. If you’ve downloaded an app or software and either aren’t using it regularly or haven’t taken the time to learn it, it’s wasting your time and probably your money!



## 9. Set Clear Boundaries

Establishing boundaries around your digital workspace can help reduce clutter and improve focus:

- **Define Work Hours:** Set specific work hours and avoid checking work emails or tasks outside of those times. This helps create a clearer separation between work and personal time. Remember that if you've gotten into the habit of responding to work emails and texts at all hours, you've established a precedent of what people will expect of you. The expression “teach people how to treat you” applies readily to this situation. When you don’t respond in a knee-jerk fashion immediately to every missive that comes your way, you will teach people when to expect a response from you.
- **Designate Digital Breaks:** Schedule breaks during your workday to step away from screens. Screen time is tough on your brain and your eyes (staring at a screen reduces your blink rate – drying your eyes and making them This can help reduce fatigue and improve overall productivity.

## 10. Reflect on Your Digital Space Regularly

Regular reflection on your digital workspace can help you stay organized:

- *Assess Effectiveness:* Periodically review your digital organization system and assess its effectiveness. Are you still finding it easy to access files? Is your email inbox manageable?
- *Adjust as Needed:* Be flexible and willing to adjust your systems as your work demands change. Continual optimization will help ensure that you maintain a clutter-free digital environment.



**By optimizing digital clutter, you can create a more efficient and focused work environment that supports your productivity. A well-organized digital workspace not only reduces stress but also enables you to find information quickly and concentrate on what truly matters in your business.**

Here's a form designed to help you implement strategies for optimizing digital clutter based on the content in Step 8.

## Digital Clutter Optimization Plan

### 1. Assess Your Digital Environment

- Identify the main sources of your digital clutter:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Inventory your files across devices:

- Major Folders:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Implement a File Organization System

- Create a folder structure:

- Main Categories:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- Describe your file naming convention:

- Example: \_\_\_\_\_

- Review and cleanup schedule:

- Frequency (e.g., monthly): \_\_\_\_\_

- Specific tasks:

---

---

---

### 3. Streamline Your Email Inbox

- Folder and label categories:
  - Categories:
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
    4. \_\_\_\_\_
    5. \_\_\_\_\_
- List subscriptions to unsubscribe from:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- Daily email management plan:
  - Tasks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Utilize Task Management Tools

- Tools you will use for task management:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
- Prioritization strategy:
  - How will you prioritize tasks?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Limit App Notifications

- Apps to disable notifications:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
- Scheduled check-in times for notifications:
  - Times: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Back Up Important Data**

- Choose your backup method:
  - Cloud Storage
  - External Hard Drive
  - Both
  
- Regular backup schedule:
  - Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Dates for backups: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Optimize Your Desktop and Browser**

- Desktop organization plan:
  - Steps to organize: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - Folder names: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Browser organization:
  - Bookmark categories: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**8. Embrace Minimalism in Digital Tools**

- List apps and tools you currently use:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- Evaluate their effectiveness:

- Which tools do you find most useful?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Which tools can you replace or eliminate?

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Set Clear Boundaries**

- Define your work hours:

- Work Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

- Schedule digital breaks:

- Break times: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Reflect on Your Digital Space Regularly**

- Review schedule:

- Frequency of assessments: \_\_\_\_\_

- Tasks for reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Adjustments needed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## STEP 9

# Establish Daily Maintenance Habits



Creating a daily maintenance routine is essential to keeping your workspace clutter-free. Here are some additional tips to ensure your efforts pay off in the long run:

- **Adopt a "One In, One Out" Rule:** For every new item you bring into your workspace, remove an old one. This prevents unnecessary accumulation.
- **Keep Essentials Within Reach:** Designate specific spots for items you use daily, so you can quickly store and retrieve them without disrupting your workspace.
- **Set a Daily Reset Time:** Allocate 5–10 minutes at the end of each workday to tidy up, file documents, and reset your space for the next day.
- **Use a Desktop Organizer:** Limit your desktop items to essentials like a pen holder, notepad, or monitor stand to minimize clutter.

