

Spring Organizing for the Office

Let's be honest. Maribeth Callicoat did not want to work with me. To her credit, she had a lot going on in her role as Controller at the Chamber of Commerce and she simply didn't think she had the time to spend with me, a Professional Organizer, on getting her office organized.

She was, however, getting pretty tired of working in the chaos that had become her office. She found she was more inefficient because she could no longer find things easily amidst the piles of papers. Check out the "before and after" pictures to see the amazing transformation!

Spring is a great time for a fresh start, so if you want to clean up and get organized, try some of these ideas to get going:

- **Start with a vision.** What would you like to see when you walk in your office? Or better yet, what do you want your boss to see?! What do you want the space to feel like? How do you want to be different at work?
- **Analyze the paper flow.** If you struggle at work because you don't have an easy and effective system for processing the paperwork, try jotting down the different aspects of your job. Don't forget committees you serve on and projects you're responsible for.
- **Pick the right tool for the job.** Now look at your list and identify what you don't have a good system for. One of these tools might help:
- **Pendaflex Pilesmart clips, trays, and files.** Check out these revolutionary organizing products at OfficeDepot.com. There is nothing wrong with piling, if you make the pile mean something and can identify what's in it. It's when the pile is a mish-mash of everything that problems arise.
- **Use baskets or shallow trays for each big project or repetitive tasks like data entry.** Place them side-by-side and you'll be more

likely to use them than if they are stacked on top of each other.

- **Desktop File Boxes are handy for those who like file folders.** Just keep the lid off so it's easier to use. Check out the Real Simple boxes at Target.

- **Binders are great because they are portable.** Put binder folders in them so you don't have to 3 hole punch and can file quickly after the meeting.

- **Assess your storage.** If the horizontal surfaces are covered with papers, it may be because your

filings cabinets are jammed full. You might disagree, but the answer is not another filing cabinet! Instead, purge the old documents that are no longer relevant. A full 80% of filed documents are never retrieved again.

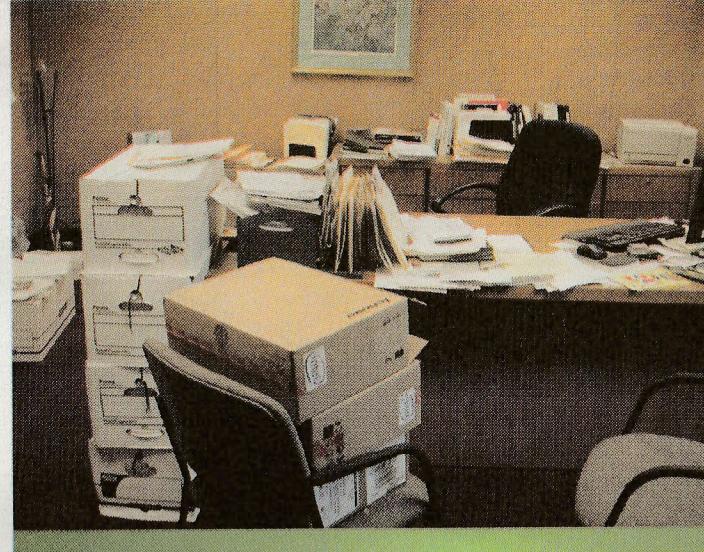
- **Resolve to make quick decisions.** As you sort through items, be brutal and decisive. It might help to stand up so you don't get too comfortable. Also try using a timer to make sure you are aware of the passing of time and don't get caught up in the minutia.

For organization assistance for your office, contact Emily Fitzgerald of Organized Living Solutions at (260) 456-7703 or e-mail emily@organizedlivingsolutions.com. You may also visit www.organizedlivingsolutions.com for more information.

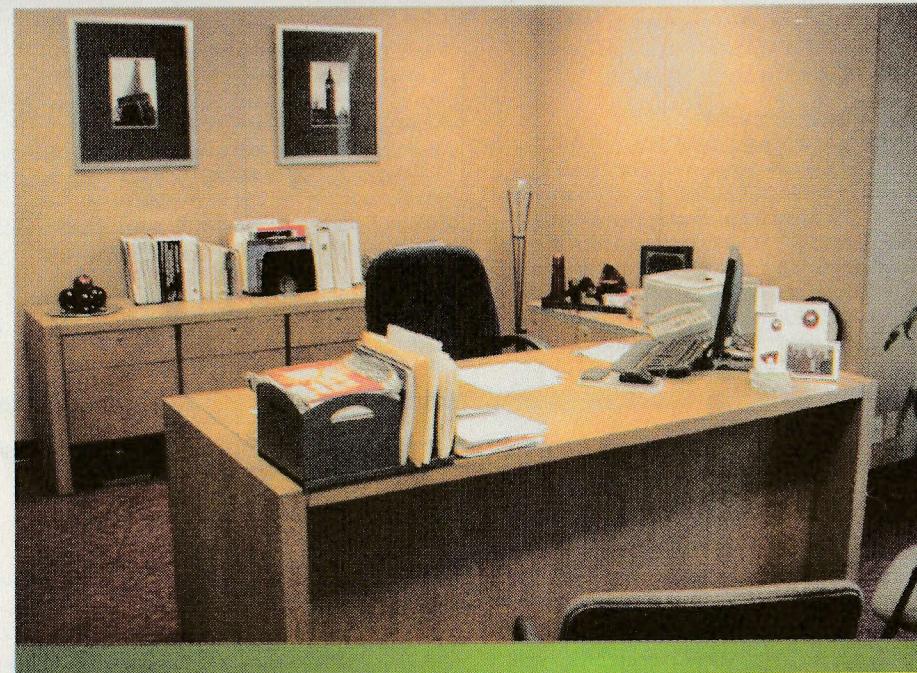
Emily Fitzgerald is a Certified Professional Organizer (CPO) through the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO). With over 4 years of experience serving hundreds of clients, she is Northern Indiana's most highly credentialed organizer.



Emily Fitzgerald



At left, Maribeth's office prior to the assistance of Emily Fitzgerald of Organized Living Solutions.



The space is neater and more professional, but the most important change is that Maribeth now has an adequate system to deal with her current projects and an effective filing system for easy access to her reference files.