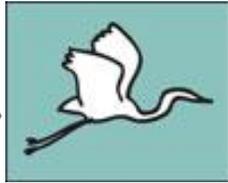


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**Print this article back-to-back with The Office Clutter Flow Chart for a fun, unique, inexpensive, educational handout.**

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## Is It **Office** Clutter?

**What is Office clutter?** Clutter comes in many forms. When it comes to your office, clutter (a.k.a. *visual noise*) can prevent you from focusing on the work you do there. Examples include excess papers and supplies, décor, things that actually belong in other rooms, and unfinished (or finished) projects. For all items in your office, ask yourself these questions: “Do I *use* it? Do I *love* it? Do I *need* to keep it? **If the answer is yes -- you use, love, or need to keep it -- great! Continue using it, and store it in an organized manner.** But for offices there are two more important questions to ask yourself: “Do I enjoy working in this space?” and, “Does it inspire me to be creative and productive?”

### Why can't I part with my **Office** clutter?

Here are some reasons why this is difficult for many:

**It was a free sample or promotional item from a trade show or networking event.** If you aren't going to use it, it's clutter. Assign one small drawer or bin to such materials and purge it before it overflows.

You don't have to take everything you are offered at a networking event!

**It's a business card, flyer or brochure.** If you aren't going to follow up with the person, or add them to your mailing list (with their permission, of course), or buy their product or service, it's clutter.

**My kids made it, or it was a gift.** OK, but does it belong in your office? Select a few personal items to display and purge the rest or store them elsewhere.

**It's related to my former job or to a completed project.** If you don't need it anymore get rid of it. If you do need to keep it, just be sure you don't store it on your desktop, or within arm's reach. That's *prime real estate* and you need an uncluttered surface to use as a work space for current projects.

**I paid good money for it.** So what? Don't clutter your present with past mistakes!

**The bottom line: If you don't use it, love it, or need to keep it, it's clutter.**

**What should I do with my Office clutter?** This one's easy: Toss, shred, recycle, gift, sell, or donate it. Or simply find a home for it in another room, if it does not support your office productivity and creativity. If you have lots of stuff to sort through, pack it up in stackable boxes (labeled, with lids) so that you can start using your uncluttered office NOW! Sort through the boxes one at a time (perhaps a box per day) until finished. If your office is crowded, store seldom-used records and reference materials elsewhere.

### What if, despite my best intentions, I am still living with **Office** clutter?

If you absolutely cannot part with your clutter at this time, you must pack it up to create space for working. (See above.) If you need help, call a friend or a professional organizer.

**Congratulations, you are on the road to becoming **Office** clutter free!**