

SETTING UP A PROPER HOME OFFICE

I asked business owners across North America what they thought were **Mandatory**, **Desired** and **Unwanted** items for an optimal home office setup. I got some FAB tips - and even pretty cool pics of home offices. Read on and then let your creativity flow into your office space!!

Mandatory Items for a Functional Home Office

A Multi-Function Centre

Invest in a four-in-one office machine: printer, fax, scanner, and copier.

For the desk space footprint of one machine you get four functions.

It is also easier to scan papers to be filed in the computer than it is to just file them in the drawer.

This upgrade really helps professionals who want to go more paperless in their office.

Eve Abbott, Organizer Extraordinaire - www.Organizer-Extraordinaire.com

A Label Maker

Everybody needs a label maker. Labelling files, containers, and drawers helps to define where your stuff and your paper live, and makes their homes more official. When things are clearly labelled, it's easier to put things away and to stay organized. Label makers aren't too expensive - some of my favourite Brother models can be found on sale at many office supply stores for under \$30. Keep your label maker and extra label cassettes handy, and as soon as you create new file folders or put stuff in a container, create a label immediately.

Joshua Zerkel, Professional Organizer - <http://www.customlivingsolutions.com>

A Table Lamp

Put a lamp on your desk; not a desk lamp with an occlusive shade, but a table lamp with a translucent shade. This gives you a larger and more softly diffused circle of light on your work surface. Why is this important? Less eye strain and fewer headaches. Use "warm white" or "soft white" compact fluorescent light bulbs in the lamp. "Cool white" and "bright white" give any room a cold institutional look.

Linda Varone - Nurturing Spaces Consulting - www.lindavarone.com

Current Software

Get the current version of the software used by your customers, and then buy a machine that's adequate to support it. Don't "cheap out" on video cards or monitors: you'll be staring at the screen for four to eight hours a day, so you'll be smart to get the largest, sharpest display you can afford. It's a lot easier to compromise on machine speed or memory, but top-notch video quality is essential.

Bill Horne

Paper & Pens

Lots of pens and paper, for capturing ideas. I personally have a few open notepads open around me so I can capture notes and ideas wherever I am in the house/office.

Good Coffee-Maker

Although coffee is usually not good in the office, at your home office you have the opportunity to have the best coffee in town.

Harry Mylonadis, Mimimoko Design - www.minimoko.com

Plenty of Supplies for You AND Your Family!

The family's scissors, tape, markers, pens and pencils should be in an area that is easily accessible to them so they won't have to interrupt you in order to use your supplies.

Make sure they understand that your office is not the family's office supply store.

Holly Uverity, Certified Professional Organizer®, Office Organizers – The Entrepreneur's Organizer - www.officeorganizers.com

Ergo Chair & Keyboard Tray

The most important tools in a home office are the correct chair and a keyboard tray. A chair that fits your body correctly can alleviate or prevent all types of aches and pains. An adjustable keyboard tray, not a single height keyboard drawer, allows you to get the keyboard and mouse to the correct height reducing strain on the neck and shoulders as well as alleviate contact pressures and adjust the wrist angle to minimize risk for carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.

Chris Sorrells OTR, CHT, CEAS, President, www.ErgonomicsSimplified.com

Room Separator

If you absolutely cannot get your own room, get a room partition or oriental screen to separate the work portion of the room. (This is what I do). You do not want to be able to see the unmade bed, or that pile of laundry, or any other mess from your normal life or you will find yourself doing chores instead of working.

Kris Hull - <http://www.KR15.com>

Desirable Items for a Functional Home Office

Uninterrupted Power Supply

This doesn't always come cheap but it's a good investment. A UPS will save you and pay you back the investment when you are working on that very important project, the power goes out and you hadn't saved a thing.

Harry Mylonadis, Mimimoko Design - www.minimoko.com

Labelled Notebooks & Bookcase

For some, hundreds of files can be daunting. It is helpful to have a bookcase with frequently used information contained in easily accessible labelled notebooks

Anne Jones

Two Monitors

Set up a two monitor system. One to put your email, social network, news sites on. And the other you can do your work

Gary Unger, Creative-at-Large - www.garyunger.com

Custom Designed Workspace

Get a custom designed workspace to make the most of your available space. One that anchors to the wall with shelves is a particularly effective without using much of your floor plan. Also a standing height work surface make a great variation for tasks such as cutting or mounting, or just a change in posture.

Ben Thompson, Creative Director - Studiofluid, Inc. - <http://studiofluid.com>

Microphone & Headset

One way to make money is to create your own products. A great product is to do a teleclass and charge for it. "Make money in your p.j.s" is a common phrase (although I don't recommend doing business in p.j.s for the simple reason that when you're not dressed you don't feel as professional and may not come across as one on the telephone.)

Eileen Roth, Your Organizing Tour Guide - Speaker and Author of Organizing For Dummies(R) - <http://www.everythinginitsplace.net>

Unwanted Items for a Functional Home Office

A Television

...this is a time waster and if you are like me you will want to watch CNN or HGTV for a few minutes and 30minutes later you are still watching...

Leslie Jacobs - www.lesmess.com

Other Necessary Items for a Functional Home Office

A Post Office Box

For safety purposes, consider getting a P.O. Box instead of using your home address for your business mail. You never know what crazies may be out there.

Professional Clothing

Get up every morning and dress professionally enough that if a surprise opportunity presented itself, you wouldn't be caught with bed-head in your bathrobe.

Susan Wilson Solovic - SBTv.com - www.sbtv.com

Interior Décor Foresight

Sit comfortably at the desk and sweep your arm left to right. The desktop under the space between your elbows to your wrist should be empty or have just your keyboard/mouse - *this is the active workspace*. Place things you grab daily - stapler, tape, pens etc. in the space covered by your wrist to your fingertips. Place things you grab less frequently just past the finger tips and place decorative items to the back corners.

These are my Frequency of Use Rules:

Use it every day - place in or on the desk. Use it every week - put it in the desk or within reach of the desk. Use it at least once a month - it should be within reach of the desk or elsewhere in the room. Use it less than once a month -it can be in the room or even somewhere else in the house. Proper placement has a big impact on clutter and productivity.

Susan Lannis, Time Liberation Agent, ORGANIZATION Plus! Inc. www.LiberateTime.com