



**Business - Creating a
Wonderful
Environment - Seven
Areas That You Might
Set Up to Function
Well**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

Published

April 11th, 2009

Your business will require that you have several specific facilities each for a different purpose. These may be part of a couple of rooms or extend into several rooms. You can begin planning your office by writing down all of the tasks you will perform and then grouping them into work areas.

Administration - You will need to have a place that is quiet where you will answer the telephone, schedule appointments and do bookkeeping. This may be set up in a corner of your client office or a separate room. A desk would be helpful, especially one with drawers to hold supplies. You might decide to use a laptop computer rather than a desktop model so that you can take it with you. If you have staff, you will need a separate room for that person and, even if it is very small, it can be set up in an organized and efficient manner.

Reception - You might need an area for clients to wait for their appointment times. This, however, can be arranged creatively. For example, I leave fifteen minutes between appointments so that there isn't much need for anyone to wait. Should someone come early for an appointment, however, they can wait in my multi-purpose room. For years, I didn't have a reception area and just made clients aware of this, asking them to arrive right on time. In the evenings, clients wait in their vehicles until their appointment times when I unlock the building's outside door for them.

Client Office - You will likely spend most of your day in this room and it therefore should be pleasing and comfortable. Instead of chairs, for example, I have two beautiful loveseats. The lighting is low and there is soft music. Most clients are very impressed and immediately state how relaxing the room feels. Use your personality and practicality to develop a client office that is attractive and useful. For example, I have a telephone with hands-free option so that we can case conference with other professionals if necessary. Afghans offer a degree of comfort for those who feel cold when they are sitting and a big basket of stickers brings smiles to the faces of child clients.

Conference and Family office - A large round table is a good asset for those who do testing, mediation or family work. I have one that has leaves to extend its size. Four chairs are usually enough but I also have a couple of extras that can be pulled up to the table for larger groups.

Library - Most professionals have many books, professional magazines and other items that could fit nicely in an organized fashion in bookshelves which could be installed in any room. Allow for expansion when you place them.

Storage - Files need to be locked in order to be confidential. Where you place the cabinets will, of course, depend on your available space. It is extremely important that you have a great deal of expansion as files must be kept for many years, depending on the regulations of your professional body. You will also need storage room for supplies, computer paper and ink, as well as other documents that are important to your business. Because I am also an author, I rented a separate office in the same building where I can store books, shipping materials and other important equipment.

Bathroom and Lunch Room Facilities - You might share a bathroom with others in your building and perhaps be able to use your client or administration space in order to have your lunch or coffee breaks. A small bar fridge and microwave oven are wonderful assets and will allow you to save money by staying in the office rather than going out to restaurants for food and beverages.

Be creative when you set up the space. For example, I have a very small administrative office, a client office and a multi-purpose room that has my library, filing cabinets, fridge, microwave, storage cabinets and round table set. We can use this office for storage, breaks, groups or study.

Remember to enjoy yourself as you set up the place in which you will be having wonderful adventures.