

# OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF FILING

*By Chris Perrow, President, Perrow Systems*

Studies show that executives spend up to six weeks per year searching for misfiled mislabeled or misplaced paperwork. A woman with whom I recently worked claimed she wasted at least one hour a day looking for what she needed when she needed it. If her company billed out her time at \$75.00 an hour, her lack of order conceivably cost her company \$19,575 in potential revenue.

The symptoms of disorganization are unfortunately all too common:

- Stress that can lead to physical or mental illness, and a feeling of hopelessness
- Reduced productivity
- Lost business and opportunities due to poor scheduling or an inadequate paper trail system
- Poor productivity from overlapping job tasks when there's a lack of clear communication.
- Purchasing items you probably already have but can't find.
- Lost income from forgetting to invoice a client
- Higher bills due to late payments from forgetting to pay bills by the due date
- Poor growth potential - it's hard to move forward when you're spinning wheels on the runway.
- Overtime pay when you give your staff a last-minute job you forgot all about

## WHAT DOES ORGANIZATION “LOOK” LIKE?

Being organized does not necessarily mean being neat, tidy and clean. Very neat and tidy offices are inhabited by “scoopers” It looks neat and tidy because they have shoved everything into a drawer or closet. Real organization means being able to grab what you want when you want it, consistently and effortlessly. And even if you ‘re certain you can’t squeeze out the time to develop order in your world, at least consider creating an effective paper system.

For the woman who had wasted an hour a day looking for paperwork, we designed a very basic, yet effective system that required only a few inexpensive organizational props that allowed her to regain most of her lost hours. Total time spent organizing: one hour. Total cost, (including supplies): \$100.00

## TOOLS FOR OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF FILING

Many people suffer from a fear of filing. They’re afraid they will forget about or lose an item, so they pile it instead. The following filing systems are simple, easy ways to keep important information readily accessible.

*Vertical wall files:* These clear file folders are mounted vertically on the wall, with papers and documents in full view. They can be purchased at most office supply stores for around \$5.00 each. Clearly and boldly label each file so others now where to put documents and papers. This can cut down on interruptions when you are trying to stay

on task.

*Open Drawer Desk Files:* These open file 'crates' sit on your desk, use vertical file folders and are always open, making it easy to drop things in and take things out. They can be purchased at most office supply stores or Wal-Mart for around \$9.00

*Calling Card Files:*

Purchase a standard, flat Rolodex without a cover. If there is a cover, you might have the urge to shove cards under the cover rather than inserting them properly. Or get an index file box with alphabetized dividers. Glue or tape calling cards on the file card and use the back of the card to make notes.

Whatever system you ultimately devise, it's important that you incorporate a routine procedure: By doing the same thing at a given time in a similar way, your actions will soon become habit.

**About Chris Perrow:**

Chris Perrow designs organizational systems that fit the nature of the individual, department or company, helping people perform at their peak while maintaining order and flow. As President of Perrow Systems in Silver Lake, Ohio, Chris conducts training for time management, lean office, productivity, change management, leadership, and employee development. Perrow is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO).

Chris holds a BA in psychology from Muhlenberg College. She has helped clients like Kent State University, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Office Max and SummaCare. to achieve new productivity through new, lasting process training Contact Chris at Perrow Systems at 330-686-0282 or by e-mail at [info@perrowsystems.com](mailto:info@perrowsystems.com), or view her website at <http://www.perrowsystems.com>.