

TIP

Smart Ways to Re-Use Paper at Work

Make the best use of your resources by giving used office paper a second life. Take a look at some good habits that can help you do more with your paper and make more of your day.

TIP

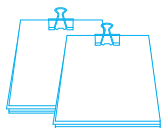
Smart Ways to Re-Use Paper at Work

In addition to making sure your business has a paper purchasing policy in place, there are some other things you can do to make best use of your resources. One of them is to re-use office paper. Quite often we print out emails, drafts of presentations or proposals, or other things that are important or useful for a short time. Once you're done with these printouts, you can drop them in your recycling bin, or maybe give them a second life. If you've only used one side of the paper and the other side is still blank, the paper is only half-used! Here are a few ideas of some good habits that can make use of this paper.



1. Paper

The first re-use is the most obvious, but also the most frequently over-looked. If the paper is only half used, use the other half - the blank side! It's a good idea to use this paper for hand-written purposes to eliminate confusion. If you print out your email on the blank side of an old piece of paper that was used to print out an earlier email, you add confusion to your desk and your day. We don't recommend that! But re-using the paper to sketch out ideas, work on a diagram or simply take notes is a great idea.



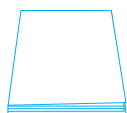
2. Notepad

Cut the paper into quarters and bind them together with a binder clip with the unused side facing up. It's good to cut the paper into quarters so that you don't get confused by the side of the paper that has already been used. These notepads are perfect for doodling, taking notes during meetings, jotting down phone numbers or important information during calls, etc. Having a ready supply of scratch paper helps you keep track of details that otherwise might get lost during your busy day.

If you have a few different clients or customers that you interact with on a regular basis, you can make a notepad for each one, so that all your notes for them are in one place. If you have lots of different clients or customers, you can make a separate notepad for each group, for instance: Schools, Law Offices, or Hospitals. Again,

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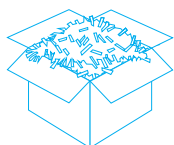
Of course, a typical use of a notepad is to make yourself a To-Do list. This helps you keep track of all your projects and Next Steps so that your mind is free to tend to the tasks at hand. It also helps ensure that nothing important gets overlooked.



3. Journal

Cut the paper in half, stack the halves together, fold them over to create a spine and staple the spine to create a journal. Keeping a journal is an excellent habit. Many effective professionals dedicate a certain amount of time at the end of each day to keeping a journal. This helps you keep track of your conversations and decisions, the progress of your projects, the items you need to add to your To-Do list, and how you spent your day, which can be handy for time-keeping, billing, or tracking expenses.

In today's busy workflow it can be difficult to make the time for keeping a journal, but the time it saves can really make a difference and help you work more effectively. One of the challenges we all face, as the amount and kinds of information we encounter each day continues to grow, is staying organized and focused on using our time efficiently. Time spent trying to remember conversations, the status of a project, or finding a phone number is time that could be spent more productively. A journal helps you organize your thoughts and develop an effective game plan for the next day.



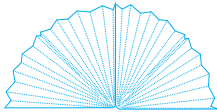
4. Packing

If your business involves shipping anything, shredded old documents make an excellent packing material. Cross-cut shredders help ensure that sensitive information is rendered unintelligible, but you may want to use less important documents for this. Clients and customers need to know they can trust you with their sensitive information, so don't use any documents that might catch their eye. Stick to things like old presentations or old office emails for this use.



5. Organization

Used paper can be repurposed to help you keep organized. Use a wide-tipped felt pen to create divider pages in your files, identify a stack of materials from (or for) clients, or make headers that you can tape to the wall to help you keep your office contents organized. You can also re-use paper to make a sleeve to protect and organize your CD/DVDs or make a dust jacket for books.



6. Fun

If you're looking to add a little life to your desktop, why not try a little Office Origami? Be sure to check out some of the fun ideas in other sections of our website!