



NEWS RELEASE

CLUTTER COMPOUNDS WORK-PLACE STRESS FOR CANADIANS

~ Un-cluttering the workplace leads to less stress and greater productivity ~

TORONTO, October 17, 2011 – For 62 percent of working Canadians, work, was identified as the primary culprit of stress in 2010 according to new numbers from Statistics Canada release last week. A pressure-cooker to begin with, the workplace is made even more stressful by being disorganized. Small Business Week in Canada is the perfect time to think about strategies to help employees be more productive and less stressed – both of which will add to the bottom line of small businesses.

“Canadians are in a constant time crunch and experience feelings of stress, failure and frustration,” says Clare Kumar, a Toronto-based professional organizer. “Today’s office workers must take stock of both their work habits and their environment, and take necessary action to alleviate the tremendous pressure disorganization has on their productivity and work-life balance.”

To help Canadians make positive changes and take steps towards improving their personal productivity, ACCO Brands Canada Inc., a Canadian manufacturer of office products, is launching its fourth-annual *Organize Your Desk Day* (www.organizeyourdeskday.com), October 20th, in tandem with Small Business Week (October 16-22).

Organize Your Desk Day is a national program designed to assist small to medium-sized businesses help their employees organize their work spaces and become more efficient and effective every day.

“By having the right tools in place, Canadian office workers can save at least 15 minutes per day which works out to a week and a half per year,” adds Linda Chu, a professional organizer in Vancouver. “This has a dramatic effect on the health of businesses and their workers.”

Professional organizers say desks in disarray causes a drop of 20 per cent in worker efficiency; costing the economy billions of dollars in lost productivity. Studies show the average worker spends at least 400 hours per year searching for paper documents.

“It costs SMBs \$120 in labour costs just to track down a misplaced document or \$250 in labour to re-create it,” adds Chu. “This places tremendous stress on the bottom line for many businesses that need to return to profitability, especially coming out of the economic downturn.”

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“Knowing where to begin is half the battle of getting organized”, says Chu. She recommends following the five-step CLEAR method to become more efficient and productive in your workplace.

C – Categorize. Sort through your possessions and group them into similar categories of information & tasks. Stay on track by identifying what things are, instead of getting sidetracked by thinking of solutions.

L – Limit. If space is a premium you may have to choose between what is important - your space or your stuff. Limit your collections by scheduling regular sessions to review and let go of information and resources collected.

E – Evaluate. Focusing on what matters most is the key to prioritizing. Determine what goals are important for you to achieve and choose the tasks and information/tools that will help to get you there. Continually evaluating your information and tasks as they relate to achieving your goals will help to increase your efficiency and productivity.

A – Allocate. Finding a home and a method to store your information & possessions is critical to your success in being able to find what you need, when you need it. Ensure that your workspace is clear for work, not for storage.

R – Remove. Items that are no longer of value or you no longer need can be removed from your workspace. Focusing on what is important will get you on track to become more efficient and productive in your workplace.

For more information about *Organize Your Desk Day*, visit www.organizeyourdeskday.com

About ACCO Brands Canada Inc.

ACCO Brands Canada Inc. is a Trading Company of ACCO Brands Corporation (NYSE: ABD), one of the world’s largest suppliers of branded office products. Its industry-leading brands include Day-Timer®, Swingline®, Kensington®, Quartet®, GBC® and Wilson Jones®, available from dealers of quality office supplies participating in *Organize your Desk Day*, such as: *Grand & Toy, Staples, Basics Office Supply, Office Plus, Novexco / BuroPLUS, and Lyreco.*

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ORGANIZE YOUR DESK DAY

Key Messages

- Organize Your Desk Day, sponsored by ACCO Brands Canada, takes place yearly because Canadians in small to medium-sized businesses are looking for new ways to increase productivity and manage their time better so they can become more productive, effective and efficient
- October 20th is Organize Your Desk Day, a national program sponsored by ACCO Brands Canada. It is designed to help Canadians recognize that an organized work environment helps to create a better work-life balance
- Your office has evolved...So should your office supplies.
- The average worker spends 400 hours per year searching for paper documents. With the right ACCO Brands Canada business tools in the work environment, Canadian small to medium businesses can increase productivity and profitability
- With the right tools in place, Canadian office workers can save at least 15 minutes per day -- that works out to a week and a half per year
- It costs businesses \$120 in labour costs just to track down a misplaced document or \$250 in labour to re-create it
- Disorganization causes many Canadians to work late at least two or three times a week
- Recent statistics indicate that Canadians are in a constant time crunch. An organized work environment helps to increase efficiency and effectiveness. This translates to a better work-life balance
- 7 in 10 disorganized Canadian workers say their workplace is disorganized. The proper tools in place help to increase productivity and profitability for small to medium-sized businesses
- Disorganization has a negative impact on the lives of disorganized Canadians. Feelings of stress, frustration and failure are evidence of this negative impact
- Office workers say they would be more effective and efficient if their workspace was better organized

