Is it time for an office upgrade?

Business is booming. There's no shortage of clients and you've had to bring on two new associates to help with your impressive caseload. But if these new attorneys are sharing a workspace in the middle of your conference room or fighting for time on an available computer, it could be time for a workspace upgrade. I know this may not be what you want to hear, but appearance matters and an overcrowded, disorganized office is not the first impression you want to give prospective clients.

Here are a few more indicators that suggest you've outgrown your office:

- Employees are distracting one another – You have to talk to practice law. You talk on the phone. You talk to clients. You talk to other lawyers within the office. If these conversations cannot take place without distracting from the work of other employees, you need more space. Particularly within a law office, a lack of privacy can also lead to confidentiality concerns. So, walk around the office one busy afternoon and pay close attention to what you are hearing. If there's too much noise, your practice may not have enough space.
- Lack of storage space – Are your filing cabinets filled to the brim? Files stacked up high on on top of desks and cabinets not only looks bad, but it can also lead to disorganization and missing documents. What about your state regulations? Are you required to have locking filing cabinets? Well, they can't lock if they can't even close. Hopefully, your practice will only continue to grow, so you will keep running up against this problem if you don't find a longterm solution.
- What happened to the conference room – I mentioned this in the intro, but this is a common problem worth repeating. When the conference room becomes an office space, you are left without a conference room… and I guarantee that there will come a time when you need a conference room. Then, your attorneys are stuck trying to move all of their work to a temporary location, until their "office" is available again. It's inconvenient and it appears unprofessional.

- Poor employee morale – While there may be a number of issues causing low morale, an uncomfortable workplace is a definite possibility. Employees want to be comfortable when performing their duties and this really isn't an unreasonable expectation. An agreeable office environment makes for more productive employees, who have all of the resources they need to perform their jobs effectively.

Business growth is a wonderful thing, but you must be willing to expand your practice space along with your practice.

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.