Systems

Corporate Efficiency Organizing

THE CEO SYSTEM

The Executive Office Filing System

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When we get busy our paperwork tends to accumulate in piles. This causes deadlines to be missed and information to be misplaced. To eliminate this problem, it is important to implement a filing system that will allow you to efficiently manage documents. Implementing this filing system will enable you to efficiently file your papers, access your information, and keep track of your receipts. We understand that the process of setting up a new filing system can seem overwhelming. We recommend blocking out four hours of uninterrupted time, once a week for two weeks, to create your new system.

- Step One: Purchase the tools needed.
- Step Two: Label all of the files according to the instructions.
- Step Three: Sort all of your papers into your new filing system.
- Step Four: If you have old files that are no longer relevant, sort through them and file any relevant paperwork into your new filing system.

The Tools Needed

- One easy to open, sturdy, two or four drawer filing cabinet
- Several boxes of multi-colored hanging files (Approximately 50 total)
- One box of 100 manila folders
- One package of multi-colored file folder labels

The System

Your filing cabinet should have at least two drawers. Within these drawers there will be thirteen different sections. Each section will be assigned a different color, allowing you to distinguish one section from another. We have assigned suggested colors for each section below, but, any color combination will work. The hanging files can then be alphabetized within each section. Not every executive will need every section. Determine your needs and adjust your filing system accordingly.

The top drawer of your filing cabinet will be broken down into seven main categories:

1. To Do
2. Current Projects
3. Unpaid Invoices
4. Current Clients
5. Networking Groups
6. Expense Receipts for Reimbursement
7. Receipts/Paid Invoices.

The bottom drawer will be broken down into six main categories:

1. Vendor Files
2. Blank Forms
3. Business Documents
4. Past Clients
5. Inactive/Completed Projects
6. Reference Material.

You will also want a separate system to keep track of business cards and leads. This information is located at the end of the booklet.

How to Label the File Folders

- Label individual hanging file folders according to each category's directions.
- Label manila folders by sticking a file folder label sticker on a manila file and then label it according to the directions.
- When you need to work on a particular file, select the manila folder and leave the hanging file in the filing cabinet. The hanging file acts as a place holder in the drawer, to insure that the manila file is returned to the correct location.

Label the Top Drawer

Red- To Do
Label one red hanging file and one manila folder "To Do."

Red- Current Projects
Label one red hanging file folder and one manila folder for each project that you are currently working on. Label the files according to each project name.

Green- Unpaid Invoices
Label one green hanging file "Unpaid Invoices."
Label one manila folder "Unpaid Invoices."

Yellow- Current Clients
Label one yellow hanging file and one manila folder for each of your current clients. Label the files according to the client's name.

Blue- Networking Groups
Label one blue hanging file and one manila folder for each networking group that you currently participate in. Label the files according to the group's name.

Purple- Expense Receipts for Reimbursement
Label one purple hanging file and one manila folder "Enter."
Label one purple hanging file and one manila folder "Pending."
Label one purple hanging file and one manila folder "Reimbursed."
Place a letter size envelope in each file for small receipts.

Yellow- Receipts and Paid Invoices
Label twelve yellow hanging files for receipts, one for each month. Example: Receipts January. Label a corresponding manila folder for each hanging file. Place a letter size envelope in each file for small receipts.

Label the Bottom Drawer

Blue- Vendor Files

Label one blue hanging file and one manila folder for each vendor that you purchase items from regularly. Label the files according to the vendor's name.

Green- Blank Forms

Label one green hanging file "Blank Forms."
Label one manila folder for each of the business forms that you print regularly.
Label the manila folders according to each form's name.

Purple- Business Documents

Label one purple hanging file "Business Documents."
Label one manila folder for each category: Contract; Policy; Liability Insurance; EIN; Lease; etc.

Yellow- Past Clients

When a current client becomes a past client, simply move the hanging file from the top drawer to the bottom. These files should be stored in the hanging file folders that they were created in until they become inactive.

Red- Inactive/Completed Projects

Label one red hanging file and one manila folder for each project that you are not currently working on. Label the files according to each project's name.
Label one red hanging file and one manila folder for each project that you have completed. Label the files according to each project's name.

