

3 Components of a Good Filing System



There are about as many different filing systems out there as there are types of personalities. Some function fairly well; others just sort of work and then there are the ones that are a jumbled mess. But there are filing systems that make it easy to find what you are looking for, and easy to return it to its proper place when you are finished. These are the Smead Organomics filing solutions. And what they have in common is that all of them optimize the three basic components of a good filing system:

1. The Finders
2. The Keepers
3. The Storage

Component 1: The Finders

The whole purpose of a filing system is to provide a method for finding a specific document among many. No matter if you are managing hundreds of thousands of records for a large company or simply organizing your personal documents, you need a way to quickly find the one you want. The Finders are the indexing element of your filing system. They are what identifies each file, and give it its own unique place in the filing system.

Indexing methods range from simply writing names on folder tabs to computer-generated strip labels complete with names, numbers, color codes and bar codes for electronic tracking. In most cases, filing systems are either indexed alphabetically by a file name, or numerically using an account or transaction number. Both indexing methods work well and your choice depends on the types of records you use, and how they are used.

Component 2: The Keepers

Keepers are what you keep your documents filed in. More than just a folder, the keeper serves as the individual storage device for documents, and is the central unit of the filing system. In its simplest form, a keeper may be a manila file folder with a name on it. But keepers can do much more to help users find information within the file itself. Fasteners and dividers can sort papers into categories, keep them secure and in proper sequence. Colored folders within hanging files can group records for quick reference. Expanding pockets can hold lots of bulky paperwork. The



color of the file itself can be used to signal different types of records. Look at the kind of documents you use, and choose a keeper that enhances your work processes and saves you time.

Component 3: The Storage

Your choice of filing equipment has a significant impact on the effectiveness of your filing system. Standard vertical file cabinets are fine if you have a relatively small amount of files that you want to keep near a desk. Lateral file cabinets provide a little better access and use less space. Large filing systems are most efficient when stored on file shelving with keepers whose tabs are on the side instead of the top. Shelf filing systems make the best use of office space, provide the fastest access to records and are the least expensive to set up and use.

Take a look at the Finders, Keepers and Storage of your filing system. By examining how each of the three components works together to create an efficient filing solution, you can create a system that is easy to use, and will save you time and money.

