

TAB's guide to smarter storage

Could you be using your space more effectively? Are you spending too much on storage? Is it enhancing your workflow? Is it designed to reduce retrieval time and speed information access?

With filing systems taking up 20% of office space on average, the volume of paper records increasing every year, and the cost of real estate square footage rising almost everywhere, these are questions records and facilities managers are asking themselves.

It isn't surprising then that many companies are looking for better ways to store their records. In fact, a recent study found that lack of filing space was among the top complaints in today's work places, second only to excessive noise.

Make smart buying and design decisions

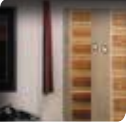
This guide is designed to help organizations that want to enhance and expand their current filing storage system. By considering the information and questions we've put together, you will be better able to:

- determine your current and future needs
- purchase the right equipment
- make informed design decisions
- control the cost of enhancement
- determine ROI


It's a good idea to have pen and paper handy as you go through the questions so you can make notes you can later review with your planning team and records management consultant.



Part 1: Assessing current and future storage needs




This is a critical part of the assessment process, and capturing accurate information will help you build a solid storage plan.




1. What type of media do you need to store?


- binders
- file folders
- CDs/DVDs
- a combination of these




If you are storing a combination of media, you'll need flexible storage that will accommodate that.




2. How much filing capacity do you need now and in the future?




To ensure your plan can accommodate current and anticipated filing needs, you'll need to calculate your capacity needs based on existing files and predicted inflow. Your records management consultant should be able to help you with this.




3. What is the nature of your work flow?



Analyzing which people in your organization are creating and using these files, where these users are located, and how often they're accessing the files will help you determine the most appropriate location and design of your filing system.



4. What type of safety and security measures do you need?



There are a number of security and safety considerations critical to any storage plan including:

- those parts of your collection which need to be secured and accessed only by authorized users
- relevant regulations and compliance issues that need to be met

- existing safety issues (i.e. uneven flooring, ergonomic handles etc) which need to be addressed

As a given, fireproofing and general safety measures should also be addressed in your plan.

5. Presentation

Depending on your business and where your files are located, aesthetics may matter a lot or very little in your storage plan. If your files are in a highly visible area such as reception where you want to make an impression on clients and partners, then you should ensure your storage equipment blends and compliments the existing design. There are a wide range of paint and color options available for reputable storage products.

If you're mixing old cabinets with new products, determine what can be done to incorporate everything into one cohesive-looking and aesthetically pleasing system.

6. Is there a move in your future?

If relocation is in your company or department's future, then you may want to consider investing in filing products that will withstand a move. TAB recommends products made with thick gauge steel and coated through a powder paint process; these are scratch resistant and strong enough to withstand the rigors of being moved.

We also recommend products that have no nuts and bolts – making disassembly much easier. Welded cabinets are also an excellent solution, as they can be moved even when

they're fully loaded, eliminating the need to pack and unpack files. Filing systems with removable and interchangeable trim parts are also a practical choice since they can be easily adapted to the design and color scheme of your new location.

Part 2: Taking stock of existing resources

Before you build, buy or design anything, it's important to first take stock of what you have to work with. Here are some questions that can help you build a foundation and maximize existing resources:

1. How much floor and vertical space do you have?

Given the cost of real estate, many organizations today are looking to reclaim some filing space and put it towards other uses. To do this it is critical to determine at the outset how much floor and vertical space you have to work with.

Once you have determined this, you can then look at filing systems that are designed specifically to save space. Storage equipment that can be stacked makes efficient use of otherwise unused vertical spaces.

Mobile shelving options are also an excellent way to maximize space, because it eliminates the need for aisle space between cabinets, a huge waste of square footage in all organizations.

2. Which of your existing storage systems can you keep?

Designing an enhanced storage system doesn't necessarily mean getting rid of the old to make way for the new. There are many ways to maximize your capital investments by finding creative ways to incorporate existing filing systems.

In fact, most TAB projects use a mix of existing and new products where we reconfigure old cabinetry to work with the new system. We've even converted static shelves and cabinets into mobile storage by putting them on tracks!

Note: Standardizing on a particular storage system that meets the needs of many groups within the organization is a good way to ensure that you can re-use equipment in the future as well.



“reconfigure old cabinetry to work with your new system”

Adding a SIDE-TRAC system to these Designer Cabinets allows for three additional cabinets, almost doubling the filing space!



Part 3: Crunching the numbers

Once you have a clear picture of your needs and existing resources, you can turn your attention to cost.

1. How much should you spend?

When planning your budget, keep in mind that equipment generally accounts for only about 15 percent of the cost of running a file room; the rest is eaten up by labor costs. The good news is that this can be reduced by as much as 40% with an efficient filing storage system!

Remember too that if you are considering the move to mobile shelving you can expect to spend \$2 to \$5 per filing inch and \$12 to \$15 for electric-powered files.

2. ROI

When determining what you should spend, remember that an effective storage system can:

- reduce file room labor costs
- increase productivity
- reduce information retrieval time
- enhance work flow
- improve customer service

And an intelligently designed filing room will free up valuable floor space which can be used for other business activities!

So in considering your potential ROI, you should take the above factors into account with respect to how many hours staff currently spend filing, retrieving files, backshifting and dealing with misfiles, and how much your savings will be when these elements are reduced with a better storage system.

Part 4: Putting together a plan

We hope that the exercise of going through this guide has been helpful in illustrating how effective storage design can strengthen your overall RM program, saving you money, space and time. This guide is designed as a starting point, a way for you to gather information that will help you match solutions to your needs.

And whether you opt for mobile shelving or static filing drawers, your ultimate objective should be a system that enhances efficiency, productivity and aesthetics while anticipating your filing needs for the future.

Let us help

At TAB, we have long-standing experience in helping companies with their storage requirements, and our consultants often start by working with designers and architects at the beginning of a project. This allows us to bring our experience to bear on your current and future storage needs, not only by helping you select the right equipment for the right situation, but by ensuring you get the right layout, flooring arrangement and room design from the very start.

Contact your TAB consultant to help you assess your needs and shape your storage project today.

UNITED STATES

888-822-9777

CANADA

800.387.6212

tab.com