- **Check for “Clutter Magnets”:** Identify areas like drawers or corners where clutter tends to accumulate and inspect them daily.
- **Reassess Your Workspace Weekly:** While daily maintenance is key, take a few minutes weekly to evaluate if any items are out of place or no longer needed.
- **Digitize When Possible:** Scan paper documents and store them digitally to reduce physical clutter.
  - **One consideration to keep in mind:** Often, we decide to digitize piles of paperwork to keep the clutter down. Bear in mind that scanning paperwork takes time, energy, and thought. While keeping documents digitally can certainly cut down on the paperwork you need to keep, it's really important to have a specific process to get paperwork scanned in. If you have a huge backlog that you want to keep digitally, consider hiring someone to do the initial load of scanning. It will be easier to keep up then on a weekly basis. Remember that you need to FIND the documents you've scanned in later, so be sure to establish a very consistent naming convention for every document and folder as you're scanning (or make sure if someone else is doing it for you that you give them very specific guidelines for naming and storing what they're scanning.) You will need to set up a regular time every week to do your scanning, just as you do your paper filing. It takes time and energy to go paperless. Be sure you're willing to expend that time and energy before you establish any kind of digital document storage!
- **Stay Mindful of Consumption:** Be intentional about what you print, buy, or bring into your workspace to limit future clutter.
- **Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledge your effort to maintain a clean and functional space—it will keep you motivated to stick to your habits.

These small, consistent habits will ensure your workspace stays productive, inviting, and stress-free. Maintenance checklist below:

## Daily Workspace Maintenance Checklist

### 1. Workspace Reset (End-of-Day Routine)

- ❑ *Clear the Desk:* Remove non-essential items and return everything to its designated spot.
- ❑ *File Documents:* Organize loose papers into appropriate folders or scan and digitize them.
- ❑ *Empty Trash/Recycling:* Dispose of unnecessary papers, packaging, or waste.
- ❑ *Check for Clutter Magnets:* Inspect drawers, shelves, or corners for misplaced items.
- ❑ *Prepare for Tomorrow:* Place tools, notes, or resources you'll need tomorrow in a central spot.

### 2. Inbox Management (Digital and Physical)

- ❑ *Sort Through Emails:* Archive or respond to unread emails.
- ❑ *Organize Physical Inbox:* File or address mail, memos, or printed documents.
- ❑ *Declutter Digital Desktop:* Remove temporary files and organize downloads into folders.

### 3. Weekly Review (Every Friday)

- ❑ *Inspect the Space:* Are there items out of place? Return them to their designated areas.
- ❑ *Reassess Essentials:* Are all items on your desk necessary? Remove excess tools or decorations.
- ❑ *Check Supplies:* Restock essential supplies like pens, paper, or sticky notes.

**4. Notes & Observations**

- What did you notice about today's maintenance?  

---

---
- Are there any problem areas or recurring clutter magnets?  

---

---
- What action will you take to improve or simplify this process?  

---

---

**By completing this checklist daily, you'll ensure your workspace remains clean, organized, and ready to support your productivity.**



## STEP 10

# Celebrate Your Achievements



Recognizing and celebrating your achievements is a vital aspect of maintaining motivation, boosting morale, and reinforcing positive habits in your workspace organization journey. Taking the time to acknowledge your successes, both big and small, fosters a sense of accomplishment and encourages continued progress. Here's how to effectively celebrate your achievements:

## 1. Define What Success Looks Like

Before you can celebrate, it's important to establish clear criteria for what constitutes an achievement:

- *Set Specific Goals:* Clearly outline the goals you aim to achieve in your workspace organization efforts. Whether it's decluttering a specific area, implementing a new filing system, or optimizing your digital workspace, having defined objectives provides a foundation for celebration.
- *Acknowledge Milestones:* Break larger goals into smaller, manageable milestones. Each time you reach one of these milestones, take the opportunity to celebrate. This approach creates a sense of progress and makes the overall goal feel more attainable.

## 2. Create a Celebration Ritual

Having a dedicated ritual for celebrating achievements can help reinforce positive habits:

- *Personal Celebrations:* Develop a personal celebration routine that resonates with you. This could be treating yourself to your favorite snack, taking a walk, watching an episode of a favorite show, or indulging in a hobby you love.
- *Team Celebrations:* If you work with a team, consider organizing group celebrations for collective achievements. This could be as simple as hosting a team lunch or sending out a “kudos” email to recognize everyone’s contributions.

## 3. Document Your Achievements

Keeping a record of your achievements not only provides a tangible reminder of your progress but also serves as motivation for future efforts:

- *Maintain an Achievement Journal:* Create a dedicated space (physical or digital) to document your achievements. Write down what you accomplished, how you felt, and the steps you took to reach your goals.
- *Create a Visual Display:* Consider creating a visual representation of your achievements, such as a chart or a vision board. Seeing your progress visually can be a powerful motivator.

