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PAPERWEIGHT PILE-UP

Lexmark study reveals 12,000-ton desktop jungle

Forget the paperless office... the nation's desks are straining under the weight of thousands of tons of unread documents as we print out and pile up more paperwork than ever before, according to new research from printer experts Lexmark.

The 'paperweight pile-up' adds up to 2,354 million sheets of wasted paper in offices across the UK and a 2.5 kilometers tall in-tray, weighing almost 12,000 tons, as much as 800 double-decker buses. *

A spring clean is urgently required with just 2% of the working population claiming to have a clutter-free desk, despite almost half of us (47%) acknowledging that an untidy desk leads to high levels of stress.

"Paperweight pile-up means businesses are wasting a fortune and losing productivity." Said Giovanni Giusti, managing director, Lexmark UK.

Lexmark conducted the research as part of a campaign for more responsible printing in the workplace. £230million worth of printed paper is wasted in British businesses every year, with one in five sheets lost on desks, left on the printer or binned within five minutes.

Paperweight Performance

The average British office desk was revealed to have 135 bits of paper floating around at any one time.

Almost one in five (18%) office workers surveyed confessed to having a 'desk-top jungle', with too many pieces of paper piled up to even count. Men and women were equally bad offenders.

The average worker prints out 10,000 pages a year at work, with a single document printed 19 times during its lifespan.

Paper Professions

The worst professionals for paper hoarding were advertising & marketing executives, with an average of 163 pieces of paper on their desks at any one time. 17% admitted they couldn't actually see their desk tops beneath the clutter.

Conversely, civil servants led the most clutter-free existence, with an average paper count of just 114 sheets. 13% of accountants confessed it can take them up to ten minutes to find a valuable document on their desk.

The messiest professionals, ranked by the state of their desks were:

1. Marketing/Advertising executives
2. IT Professionals
3. Legal Workers
4. Accountants
5. Civil Servants

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Surprisingly, the fewer the number of employees in a company, the more paper each employee had on their desks, suggesting small businesses are definitely in need of some help when it comes to document management.

Oh Crumbs!

Adding to the paperweight pile up, 73% of UK employees admitted to eating lunch at their desks, with 5% confessing to a desk covered in crumbs. IT workers are the most likely to grab a bite to eat chained to their desk, while accountants were the most likely to eat out.

"The state of your desk is an important factor when it comes to working efficiently," said Giovanni Giusti, managing director, Lexmark UK. "Our message is simple - think before you print. Wasted printing costs businesses millions of pounds each year that should be on the bottom line."

Six Steps to Desk Relief

Lexmark has teamed up with workplace psychologist Judi Jones, to suggest some simple methods for reducing mess and having a less stressful desk-life.

1. Book time in your diary to have a 'desk cull' once a week and treat the time as high priority
2. Get rid of anything on your desk that doesn't work or isn't essential from one hour to the next - dead chewed-up pens, unread documents, old sandwich wrappers
3. Virtually tidy your PC and email files regularly
4. Choose up to three visual reminders of fun or lifestyle balance like toys or photos. Keep them where you can see them when you are on the phone
5. Have a one-touch system for paperwork – read everything once then clearly mark the next step action with a post-it on the front
6. Have an at-a-glance, long-term planner in clear view to keep your sense of structure and priorities

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Notes to Editors

* Based on an estimate of 17,434, 000 office workers in the UK. Figure excludes call centre operators.

Source: Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey 2003

** With the average office worker using 80gsm A4 paper weighing 5g per sheet.

*** Based on an average cost of a monochrome printed page – 1p

**** Extrapolated from research conducted by USA Environmental Protection Agency

500 office workers were interviewed for the questionnaire

About Lexmark

Lexmark International, Inc. (NYSE: LXX) is a leading developer, manufacturer and supplier of printing solutions -- including laser and inkjet printers, multifunction products, associated supplies and services -- for offices and homes in more than 150 countries. Founded in 1991, Lexmark reported approximately \$5.3 billion in revenue in 2004, and can be found on the Internet at www.lexmark.com.

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For further information about Lexmark please contact:

Lisa Canning

Lexmark International

Tel: 0870 444 0044

Email: lisamarie.canning@lexmark.co.uk

Jenny Stopher

Red Consultancy

Tel: 0207 025 6524

Email: Jenny.stopher@redconsultancy.com