

Not that I'm a pig, more a pack-rat

I realize in today's society, we live in a world with an overabundance of consultants from all walks of life.

And at times they seem to range from the ridiculous to the sublime.

I saw it first-hand this week, as I watched the news on TV.

It was a small feature about a woman who has developed a new consulting business—she helps people clean up their desks.

Yup, you heard it right—clean up a desk.

Now I'm not sure, but if I had a desk so unruly that I needed a consultant to come in and tell me how to file material to the 'circular file' I wouldn't want it broadcasted to the world that I'm a pig at my desk.

But apparently, a company CEO wasn't that proud, and she sat beside him at his desk, on national TV, telling him how 80 per cent of the material on his desk would never be 'information accessed' again (I think she means he'll never read it) and that he should either file it or dispose of it.

"After all," she said, "A clean desk is an efficient desk. It impresses clients and makes the workplace so much more appealing."

I couldn't help but wonder if she was a former kindergarten teacher, who handed out name tags and gave stars to those who complied with her program.

She showed him how to file those pieces of 'data' (whatever happened to calling them papers?) in an orderly manner in file folders, with name tabs all facing the same way, and appropriate headings affixed to each one.

Imagine? Names on the tabs? And all facing the same way? The woman is a genius.

(Or perhaps the CEO is less than gifted in the organizational skills department.)

Anyway, after watching her in action, I had to take a discriminating look at my own desk the next time I came into work.

Now I'll be the first to admit my desk isn't

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Ted Brown

the pride of the office. In fact, I'd go so far as to say it has a 'lived in' look.

And after visiting numerous newspaper offices in my time, I would also have to say it seems to go with the territory. (By the way, that's an observation, not an excuse.)

I do recall a wood-grained arborite finish under it all, but that's only a vague memory.

As I surveyed my personal workplace 'statement', I thought how, should this consultant walk into my office, she would most certainly have her work cut out for her.

Not that I'm a pig, more a pack-rat.

And some of the stuff on my desk is more than simple 'data.'

There's a pile of sentimental value there.

Oh sure, I could dump all these bits and pieces of paper, the cards, the letters and the out-dated press releases—and in doing so, contribute to filling another landfill site.

But I'm always a little cautious, since it could upset the delicate equilibrium of the office, like so many years ago, when a co-worker went to the effort of cleaning off his desk, going so far as to use some spray cleaner on the desk top, after it was all tidied up.

Another co-worker walked into the office just after he had cleaned it, surveyed his now sparkling desk, and asked the most innocent of questions.

"Did he get another job?"

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