Green- Reference

Label one green hanging file and one manila folder for each category of reference material that you need to store. Reference material includes interesting articles, educational material, etc. File reference material alphabetically.

How to Use the System

Top Drawer System

Red- To Do
File the papers that require your attention or action, but are not part of an ongoing project, in your "To Do" file. If the paper represents a task that will take less than three minutes to complete, you should do it immediately. If it will take longer than three minutes or requires more information, write a note on your to do list, ensuring that you won't forget, and file the paper in your "To Do" file.

Red- Current Projects
A project can be defined as anything that you are actively working on or overseeing. A project is completed by working through a set of tasks over a certain period of time. Always schedule the tasks that you need to complete for your projects on your calendar. You can then file any corresponding paper in the correct project's file. When you need to work on a particular project, select the manila folder and leave the hanging file in the filing cabinet. When you are finished, return the manila folder to the drawer. Never have more than one project file out on your desk at a time.

Green- Unpaid Invoices
File all unpaid invoices in the "Unpaid Invoices" folder as soon as they arrive. Schedule a time on your calendar once or twice a month to go through this file and write the necessary checks. Write the check number and the date of the payment on the invoice and file it in the proper month's receipt file.

Yellow- Current Clients
Each client that you are currently working with should have a file. Keep a signed copy of your contract and any relevant information in each client's file. Once you complete your work with a client their file should be moved to your "Past Client" section.

It is not necessary to keep billing information in each client file, although you can. If you need to keep copies of receipts or billing information in the client's file, please keep a photocopy of this information in the client's file and place the original document in the proper month's receipt file. This specifically applies to services such as contractors where materials are purchased and then passed on to the customer.

Blue- Networking Groups
You should have a file for each networking group that you actively participate in. If you need to complete a project for one of these groups, you can move the file to the red "Current Projects" section and then move it back when the project is complete.

Purple-Expense Receipts for Reimbursement

Executives often need to keep track of their receipts so that they can be reimbursed for the money that they spent. Next time you have a receipt that you need to be reimbursed for, file it in the "Enter" file. After you have photocopied and submitted the receipt for reimbursement, keep the photocopy in the "Pending" file. Once you verify that you have been reimbursed, write the check number and the date the payment was received on the receipt and move it to the "Reimbursed" file.

Yellow- Receipts/Paid Invoices

As you accumulate miscellaneous business receipts, you should file them in the proper month's receipt file. Put smaller loose receipts into the letter size envelope in each file. Give this file to the bookkeeper at the end of each month or enter the receipts into your software program such as QuickBooks.

1. **Vendor Statements** - Once vendor statements are paid they should be filed in the proper month's receipt file. If you need to keep copies of your statements in your vendor file, please photocopy the statement when it comes in and file the original in the proper month's receipt file, keeping the copy in the vendor file.

2. **Receipts for Client Products** – Some executives purchase materials for a specific client and need to keep the receipt for warranty purposes. To do this, photocopy the receipt and file the original in the proper month's receipt file. Keep the copy in the customer file. If a customer ever needs the original receipt, you can pull it from your tax file by using the date on the photocopied receipt.

Bottom Drawer System

Blue- Vendor Files
A vendor file contains current reference information about a vendor that you purchase materials from regularly. Vendor statements should be kept with your monthly receipts. If you need to keep copies of your statements in your vendor file, please photocopy the statement when it comes in and file the original in the proper month's receipt file. These files should be emptied yearly and information should be filed with the taxes for that year.

Green- Blank Forms
You should have a manila folder for each of the forms that you use regularly.

Purple- Business Documents
Contract; Policy; Liability Insurance; EIN Number; Lease; etc should be filed here.

Yellow- Past Clients
Keep client files in their already created hanging file folder and store the files here when the client leaves.

Red- Inactive/Completed Projects
This is where you store any completed projects or projects that are currently stalled. If you need to work on a project concerning one of these files, move the file to the top drawer and place it in the "Current Project" section. When you are finished, return it to the bottom drawer.

