
PARKER MILLS LLP

THE LAWYERS' LAWYERS

865 S. Figueroa St., Suite 3200, Los Angeles, CA 90017-5431
(213) 622-4441 Tel - (213) 622-1444 Fax - www.pmmlaw.com

David B. Parker
William K. Mills

Gina A. Leago
Ann C. Schneider
Justin D. Denlinger
Theodore W. