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G93-1165 Essentials of a Home Business Center

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Essentials of a Home Business Center

This publication outlines the equipment, storage space and supplies needed to set up a well-equipped home business center at a reasonable cost.

Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Extension Family Economics and Management Specialist

A business center doesn't have to be elaborate. But, to be adequate it should...

1. be located in a convenient, comfortable area of the home;
2. provide necessary equipment, supplies, papers, records and references; and
3. have good light.

Where Can It Be Located?

You may be able to find space for a home business center in just about any room of your house. Ideally you would have a special room--an "office." But few homes today are large enough for such luxury. Instead, consider a spare corner in the living room, dining room, a bedroom, kitchen or family room. You'll also need storage space for inactive records. That space might be in the attic, garage, basement, under a bed, on those hard-to-reach top closet shelves, under stairs or in the back of a deep closet.

What Do You Need in a Business Center?

Essential Large Equipment

- Ample, sturdy writing surface
- Sturdy, comfortable chair
- Storage space for current records and papers, equipment, supplies

This does not automatically mean you need a desk and file cabinet. You can use the dining room table as your writing surface and a nearby cabinet or chest for storage space. A desk and storage unit can be built into an unused closet. A plywood or hollow core door mounted on two two-drawer file cabinets provides both storage and writing surface. Or, you could use a new or remodeled standard office desk and file, or a combination desk and metal file unit.

Necessary Storage Space For:

1. Small equipment and supplies (pencils, pens, paper clips, scissors, stationery, etc.), such as in a divided shallow drawer, divided tray or box, etc.
2. Reference materials (telephone directory, address book, desk calendar, dictionary, catalogs, etc.).
3. Important papers, records and documents.
4. Temporary storage for incoming or unfinished transactions (bills to be paid, unanswered letters, etc.), such as a small box, basket, spindle or other device.
5. An active file for current receipts, correspondence, bank statements, account books, etc. A small check file, a cardboard box that will hold manila folders, expanding manila envelopes, small portable metal files, a drawer in a desk, or a one-to-four drawer filing cabinet can all be used.
6. An inactive file for storing certain important records and papers kept at home for future references or for permanent records other than those best kept in a safe deposit box. Make the inactive file the same size as the active file to help in transferring materials from one to the other.

Essential Small Tools and Supplies

Pencils, pens	Eraser
Paper clips, rubber bands	Pencil sharpener
Transparent tape	Stationery (personal and business)
Scissors	Account books
Ruler	Stamps
Deposit slips	Dictionary
Desk Calendar	Wastepaper basket

Optional Small Tools and Supplies

You decide if these will earn their keep in valuable storage space!

Glue or rubber cement	Sponge for moistening envelopes and stamps
Stapler	Letter opener
Spindle	Book ends
Paper weights	Hole punch
Address book	Parcel post scale
Typewriter	Bulletin board
Adding machine	Parcel post labels

You will also need to provide adequate lighting for an efficient business center. For more information on lighting see *HEG83-174, On the Light Side--Incandescent and Fluorescent*, available from the Cooperative Extension Service office in your county.

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