Green- Reference
File reference material alphabetically in the bottom drawer of your filing cabinet. Reference material can include interesting articles, educational material, etc. If you need to work on a project concerning one of these files, move the file to the top drawer and place it in the "Current Project" section. When you are finished, return the file to the bottom drawer.

Create a notebook

In the heat of the business day we can be juggling a few projects at once. To help keep track of all the incoming information CEO Systems suggests creating a daily notebook. This notebook allows you to store all the information that you receive orally in one convenient place. Phone numbers, addresses, and client info, can all be jotted down in the notebook. Date each page for easy reference. At the end of each day, transfer any pertinent information to you calendar or address book.

To keep your system operating at peak efficiency implement this end of The Workday system

End of The Workday System

Block out fifteen minutes at the end of each work day to follow the system outlined below. Schedule this time on your calendar. Do not allow yourself to skip this appointment.

1. Re-file any existing project folders that have been left open on your desk.
2. Make new files and folders for projects that you have started.
3. File any loose paperwork in its proper file.
4. Recycle or shred any documents that you no longer need.
5. Update your Outlook or task management system to reflect any work that you were unable to complete.
6. Enter any new tasks into Outlook or onto your "To Do" list.
7. Review your schedule for the next day and mentally prepare for it.
8. When necessary, make changes to your schedule to avoid any time conflicts.

The CEO System For Business Cards

Executives will often return to their office after a networking event with a stack of business cards and no plan in place to follow up with them. As time goes by, the business cards tend to accumulate in piles around the office and eventually end up in the trash. To eliminate this cycle, CEO Systems would like to recommend implementing a new system, one that will help you keep track of the business cards that you receive and follow up with the business connections that you make.

The Tools Needed:

- One Index card box
- One package of index cards labeled with the days of the week
- One package of index monthly tabs labeled January – December
- One empty business card box. This will be used to store business cards that are no longer leads.

The System

To keep track of the business leads that you need to contact in the future use the index box as your weekly and yearly lead follow up system. Place your weekly index cards in front and your monthly index cards in back. When you receive a business card from a potential client follow the system below.

Once you receive a business card that may be a lead:

1. Write any important information that you learned from the person on the back of the business card. For example: what product they are interested in and the best time to contact them.
2. Enter their contact information into your database, such as Microsoft Outlook Contacts. Mark the card indicating that it has been entered.
3. Call the lead and follow your system for turning a lead into a client or customer, such as scheduling an appointment with them. If you leave a message, write LM and the date you called on the card. File the card behind the proper index card so that you can follow up in three days.
4. If you use social networking tools such as Facebook or LinkedIn, search for them and send an invitation to connect with them.
5. If you use a contact management or autoresponder program, such as AWeber, add them to your contact list.
6. Three days later, send an e-mail and mark the card with the date that the email was sent. File the card behind the proper index card so that you can follow up in five days.
7. Five days later, make one more phone call. If you leave a message, write LM and the date you called on the business card.
8. Place the business card in the box with other business cards that have been entered for marketing purposes.

Not every lead becomes an immediate sale. When you receive a business card from a potential client and they request to be contacted at a later date, make a note on their card and place it in your index box behind the specified month's index card. For leads that need to be contacted on a certain date, you can set a reminder in your to do tracking system, such as Microsoft Outlook Tasks, specifying the date and time that they need to be contacted.

About CEO Systems

CEO Systems specializes in increasing your company's efficiency. We develop documented systems for small to mid-size businesses that improve productivity and organization.

CEO Systems works with a wide variety of clients, from individuals to companies with dozens of employees, servicing a wide spectrum of professional organizations.

Our primary focus is to increase proficiency in your business, allowing for time and cost savings. Every office is unique, so we customize our solutions to best meet your needs.

The benefits of our organizational services and documented systems are immediately evident.

We offer a variety of services to fit your needs and will propose a customized plan to help you accomplish your goals. We also provide on-site training and motivational meetings to increase staff participation in the programs designed for your company.

Whether you are new to business or are looking to improve your current productivity, CEO Systems can bring you organization and documented systems to help you operate more efficiently and lower your stress.

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