

BUSINESS INSIGHT

Workplace makeover

Tame those computer cables



Christina Hansen, product specialist

Christina Hansen is a product specialist at CableOrganizer.com, a leading e-retailer of cable, wire and equipment management solutions. She offers advice on giving desks a makeover.

Give some tips to how to control all those computer cables.

To begin with, it's a good idea to get your cables going in the right direction. In most workspace setups, this

is toward the back of the desk. There are a few different products that either attach to or sit along the rear edge of your desk, and that have a row of channels to hold onto individual computer cables. The channels are loose enough to let the wires move freely, but snug enough so that unplugged connectors can't slip through them. This is one of my favorite features, because it means you don't have to crawl around under your desk to find disconnected cables.

What about computer-wire management?

After you have your work surface taken care of, tackle the excess wire length under the desk. There are many different products that let you coil up extra-long cords, so that your feet don't get tangled in them, and the space below your desk stays cleaner. For beginners, I'd suggest using things such as cable ties, cord winders and wire loom, but to take it further, there are organizers that mount to your desk or wall to hold the coiled-up cords off the floor.

Explain the use of desk grommets and cord protectors.

Desk grommets are the little rubber or plastic rings that you often see in desktops, and their main job is to organize and protect cables as they go through your desk to get from

Point A to Point B. They are based on the principle that it's always neater and easier to run phone and computer cables through your desktop than over it. These days, a lot of desks come with pre-installed grommets, but it's really easy to retrofit a desk. If you have a wood, metal or particleboard top, just use a hole saw to make a pass-through point for your cables, then pop in a grommet. Cord protectors, true to their name, also protect cables, but they are always used on the floor. Everything from foot traffic to rolling office chairs can crush cables as they wind across the floor, so it's important to give power cords, data cables and phone wires a layer of armor. Cord covers protect people, as well, by reducing the risk of cable-related tripping hazards.

Any other makeover tips?

One of my favorite ways to update an office is to add a charging station. It's easy for cell phones, iPods and other gadgets to clutter up the desktop while they charge, so having a compact, dedicated place to park and re-juice them can make a big difference. Charging stations also raise the office style factor, no matter what your taste.

—Dawn House

