

Create a work space with the right look and feel



CHERYLL GILLESPIE INTERIORS BY CHERYLL

It's hard to believe that another summer has almost passed us by, and while I'm certainly not trying to speed through the few remaining weeks of my favorite time of year, I simply can't help but look ahead to Fall and be inspired by all the back to school inspirations.

I may not be going back to school and nor do I have young kids that are heading in that direction, I do find that this time of year I am inspired to address my own 'work' spaces.

It's time to spend a day or two overhauling the office or den space, or perhaps even creating one that you didn't have before.

A dedicated work space

in the home is a must have, whether it's as simple and as unobtrusive as a small corner of the kitchen, an antique secretary desk in the corner of the living room or a complete room onto itself, we all need an inspired, organized and creative work space.

The first step is to allocate space, this may already be established for you but if it isn't then let's decide where you will locate your work space.

Secondly, we need to decide how this work space needs to function and perform. Will it simply be used to organize current house records and receipts?

Will this space be running a major home business or simply exist as a getaway area for

the kid's to work on homework?

I love wireless and how it can afford us the aesthetics of a clean work space. I have my fax machine and printer located in the mechanical room of the house so that I don't have to visually pollute my work space with the heavy equipment.

When we are creating a den-style space in an unused bedroom, printers and fax machines are located on shelving installed specifically for that purpose in the closet.

Furniture for your work space needs to feel and function as good as it looks. Choose your desk and chair carefully and ensure that you will want to spend time sitting and working here.

Ensure that there is adequate storage for all your work materials and files that you need within reach. Your work space may need to include a credenza (think creatively as this could be a custom built piece, an up-styled dining buffet, a vintage pie storage or a series of shelves and boxes hung on the wall adjacent to

the desk).

Now, design the storage to either tuck into the furniture piece or to be cleverly displayed in boxes and bins on the shelves — label everything so you know exactly where everything is.

When all your stuff has a home, it's easy to find and readily available to use. You will also need good working light, place an attractive floor or desk top lamp appropriately.

We always love having a living plant or bouquet of flowers in our designed work spaces, stimulating fresh ideas and new life.

Finally, it's time to add the important finishing touches; the mementoes, photographs and small touches that remind us of why we work so hard in the first place and inspire us to work passionately. That's living fabulously!

— *Cheryll Gillespie is an award-winning designer with a passion for travel. Visit her at www.rockhousestyle.com*



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Respect a tenant's needs when selling property



SABINE GHALI PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

If you've decided now's the time to cash out and sell your investment property, congrats! There is a lot you can do to ensure you get top dollar.

But if your property is currently tenanted, you'll want to read this first, as selling a tenanted property can be a harder proposition.

A successful sale for tenanted properties is more than the regular checklist. I advise my clients to put themselves in their tenants' shoes. A sale is going to be stressful and disruptive.

Not only will strangers be traipsing through their home, they no doubt will also be concerned about what a sale means for their

housing situation.

Here's what you need to know. Tenants cannot be evicted because you'd like to sell. This means that you've got to get them on side with your sale as best you can.

My first tip — be honest. If you've made the decision to sell, let your tenant know as early on in the process as you can.

Deliver the news in person, if possible. You don't want them to find out through the neighborhood grapevine, from marketing materials or eager realtors. And who knows?

If you approach them early enough, you may find they're amenable to moving to avoid the hassle of the sale, and what

this could mean for their future housing situation.

If this is the case, consider sweetening the pot by offsetting their moving expenses, or waiving their 60 days notice. After all if a vacant property means it can be gussied up, staged, photographed and open-housed to your heart's content, you're also more likely to get stronger offers. It'll be money well spent.

If your tenant will be living in the unit through and beyond the sale, imagine what this means for them. Try to understand your tenant's position and respond and behave accordingly.

I've said it before here and I'll say it again, fostering a strong, positive and professional relationship will pay for itself in a home that looks its best, with happy tenants who will treat your investment like their own.

No matter where you are in the investment property lifecycle, this relationship management is key. A property sale is stressful for you as the seller.

But your tenants are being pretty put out, without much say in the matter.

Between open houses, scheduled viewings and keeping the place presentable, they're also going to be wondering about what a sale means for them.

Obviously it's impossible for you to answer that, only the future owner will know, but you can be empathetic. You can also try lessening the inconvenience. For instance:

Between your tenant and realtor, work out a realistic showing schedule and best as you all can, stick to it. Remember your tenant requires 24 hours notice for anyone to access the space.

Offer to hire a regular cleaning service for the duration of the property's time on the market. This is well worth the expense: your tenant won't be put out by the need to have the place show-worthy, but you can rest assured it will be spic and span for prospective buyers.

If you're doing an open house, consider sending your



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tenants out for brunch. If you anticipate doing a weekend full of showings, gauge their interest in a couple of nights away. Again well worth the expense, if you know the space will be vacant and presentable.

Being prepared, proactive and personable is my best advice for property investors

and this is no less true during the property's sale. Best of luck!

— *Sabine Ghali is director at Buttonwood Property Management and an entrepreneur at heart who endeavors to help investors create wealth over time. Visit her at www.buttonwood.ca*