Visit www.organizeyourdeskday.com



ORGANIZE YOUR DESK DAY

Statistics and Trends

- Nearly 3 in 4 Canadian workers report to being stressed, and 6 in 10 of highly stressed workers indicated work was a leading cause of their stress.. (StatsCan 2011)
- The average worker spends 400 hours per year searching for paper documents (*Datapro/Gartner Group*)
- With the right tools in place, Canadian office workers can save at least 15 minutes per day if organized-- that works out to 1.5 weeks per year (*ACCO Brands Canada*)
- It costs businesses \$120 in labour costs just to track down a misplaced document or \$250 in labour to re-create it (*North Carolina's Brunswick Beacon*)
- Disorganization causes many Canadians to work late at least two or three times a week (*Professional Organizers in Canada*)
- 7 in 10 disorganized Canadian workers say their workplace is disorganized; commonly saying their desk is in the worst shape (*Professional Organizers in Canada*)
- Disorganization has a negative impact on the lives of disorganized Canadians. Feelings of stress, frustration and failure are evidence of this negative impact (*Professional Organizers in Canada*)
- Desks in disarray cost the economy billions of dollars. Organizational experts estimate the disorganized worker loses 20% of their efficiency (*Dan Aslett. Professional Organizer*)
- 48% of executives admit to having a messy desk but claim to know where everything is. In contrast, 12% say although their desk appears organized, they have no idea where to find anything (*FastCompany Magazine*)
- Executives waste six weeks per year searching for lost documents (*FastCompany Magazine*)
- In a study of 138 business people - 73% said their impressions of colleagues were influenced by the way their desks are organized. Nearly 70% believed that workers with messy desks were perceived as less career-driven than their fastidious counterparts (*Arizona Republic*)
- 95% is the percentage of information that is on paper. It is estimated that the average worker prints out 45 sheets of paper per day (*IDC*)
- It costs about \$25,000 to fill a four drawer filing cabinet and over \$2,100 a year to maintain it (*Gartner Group, Coopers & Lybrand, Ernst & Young*)
- People who multitask are actually less efficient than those who focus on one project at a time (*Journal of Experimental Psychology*)

- The time lost switching among tasks increases with the complexity of the tasks (*Dr. David Meyer, Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan*)
- The average person uses 13 different methods to control and manage their time (*Dr. Donald Wetmore - Productivity Institute*)
- The average person gets one interruption every 8 minutes or approximately 7 per hour, or 50-60 per day. The average interruption takes about 5 minutes, totaling about 4 hours or 50% of the average workday. 80% of those interruptions are typically rated as “little value” or “no value” creating approximately 3 hours of wasted time per day (*Dr. Donald Wetmore - Productivity Institute*)

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Clare Kumar

Biography

Clare Kumar, a Toronto-based professional organizer, **“takes the bumps out of life”**. Using organizing principles to solve a multitude of problems, Clare helps people become more organized at home and at work.

She’s passionate about helping people increase productivity, reduce stress and get more out of life whether at the office or at home.

Since creating Streamlife, an organizing company in 2005, Clare coaches residential, small business and corporate clients in Toronto and Montréal, to get organized, to improve productivity and achieve greater peace of mind, while creating inspiring spaces in which to live and work.

Whether it be working directly with clients or speaking to wider audiences about space, time and storage issues, Clare encourages sustainable alternative work arrangements by helping employees and home-based entrepreneurs establish comfortable, efficient work environments and develop productive work habits.

With more than fifteen years background in marketing, sales, human resources and communications, Clare understands senior management concerns and how to practically support today’s workforce, especially with respect to making choices between work and personal life.

- Clare is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, animated and articulate making her a go-to person in the organizing industry. She has been a guest expert on The Marilyn Denis Show, Breakfast Television, The Steven & Chris Show, The Shopping Channel, Real Life and Downright Domestic. She has been interviewed by The Globe & Mail, Toronto Star, Canadian Press, Metronews and CBC Radio, and appeared in Canadian House&Home.
- Clare has worked with companies such as *Canadian Tire*, *ACCO Brands Canada*, and *Whirlpool Canada*, and represented a variety of brands including *Rubbermaid*, *Neatfreak*, *Homz* and *Staples*.
- Her favourite type of client includes one who recognizes that getting organized will affect their lives in profound ways and is ready to invest the time and energy to get there.
- She adds that the top five things clients can do today to stay efficient are:
 1. **Prioritize.** Regularly revisit your priorities to make sure you’re spending your time on the things that really matter.

