



Family Resource Management...

Getting Organized Series

Organizing Your Home Business Center

FRM-00390

In this issue

- Description of a home business center
- Equipment for the home office center
- Organizing a home business center

What you'll need

- Office furnishings
- Office supplies
- Office equipment
- Work space
- Storage space

What is a home business center?

A home business center is a place in the home set aside for planning and filing.

Why do you need one?

A home business center is the first step to getting organized. It helps save time and energy as well as money by keeping all the records and necessary equipment in one place.

How would you use one?

- To pay bills and keep accounts.
- To find important papers and official records.
- To have business tools and supplies within easy reach.
- To have a feeling of being organized.
- To help you save time, energy and money.

Who would run it?

A home business center needs to be set up by the person who has agreed to manage the center. That way someone will always know where to find things.

Other family members should be familiar with the center and be able to locate information.

Where should you put it?

In many homes the business center is a part of the kitchen, living room, den, bedroom, or built under the stairs. It should be convenient to other work areas, yet away from noise and interruptions. Wherever the business center is located, the area needs adequate lighting.

• Start Here

Using the checklist below, locate the items that you will need for your home business center.

Your home business center should have:

- Adequate lighting.
- A waste basket.
- A box or letter holder to place all incoming and unfinished items such as bills to pay, checks to write and letters to answer.
- A desk, a table or a counter top to spread out papers, write checks, answer letters, record information, prepare menus, shopping lists, take inventories.
- A small drawer or box for small supplies such as pencils, pens,

erasers, ruler, letter opener, paper clips, thumbtacks, scissors, rubber bands, glue, stapler, tape, pad of paper, and marking pen.

- A small drawer or box for business envelopes, stationery and envelopes, address book, and return address labels.
- A space for filing materials such as file folders, labels, dividers, large envelopes etc.
- A shelf or file drawer to store account books and receipts.
- A file drawer or storage space for a permanent filing system.
- A file drawer or shelf for reference materials: dictionary, zip code book, operating manuals, pamphlets, informational bulletins, magazine articles.
- A bulletin board for a calendar, posting messages, and letter holder.
- Close access to a phone and phone book.

• Make a list!

In the spaces provided below, make a list of the things you will need to make or purchase to complete the task of organizing your home business center.

• **Keep it simpler!**

Furnishings for your home business center may be simple or elaborate, costly, or do-it yourself type. The location of your center may determine the furniture selected.

Being organized is certainly more important than having elaborate equipment. You may need to work on the table from a file box stored in a coat closet. But such a storage system needs to be backed up by organization and adequate storage and supplies to make it efficient.

The ideal situation is to have a desk or table that is used only as a business center.

In addition to a table or desk for work space, you need storage space. Filing cabinets are convenient but not essential. Portable file boxes are less expensive than file cabinets. Some heavy cardboard boxes the same size as a file folder make excellent storage for filing.

A typewriter, adding machine, calculator and computer are handy items for the home business center. Shelves for books and reference materials also are helpful. Strong boxes can be stacked to serve as bookcases.

Becoming organized should not require the purchase of expensive equipment but rather efficient use of items you may already have or can use to improvise.

Therefore, after establishing work space and storage space of some type, you are ready to develop a system for handling day-to-day papers and records. One way is to use a bill holder with a pocket for unpaid bills and paid bills. Try to process bills and mail by handling each piece only once. They go into the **to pay** box when received. Then when paid they go into the **to file** box for eventual storage.

• **That's it!**

Now that you have located all the materials that you will need, you are ready to set up your home business center.

• **Wrap-up**

To begin to get organized, set up a home business center with a desk, drawer, box, filing case or whatever you have available.

Keeping all your equipment and supplies together in one place saves time and energy.

Becoming organized requires imagination and using materials that you already have—not expensive equipment.

Organization can save you time, money and energy in the long run.

It's worth the task!

About the series

This is a series of fact sheets to assist you in setting up a system to help you get control of your time and resources.

Each fact sheet gives you suggestions and ideas concerning one topic with a suggested activity to help you get one step closer to becoming organized.

It may take you as long as a year to get your management system working effectively for you.

Households that develop such a system and use it faithfully have discovered that no matter what the economic conditions are, they can still get ahead or at least stay even.

In this series, you can request fact sheets on the following topics:

- *Organizing Your Home Business Center* (FRM-00390)
- *The Temporary Home Filing System* (FRM-00391)
- *The Permanent Home Filing System*

(FRM-00392)

- *Valuable Papers Checklist* (FRM-00393)
- *Valuable Papers Inventory* (FRM-00394)
- *Taking A Household Inventory With a Camera* (FRM-00395)
- *Keeping Home Records: What to Discard* (FRM-00396)
- *Replacing Valuable Papers* (FRM-00397)

For more information contact:
Roxie Rodgers Dinstel
Home Economist
phone (907) 474-2426
e-mail: fnrrd@uaf.edu

This publication was originally developed in 1982 by Natalie Thomas, Extension Family Resource Management, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Technical review by Roxie Rodgers Dinstel, 1999.