

design gallery

SPOTLIGHTING EXEMPLARY WORK

Commute down the hall Given ever-rising gas prices, congested roads, and rapidly evolving broadband connectivity, it's a wonder more people don't work out of a home office. It's a trend that will only gain momentum, especially if gas tops \$4 a gallon again. We're probably reaching a point where one of the most commonly remodeled rooms in the house will be the home office, evolving from its 20th-century version with a desk flanked by bookcases to a 21st-century video-equipped wireless conference room.

For the past 15 years, San Francisco designer Mark Dutka has focused his energy on home offices, turning neglected chunks of space into finely tuned workplaces in whatever style suits the homeowners and the house. This "Design Gallery" presents two of them. Comb through these two examples and Dutka's article on pp. 86-91 to learn what strategies and products he uses to perfect each workspace.

AN OFFICE FOR TWO

A husband and wife share this office. She works full-time as a marketing consultant, while he requires his own workstation only on a part-time basis. She needs the standard equipment of a contemporary office, such as a computer, a printer, and a fax machine, while he needs additional equipment for his photography.

Dutka rearranged the original 11-ft. by 13-ft. space to include two nearly

identical L-shaped workstations separated by a central tower cabinet with access to a shared printer/fax/scanner on a pullout shelf behind pocket doors (photo right). The crisp, unadorned cabinetry in bird's-eye maple reflects the contemporary style of the rest of the house.

A breadboard-type shelf located under the printer provides additional space for both workers. Beneath it,



before

side-loaded file drawers are within easy reach.

Each desktop dies into a cube containing more drawer space with another breadboard on top. An L-shaped shelf under each desktop provides additional, unobtrusive storage. Because she's the full-time occupant of this office, the wife gets the workstation by the window.

Rather than just rearrange the space in the existing closet and dress it up with a new door, the closet wall was gutted to capture formerly inaccessible space (photos facing page). The reframed wall now contains a 26-in.-deep cabinet with pullout shelves for the photo printer, a charging drawer for battery-powered devices, a scanner, and other to-be-determined pieces of equipment. A 2-in. gap between the back of the shelves and the back of the cabinet provides a wiring chase.



Shared space

A husband and wife share this shoulder-to-shoulder dual office that offers individual workstations and shared access to a printer/fax/scanner. As the full-time occupant of the space, the wife gets the seat with the view.



AN OFFICE FOR ONE

The first time Dutka saw this long, narrow space, its owners were using it as a combination children's playroom, exercise room, and home office. The room has a window and a French door to the backyard, and it's adjacent to the master bedroom.

Initially, the owners wanted to combine an upgraded office for the wife with a playroom for the children. Dutka countered with a different proposal: Relocate the children's playroom upstairs to the library/guest room so that the redesigned space could become a combination home office and library that also could accommodate the occasional guest on a sleeper sofa. This revised solution allowed the room to be a quieter space, an important consideration considering its proximity to the master bedroom.

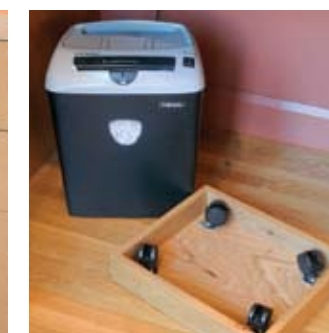
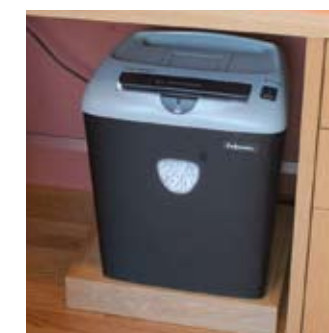
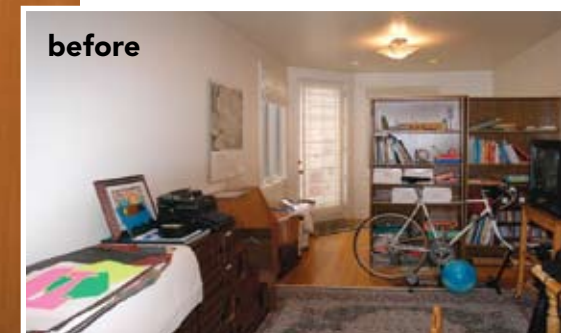
The new office overlooks the backyard in the daylit corner of the room. It includes display space above the desk in rectangular niches. A custom cubby for file folders, bills, and letters includes a little compartment behind a door. It's a charging station for the client's phone, camera, and personal organizer. Tucked into the corner below the desktop is a document shredder. It sits on a base outfitted with swiveling casters for easy mobility when needed.

Separating the office from the library/guest room is a low wall that includes resin windows with embedded reeds (www.3-form.com).



Half walls, full office

Relocating the children's playroom to another part of the house was the first order of business for this home office. Next was the addition of cubbies for organizing, a rolling shredder, and a partition fitted with translucent inserts that allow light to pass through the office and into the adjoining room.



Drawing: Vince Babak. "Before" photo: Mark Dutka. All other photos: Charles Miller.