2. **Plan every week.** Whether it be scheduling office meetings or deciding what you're going to have for dinner, a little forethought at the start of every week goes a long way to boosting your efficiency at completing necessary tasks.
3. **Prepare a 'home'.** Ensure that your desk's valuable real estate is allocated wisely by creating a 'home' for every item that serves you.
4. **Practice letting go.** Schedule time to edit your files and eliminate those you no longer need. Each quarter look at what you've accumulated from trade shows, company events and keep only what has real value. Soon it will become a habit.
5. **Partner.** Find a partner to work with to keep you accountable. Just as with any challenging goal, it can be more enjoyable and productive to work with a supportive person.

Clare is a Silver Leaf member of Professional Organizers in Canada (POC), having serving as its Director of Marketing, and a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO). She actively participates in the Institute on Challenging Disorganization. Clare is member of the Canadian Telework Association and an affiliate member of the Association of Canadian Ergonomists.

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To interview Clare Kumar regarding Organize Your Desk Day, please contact:

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Linda Chu

Biography

Linda Chu, is a Vancouver-based Organizing Consultant and the Past President for Professional Organizers in Canada. As the founder of Out of Chaos, her work with a broad range of clients in the municipal, corporate, and residential areas, has established Linda as one of the country's top experts on personal and professional organization.

Through her company Out of Chaos, she has not only worked with executives and corporate teams to improve their workplace effectiveness, but is equally successful working with home owners, whether they are de-cluttering from their overwhelming piles, downsizing, or moving.

An in-demand speaker at conferences and in Work Health & Wellness programs Linda provides tangible strategies on how to master the overwhelming challenges we all face in gaining control of our time, space, and information.

Linda is able to truly transform her clients' lives physically, mentally, and emotionally by giving them the tools and knowledge to manage the multiple priorities and clutter in their lives. She restores balance in people's lives.

Linda's expertise has been sought after by municipalities and school districts and firms such as *General Motors*, *IKEA*, and *Whirlpool Canada*. She has been seen regularly on Citytv Breakfast Television, heard on CBC Radio, and featured in publications such as *Chatelaine Magazine*, *National Post*, and *Reader's Digest*.

Prior to the Professional Organizing Industry, Linda spent over 20 years managing front line operations in first class hotels in the Hospitality Industry. Surviving the onset of down-sizing, required her to streamline work processes and develop systems that were more efficient and effective.

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To interview Linda Chu regarding Organize Your Desk Day, please contact:

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FACT SHEET

COMPANY:

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DESCRIPTION:

ACCO Brands Canada Inc. provides office products to Canadian retailers. The company is the annual sponsor of **Organize Your Desk Day**, Thursday, October 20, 2011.

Visit www.organizeyourdeskday.com

PRODUCTS:

Although a manufacturer of many office products, these items help Canadians increase workplace productivity by assisting in organization and/or making repetitive office tasks easier and with less potential strain:

- **Red Swingline® 747 Stapler** -- Discover the stapling star of any office space! It's bold head-turning design and legendary Swingline® performance will help you organize your papers.
- **Swingline® Shredders** -- A desktop document shredder -- reduces the risk of identity theft and helps protect privacy.
- **Quartet® Arc™ Dry-Erase Magnetic Cubicle Boards** -- The perfect organization tools for tracking important meetings and projects – perfect for the cubicle environment. Keep your priorities in sight and top of mind.
- **Wilson Jones® Binders & View-Tab® Dividers** -- Take your work style to a higher level by organizing important projects and reference materials in one spot. It's a breeze to label your tabs using a single printed page with the handy, re-usable View-Tab Dividers.
- **Swingline® Optima™ 20 Electric Punch** – Sleek and portable, this electric 3 hole punch makes easy work of repetitive punching tasks. Features an oversized activation button and a see-through chip drawer so you know when it's time to empty.
- **Kensington® SmartFit® Products** – Comfortable, ergonomically correct computing is easy with the Kensington SmartFit® System. This simple system will place your body in the correct posture for safety, comfort and a perfect fit, leaving you to deal with more important projects.

These tools and many more are available from dealers of quality office supplies participating in **Organize Your Desk Day**, such as: *Grand & Toy, Staples, Basics Office Supply, Office Plus, Novexco / BuroPLUS, and Lyreco*. Visit www.organizeyourdeskday.com for more information.