

The “Daily Plan-It™”

SHUMATE BROKERAGE CORP.

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No More Clutter!

We're all bombarded by clutter. When a client or co-worker enters your office, does she see huge stacks of papers, files, magazines, and other assorted items strewn across your desk? If so, what does it say about you? Do you manage clutter, or does clutter manage you?

Experience has shown that people react negatively when they see a cluttered environment. Clutter tends to slow down response time and leads to inefficiency. It costs businesses money in lost time, since it's wasteful for employees to spend time searching for lost information. And it slows down creativity. It also sends a signal that you accept lower standards. Is that how you want your clients to perceive you when they walk into your office?

Be Proactive

If you feel your office is in need of either an extreme makeover or gentle touch-up, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself as you begin the process of cleaning up:

- What's the reason for each and every stack of documents?
- Where does each file belong?
- Are any files, or sections of files, missing?
- Are there any papers piling up in unusual places?
- When was the last time your desk was truly clean?

If you're in need of de-cluttering, here are five tips to help you along the process.

1. Create an effective filing system and refile all loose papers and files.
2. Discard any magazine or newspaper that hasn't been read in three months.
3. Forget the past, or you may enter a state of overwhelm. Begin answering current emails and letters, and catch up on the backlog as time allows.

4. Look for chronic problem areas.

5. Make sure you give yourself enough time to reorganize. It took you years to build up the mess; breaking the habit won't happen overnight.

When the office works more efficiently, employees work better. So does the business. When the business works better, it tends to attract *more* business. When more business is attracted, more success will come your way.

If you need any reminders to keep away clutter, just ask your best clients if they prefer a clean or cluttered desk. Most people will back away from a cluttered office. When they back away, they tend not to refer business to you. If you haven't had any recent referrals from clients who have visited your office, take a look around to see if clutter may have scared them away.

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