

## Messes Are Perfect For Some

By Anne Sedler

It started as a buzz and is turning into a roar, or uproar to be exact. In my circle of productivity and organizing consultants, some are gnashing their teeth over the newly released book by David Friedman and Eric Abrahamson, "*The Hidden Benefits of Disorder: How Crammed Closets, Cluttered Offices, and On-the-Fly Planning Make the World a Better Place.*"

In the world of messy desk aficionados, the book affirms many who are justifiably sick and tired of having neat freaks look down their beaks at them. Some business people are happy, comfortable, and productive working in what others would consider a chaotic climate. As an organizing and productivity consultant, I wouldn't spend a moment trying to persuade these people to be more organized if what they are doing suits their needs, and if they are not seeking a different way to accomplish their work.

Personally, I couldn't be happier about the book. It doesn't upset me in the least if some people like their mess. My belief is that you will be as organized and productive as you want to be. Having a clean desk does not necessarily resolve issues of poor organization and productivity, and neither does pile after pile of paper and other clutter. If you have a mess, here are the questions that will help determine if it is a "perfect mess" or not:

- Do you consistently waste time looking for paper and other things you need to complete your work? If you regularly have to work late and miss deadlines, you can probably answer yes here.
- Does a cluttered desk distract you from focusing on high priority work? Once again, missed deadlines and late nights in the office may indicate a yes to this question.
- Do the piles form because you are unable to make decisions about what to do next with each document? There are only [five decisions](#) to make regarding any document, voice mail, or e-mail.
- Are you falling behind on your promises to follow-up and follow through? If you find yourself missing opportunities and losing important business relationships, you can surely answer in the affirmative.
- Does the mess cause you to feel stressful and anxious? Statistics show that most workers are negatively impacted by chaos and the results can cause medical and emotional problems. A yes to this question may have serious ramifications to your health.

If you answered yes to even one of my questions, you have some degree of disorganization that may impact productivity and cause frustration. Do you need to spend hour upon hour learning organizing solutions? That might be a waste of your time. Instead, look for the habits that don't work and change them. Buying new gadgets and looking for expensive fixes may not be necessary. If, however, much of what you are doing is not working for you, think about getting help. The sooner you do, the sooner you will improve the quality of your work and your life.