

Ban chaos from your law office

Chaos within a law office can be good and bad. On the positive side, chaos often indicates that your practice is thriving and busy with clients. On the negative side, it's a strong indication of disorganization and poor planning. Chaos also serves as an open invitation for costly mistakes and missed opportunities. Don't let your office become overwhelmed with chaos. Take control of the turmoil by implementing some administrative structures that will increase the organization and efficiency within your legal practice.

The Value of an Organized Day

There is nothing worse than starting the day in a state of confusion. If you spend your mornings trying to remember what time a settlement conference begins or when a real estate contract is due, you absolutely need to reevaluate your scheduling system. With an effective scheduling application, every task is quickly and easily accessible. With one swipe on your phone or computer, you can view your entire day, week, or even your month.

But having the software is only half the battle. It doesn't work if you don't use it. Make sure your assistant is properly trained to maintain your calendaring system. This means that you also have to ensure that he or she is made aware of schedule commitments you make on your own. You may find it helpful to sit down with your assistant once or twice a week to review your calendar for completion and check for any conflicts. A little effort now can keep trouble-making chaos away later.

Order in the Files

A messy file indicates a messy mind. How many times have you been in court and seen a lawyer walk in with files so messy they made you cringe? Maybe you are the one in the courtroom making all of the other attorneys cringe. What do you think that level of disorganization says to a client or even a judge? An orderly file not only exemplifies your professionalism, but it can also save you tons of time and frustration.

While electronic files are a great way to wrangle in this chaos, some areas of legal practice just require paper files. If this is the case in your firm, use dividers and a consistent filing system to keep files organized. A documentation checklist or table of contents helps you see what's inside and quickly find it. Also, even when working with paper files, make sure to maintain an electronic backup just in case something happens to the paper version.

Bring in Reinforcements

If chaos is running rampant in your law office, maybe it's time to bring in an administrator or manager to whip things into shape. As an attorney, you have a lot on your plate. An administrator can takeover the daily tasks necessary to efficiently run the office, while you focus on your clients and getting their matters completed. Click [here](#) for a post entirely dedicated to bringing in an administrator. Even on a part-time or contractual basis, an administrator can be incredibly valuable to your practice, as well as your piece of mind.

Now, it may be impossible to completely ban every moment of chaos from your law office. After all, you are a law firm and the unexpected is pretty much expected. But you can still have systems in place that help you create an organized environment, so when the chaos does come plowing through the door, you are ready to handle it.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.