

HAVE YOU GOT DESKITIS?

Do you remember the last time you saw your desk? If not, you are probably suffering from Deskitis! It is not only amusing but scarily true!!

BY JANE SMITH

We are privileged to be able to bring you results from a recent survey carried out by Avery Dennison on UK habits when it comes to our desks and clutter control. It is not only amusing but scarily true!!

But... before we reveal all we'd also like to make the very serious point. Clutter con-

trol, is, in fact, pretty fundamental to our world of commercial stationery. It's a case of selling the concept that 'every desk should have one'. Avery is of course, very proactive in their approach but they are not alone. Other big plays also offer some great clutter control solutions. Esselte for example have book racks and magazine files, filing pockets

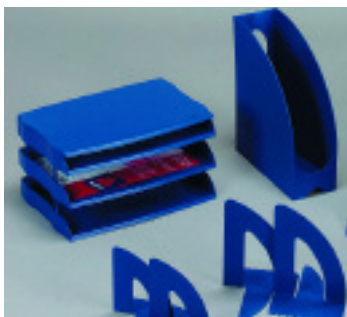
and their Dymo brand of labelling machines and supplies. Acco and Fellowes can also boast comprehensive stables of clutter control products, from Acco's famous Agenda Desk Accessories range and brand new Shredder models to Fellowes fantastic choice of media storage and space saving ideas around the computer and their archival

storage ranges. And what about the smaller, niche suppliers? We spoke to Velcro to ask how their product could contribute to desk and clutter control 'heaven'.

"The Velcro brand range has been designed to help make the most of any working environment," says Trudie Chadwick, Senior Product Manager at Velcro Ltd. "We have devised some clever ways of using Velcro for temporary or permanent desk top fixing solutions. For example, de-cluttering the desk top by securing lightweight items such as telephone lists and calculators to partitions, or securing computer cables neatly and safely with Adjustable Cable Ties."

THE AVERY DESKITIS SURVEY

Britain is in the grip of a bad case of Deskitis – that is Dump Everything Seldom Keep It Tidy – with more than half those questioned (55%) in a new nationwide survey for office products manufacturer Avery admitting they were unable to remember the last time they saw their desk!



Louisa Smith marketing communications manager at Avery, stated: "A majority of desk warriors confess that all this clutter was no temporary aberration but a normal part of their working life. Desk top muddle it seems is not just for Christmas but for life!"

Less than a third (30%) said they cleared their desk daily with one in five (20%) doing so very occasionally and one in six (16%) only bothering when the pile threatens to 'fall off the desk!'

Other key findings include:

>> The average desk top serves as a repository for a wide range of personal items ranging from Teddy Bears (14%) and books (13%) to family snaps (38%), nail files (9%) and newspapers or magazines (25%) with the most frequently encountered non-work related item being the desk owner's favourite mug (68%).



>> By far the most common source of clutter are acres of papers, files and other documents that accounted for 92% of desk top space. Such widespread clutter files in the face of the fact that eight out of ten (82%) readily accept that tidy desks help people work more efficiently – a conclusion challenged by only 3% of office workers.

>> Only one in ten (9%) used the excuse that once the desk is tidied they can 'never find anything' with a mere one in twenty (5%) worrying that a tidy desk might get them branded as 'anally retentive' by colleagues!

So, why are Brits so bad when it comes to working on a clean, tidy and well-ordered desk?

Consumer psychologist Dr David Lewis commented on the findings: "For a start, as the Avery survey discovered, there is little external pressure on them do to so. Eight out of ten (78%) companies have no clean desk policy in place and less than one in a hundred (0.7%) take tidiness into account when awarding a pay rise or putting someone forward for promotion."

Almost two thirds (62%) of workers agreed they would have a greater incentive to tidy away paper work if their current filing system was overhauled, with three-quarters (75%) claiming that bright, fresh and funky storage solutions would make filing more fun.

TIDY DESKS = EFFICIENT WORKERS

"Research has clearly shown that a messy desktop reduces efficiency and impairs performance in three key ways. First it leads to wasted time searching for an essential item, and when this is needed urgently the anxiety aroused by its temporary misplacement further undermines concentration and confidence," added Dr David Lewis.

"Second, being confronted with piles of work to complete not only makes it far harder to stay focused but causes a loss of motivation. Finally a cluttered desk acts as a significant barrier to the important psychological process of closure. That is finishing off one job before embarking on another – a failure of closure, no matter what the cause, can prove a serious cause of stress," he concluded. ■