## 4. Reflect on Your Journey

Celebration is not just about acknowledging the end result; it’s also about reflecting on the journey:

- *Evaluate Your Progress:* Take time to reflect on the challenges you overcame and the lessons learned along the way. Understanding what worked well and what could be improved will inform your future organization efforts.
- *Appreciate Your Efforts:* Recognize the hard work and dedication that went into achieving your goals. Celebrating the process, not just the outcome, fosters a growth mindset.

## 5. Share Your Success with Others

Sharing your achievements with friends, family, or colleagues can amplify the positive feelings associated with your accomplishments:

- *Communicate Your Success:* Whether through a social media post, an email to a colleague, or a conversation with a friend, sharing your achievements can reinforce your sense of accomplishment. “Before” and “After” pictures of a disorganized workspace turned organized can be a great celebration – and a motivator to keep the space organized in the future!
- *Encourage Others:* Use your successes as a way to inspire and motivate others. Share what worked for you and encourage them to pursue their own organizational goals.



## 6. Reward Yourself

Incorporate tangible rewards into your celebration process:

- *Set Up a Reward System:* Decide on specific rewards for achieving milestones or goals. These could be simple pleasures, such as a nice dinner, a day off, or purchasing a book you've wanted to read.
- *Invest in Your Workspace:* Consider treating yourself to an organizational tool or item that enhances your workspace, like a new planner, desk organizer, or digital tool that supports your productivity. Often when we organize a physical space, we end up with containers and folders that have been emptied. Re-using those supplies can save you a ton of money, but sometimes, purchasing new, coordinating supplies can make your space so attractive, it will inspire you to keep it up! Sometimes, it's a great idea to just TREAT YOURSELF!

## 7. Stay Mindful of Your Achievements

Make a conscious effort to recognize and appreciate your accomplishments, regardless of their size:

- *Practice Gratitude:* Develop a gratitude practice that includes reflecting on your achievements. This can be as simple as listing three things you accomplished each week and taking a moment to appreciate them.
- *Cultivate a Positive Mindset:* Emphasize the positive aspects of your journey and the impact of your achievements on your overall productivity and well-being.

## 8. Use Achievements as Motivation for Future Goals

Your achievements can serve as a springboard for setting and pursuing new goals:

- *Set New Challenges:* Once you've celebrated a milestone, consider what your next challenge will be. Setting new goals keeps you engaged and motivated.
- *Reflect on Lessons Learned:* Use your past achievements to inform your future endeavors. What strategies worked well? What obstacles did you overcome? This reflection can help you approach new challenges with confidence.

**Celebrating your achievements is a crucial step in maintaining motivation and reinforcing the positive habits you've developed in your workspace organization journey. By acknowledging your progress and rewarding yourself along the way, you cultivate a mindset that values growth and accomplishment, making it easier to tackle future goals with enthusiasm and commitment.**



Here's a form designed to help you implement strategies for celebrating your achievements based on the content in Step 10.

## Achievement Celebration Plan

### 1. Define Success

- List your main goals for workspace organization:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Identify milestones for each goal:

*Goal 1:*

- Milestone 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Milestone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

*Goal 2:*

- Milestone 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Milestone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

*Goal 3:*

- Milestone 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Milestone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Create a Celebration Ritual

- Personal celebration ideas:

---

---

---

- Team celebration ideas (if applicable):

---

---

---

**3. Document Your Achievements**

- Decide on a method to record your achievements:
  - Achievement Journal
  - Visual Display (e.g., chart, vision board)
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Write a brief description of a recent achievement:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Reflect on Your Journey**

- List challenges you overcame during this journey:
  - 1.
  - 2.
- What lessons have you learned?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**5. Share Your Success**

- How will you share your achievements with others?
  - Social Media Post
  - Email to Colleagues
  - Conversation with Friends
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Reward Yourself**

- Identify specific rewards for achieving your goals:
  - Goal 1 Reward: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Goal 2 Reward: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Goal 3 Reward: \_\_\_\_\_



- List any workspace items or tools you'd like to invest in:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Mindfulness and Gratitude**

- List three achievements from the past week to be grateful for:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Set New Challenges**

- What new goals or challenges will you pursue next?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
- What strategies will you use to achieve these new goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_