

biz 101

MESSY DESKS, overflowing inboxes, unopened mail—the corporate world is in need of help, and professional organizers can fill that need. The National Association of Professional Organizers has seen a rise in demand. “When NAPO began 22 years ago, many of our clients were residential,” says Barry Izsak, former NAPO president. “In the past five years, we’ve seen a big shift into the corporate and business environment. [Entrepreneurs] realize that if their employees are as organized as they can be, they’re going to be more productive.”

KEEPING ORDER

RESCUING OFFICES IN DISARRAY IS BIG BUSINESS FOR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS. By Nichole L. Torres

Maximizing efficiency is the mission of Laura Leist, founder of Eliminate Chaos LLC, a professional organizing company in Snohomish, Washington. This former IT professional was an expert organizer with a particular talent in computer programs, so she began by helping clients organize their PDAs and contact management programs.

One of her challenges is getting management to recognize how valuable a professional organizer can be to the office. She markets through networking, speaking engagements and direct mail targeted to business clients. Still, it's mostly referrals that have



built her annual sales to nearly seven figures. “There isn’t a right or wrong way to go about organizing,” says Leist, 39. “It’s about creating a system that is efficient and functional and that the client can maintain. So it’s a lot of asking the right questions.”

Teaching the client how to maintain organization in the long term is a recurring theme with NAPO members. “A lot of people will join this industry and say, ‘I’m organized, so I can organize other people,’ but it’s really about the transferring of skills,” says NAPO president Standolyn Robertson.

Ilene Drexler, founder of The Organizing Wiz in New York City, has seen demand grow so much recently that she’s considering hiring employees or subcontracting to handle all the work. “It’s a good problem to have,” says Drexler, 46, whose company averages six-figure sales.

As businesses become more streamlined and employees find themselves more crunched for time, the professional organizer will be in high demand. “It’s a fabulous industry to be in,” says Leist. “And it’s only going to continue to grow.”

In the mix:

Sales are stacking up for expert organizers like Laura Leist, whose services are in high demand.

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