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NAPO RECOMMENDS BUSINESSES USE SLOWER SUMMER MONTHS TO TACKLE OFFICE ORGANIZATION

MT. LAUREL, NJ – For many businesses, the summer months can represent a break from constantly ringing phones, back-to-back meetings and tight deadlines. While it may be tempting to simply enjoy this slower time of the year, the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is suggesting that business owners and human resources managers use this season to tackle organizational duties that will help improve efficiency and reduce costs.

In an office environment, not being able to easily locate files or data, manage time or just generally keep things organized can have a real impact on one's bottom line. Consider these statistics:

- 43 percent of Americans surveyed described themselves as disorganized and 21 percent have missed crucial deadlines. Nearly half say disorganization causes them to work late at least two to three times a week. (From David Lewis' survey of 2,544 U.S. and European workers, Esselte Corp.)
- 30 percent of all employees' time is spent trying to find lost documents. (Study by Delphi Group)
- Three out of four workers surveyed worldwide agreed with this statement: "I find myself becoming more stressed when everything is a mess and I can't find important documents when needed." (From David Lewis' survey of 2,544 U.S. and European workers, Esselte Corp.)

With some organizational tips from NAPO, a more efficient office and workspace could be within arm's reach.

"Sometimes it's not a matter of knowing what to do to become better organized at the office, but of knowing *how* to do it, or where to start," said NAPO President Laura Leist, Certified Professional Organizer® (CPO®). "Often businesses stay so busy with day-to-day functions that they are not able to step back and look at ways to improve workflow or eliminate clutter.

Professional organizers work to first understand an organization's processes and then customize solutions that help clients develop and maintain a more efficient and productive office.”

One benefit to hiring a professional organizer is that he or she is an independent observer who can look objectively at a company's workflow, workspaces and technology systems to determine what might be working and what may need to be improved. But there are steps that individual employees and business owners can begin taking on their own to improve efficiency and workflow. NAPO recommends the following tips:

For better time management/employee productivity:

- Make a habit of prioritizing weekly duties and rank them in order of importance.
- Review how time is spent and make adjustments according to goals and priorities.
- Break large projects down into small, sequential steps and allocate twice as much time for a task as you think it might take to account for interruptions or additional research.

For better file/data management:

- Maintain control over the inbox by deleting, delegating, filing or acting on emails as soon as they are received.
- For electronic files, establish naming guidelines to make it easier to store and retrieve data used company-wide.
- When it comes to paper mail or other documents, use a similar method – process what you receive on a daily basis and do one of the following: act on it, pass it on to the appropriate person, or eliminate it.
- Devise and maintain a filing system and begin by purging unnecessary documents and data.
- Develop a filing or scanning schedule to prevent a backlog.
- Create a procedure manual detailing your workflow systems and train staff to maintain the systems.

For better workspace organization:

- Make time to clear clutter from desks and other workspaces and keep only supplies you need on a daily basis on the desktop.
- Define the purpose of each space in your office and be sure that staff understands how it is to be used.
- Keep a trash can, recycling bin and shredder where mail is processed.
- Consider the purchase of items (storage systems or furniture) that will make workspaces more efficient and organized.

What is a professional organizer?

A professional organizer enhances the lives of clients by designing systems and processes using organizing principles and through transferring organizing skills. Professional organizers help individuals take control of their surroundings, their time, their paper and their systems for life. To locate one of NAPO's professional organizers in your area, you can use NAPO's Professional Organizer Directory, searchable by zip code, country, and organizing service at www.napo.net.

About NAPO

The premier national association dedicated to the field of organizing, the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is The Organizing Authority®. Formed in 1985 as a nonprofit, professional, educational association, NAPO is dedicated to serving its members through education, networking, industry resources, and promoting the profession to the public. NAPO's mission is to develop, lead, and promote professional organizers and the organizing industry. For more information, visit www.napo.net.

Editor's Note: To interview a representative from NAPO, contact Jessica Lester at (215) 884-6499 or jesstet@comsolutionsgroup.com