April Wellness: Detox Your Desk   By Anne Praino

The first day of Spring was officially March 20th and seeing as Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow thereby predicting an early onset of warmer weather, we should start preparing. One of my favorite traditions of this season is Spring Cleaning. We have spent the cold months hoarding food, supplies, and possibly a few extra pounds for that "winter blanket" to keep us warm. **But now it's time to "clean house", as they say. Shed the excess. For our purposes—we need to detox our desk.** Now just the thought of approaching those piles of paper and folders that have accumulated over these past few months (or years for that matter) may be daunting and further, not a valuable use of your time, but we are going to attempt to change your mind.

Let's start with the basics. **Decluttering makes your workspace safer.** Many of us are privy to sensitive information including Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and personal medical histories in this business. Any of that documentation that you have lying around your desk is confidential. Following a clean desk policy will help your organization reduce the risk of information theft, fraud, or a security breach caused by sensitive information being left unattended and visible in plain view. A preventive measure towards compliance in regards to the protection of personal information.[1]

For those around you, your workspace is a reflection of you—there is no denying that truth. "A professional person takes pride in his or her appearance whether it's your outfit or your desk."[2] Co-workers, managers and clients could very easily interpret your desk as a mirror to how professional you are and potentially how trustworthy. A tidy workspace suggests attention to detail. Take it a step further and that environment suggest superior products and services as well. It shows a pride in your work. [3]

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On a more personal level, **a clean desk will increase your efficiency and ultimately save money.** According to an International Data Corporation (IDC) report, a typical employee spends 2.5 hours a day searching for information.[4] Many of us have a stack of items accruing next to our keyboard which may or may not be related to one another. Piling paperwork in this manner often obscures items underneath, resulting in wasted time searching for what you are looking for when you need it. In addition, those mounds of paper start taking over your workspace. Ultimately, the work space becomes dysfunctional and an obstacle to you in your effort to complete quality work in a timely manner.[5]

And on an internal level, taking on **the task of removing and re-organizing your workspace is an exercise in self-development.** The process is a series of decisions. It's problem-solving. You will need to make final decisions in regards to keeping and storing every item you deem valuable or getting rid of them for good. It is empowering. If you can clean your desk successfully, it will help build your confidence in your decision-making skills and could very well increase your own level of competency.[6]

So how do we go about it? For some it will be a work in progress. Instead of trying to revamp the whole space in one day, **make a plan**. Whether it be an area of your workspace or a designated amount of time that you allocate to the process each day — incorporate decluttering into your daily tasks. Check email, answer voicemail, de-clutter. Begin your day.[7]

Tycor's April Wellness challenge is just that. <u>Designate five minutes every day to declutter your desk. Each time you perform this task, you will make room for new ideas, clear thoughts and a more efficient work life.</u> In the words of Benjamin Franklin "For every minute spent organizing, an hour is earned."

Imagine what we will do with all of our time….

Sources

[1] TMAdmin, 2019

[2,3] Seana Turner, n.d.

[4] PrivacySense. Net, n.d.

[5] TMAdmin, 2019

[6] Boynes, 2018

[7] Sander, 2018