

ORDER IN *THE OFFICE*

Part Martha Stewart, part Perry Mason, Kelly Lynn Anders straightens up the lawyers



“CLIENTS CAN MAKE **JUDGMENTS ABOUT COMPETENCY** BASED ON HOW YOUR **OFFICE APPEARS.**”

— KELLY LYNN ANDERS



Kelly Lynn Anders is an author, adviser, teacher, confidante, sometimes disciplinarian and self-proclaimed “stacker.”

Kelly Lynn Anders is a self-proclaimed stacker. She knows this because she wrote the book on stackers—literally.

Anders, associate dean for student affairs at Washburn University School of Law, authored the book, *The Organized Lawyer*. Released in January 2009, it outlines four major organizational personality types that, when identified, assist lawyers and other professionals to maintain a more organized workspace. Anders labels the four—stackers, spreaders, free spirits and pack rats—as behavioral habits that provide the key to organizing an individual’s personal space and approach to business.

“The types are to identify how people naturally live among their things,” says Anders. “Knowing your tendencies under stress helps you to be realistic.”

THE INSPIRATION FOR ANDERS’ BOOK **WAS BORN** WHILE SHE ATTENDED **PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW.**

In many ways, the book reflects the author. It emulates Anders’ polished demeanor and poised conversational personality. *The Organized Lawyer* defines order in the office space and crystallizes how to make changes.

The inspiration for Anders’ book was born while she attended Pepperdine University School of Law.

“I saw there was a void in the classes and literature,” says Anders. “The model rules of professional conduct say lawyers should be organized and diligent, but there is no specific instruction in the typical law school curriculum about how to accomplish

EACH EVENING, ANDERS SPENDS HER **LAST FIVE MINUTES AT WORK** STRAIGHTENING HER OFFICE SO THAT SHE **ARRIVES IN THE MORNING TO A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.**



As you would expect from the woman who wrote the book on efficient personal workspace, Anders has created an office that is bright, inviting and organized.

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The Organized Lawyer has won favorable reviews from within the legal profession, such as a strong write-up in the *Tennessee Bar Journal*, and its reception has gratified Anders.

“I’m a driven person,” she notes. “I’ve been delighted by the reception from the legal community and the community at large.”

Anders believes an organized workspace speaks to more than efficiency.

“Clients can make judgments about competency based on how your office appears,” says Anders.

For her work space, Anders likes an environment that is cozy and accessible but also professional and conducive to multitasking.

“In my role as associate dean of students, I wear many hats,” says Anders. “I’m adviser, teacher, confidante, disciplinarian when necessary and administrator.” She also manages an externship program, placing students outside the law school for course credit. All these duties mean that organization is paramount in her work.

Each evening, Anders spends her last five minutes at work straightening her office so that she arrives in the morning to a clean environment. This allows her to begin the day by checking her voice mail, e-mail and appointment calendar for the day’s schedule.

Sitting in her office, Anders thumbs through her business card holder to confirm some contact information.

“I have my business cards alphabetized,” she smiles. [TM](#)



FOUR TYPES OF ORDER

Kelly Lynn Anders identifies four office-organizing types in her book, *The Organized Lawyer*: “Not everyone prioritizes about what the eye needs to feel relaxed,” says Anders. “Some ideas work for some and not for others. That’s why it’s important to know your type.”

STACKERS organize by topic in stacks. They are visual and tactile and like to give the appearance of order. The busier these people are, the more stacks they have.

SPREADERS are visual like stackers but must be able to see everything they’re working on.

FREE SPIRITS keep very few personal belongings around the work area. They like new ideas and keep reports, books, articles and magazines near.

PACK RATS have emotional ties to things. They like the feeling of fullness around them and like to tell stories about what’s in the office.

None of these types are worse or better than others, says Anders, but the worst traits of each type come out when a person is under stress or hit by a strong workload. Knowing your type can help you recognize what to watch for around your workspace and allow you to head off cluttering habits that could reduce your efficiency.