

Office Environment

JUNE 26 - JULY 2, 1992

A special section by the staff of the Midlands Business Journal

Changing office environment result of advances in variety of industries

by Natalie J.S. Hadley

Organizing — Kathryn Bechen, Organized With Ease

In an information age, the paperless office has failed to materialize. A June 8, 1991, article in USA Today estimated that Americans would generate 1.6 trillion pieces of paper in a year, creating 120 billion new pieces of paper in 5 million additional filing cabinets over the next nine years.

"We hoped computers would alleviate the problem, but we soon discovered that for every piece of paper a computer eliminated, it generated three more," said Kathryn Bechen, who started Organized With Ease in Omaha last year. "That in turn has contributed to the filing problem."

The information age has created a market for professional organizers like Bechen. The National Association of Professional Organizers, founded as an informal group of five women in 1983, has grown to 366 members in the United States, Canada and England.

"Twenty years ago there wasn't such a thing as a professional organizer," Bechen said. "In the Midwest, people

aren't aware it's a specialty different from interior design or space planning. The goal is to help people be better organized, save them time and money and help them enjoy life more."

Downsizing has increased employees' workloads, making organization an important work habit. "In the '90s, companies are downsizing and expecting more and more," Bechen said. "Someone leaves and the position is not filled, so you may have two workers doing the work of four. The world has become very fast paced. Being organized is a necessity now rather than a luxury."

Companies might call on a professional organizer to assist in a move, update a filing system or solve a larger management problem.

"There may be a communication or work flow problem in the office, problems getting things done and meeting deadlines," Bechen said. "A manager may have problems with a chronically disorganized employee. It may be a high level person who wants to fine tune himself and his system. It might be a business that grew quickly and unless it had someone good at organizing when it started, there may be a lack of an original workable system."

Professional organizers help establish systems, provide assessment and teach employees what to toss, what to keep and how to keep it so it can be found again.

Being organized allows employees to do more, know where to find things and feel more in control. "Their environment looks better and is easier to move around in," Bechen said. "Being organized makes you better prepared for an emergency situation, gives people confidence and credibility with clients and colleagues, and saves money."



Bechen