

The Organized Lawyer

by Kelly Lynn Anders

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Reviewed by Thomas J. Helms

Thomas J. Helms is a shareholder with Helms & Associates, P.C., in Englewood, where he practices civil litigation—(303) 321-2703, thomas_helms@hotmail.com.



The Organized Lawyer is a useful book that suggests ways for attorneys to become more organized and efficient in the practice of law. The book starts with an interesting discussion about various “organizational types.” The reader is encouraged to answer ten questions to determine his or her personal organizational type. The reader can then focus on organizational problems and remedies that specifically apply to each of the four categories: stacker, spreader, free

spirit, and packrat. This self-analysis is helpful in finding specific solutions to organizational problems common to each of the organizational types.

The author maintains that an organized attorney work space is necessary to create a foundation for working efficiently. There are chapters on office layouts, desk arrangements, the home office, alternative work areas, and law libraries. A particularly helpful section addresses the value of an organized work space. Here, the author provides a series of incremental steps that can be used to reevaluate attorney work space and discusses the effect work space has on the attorney’s ability to practice law without distraction or wasted time. By way of example, the author argues persuasively that “in and out” boxes are a huge time-waster. She then provides specific alternatives for the efficient handling of documents. Some of the suggestions may seem obvious to the veteran attorney, but every chapter has at least one or two fresh ideas that even the most experienced and well-organized attorney can implement to improve his or her work space.

The Organized Lawyer also has several chapters that do not pertain to work space. Topics covered include personal services, marketing and entertainment, and the professional wardrobe. As a whole, I found these chapters to be much less helpful than the chapters preceding them.

Each chapter concludes with a checklist that summarizes the major points from the chapter. This makes it easy for readers to periodically review the material and determine whether they have effectively incorporated the ideas from the book into their individual practices.

The author makes a persuasive case for creating a well-organized work space and approaching this goal in a systematic fashion. She assures the reader that once the space is organized, it does not take much time to keep it organized. Five minutes at the end of the day and an hour at the end of the week are sufficient to maintain the well-organized office.

The Organized Lawyer is an excellent book for attorneys who are beginning their practice or who need to look anew at their current practice. The book is practical and has the potential to help any attorney not satisfied with his or her current level of organization. It does a good job of encouraging attorneys to make the decision to become more organized and then provides an efficient framework in which to accomplish that goal.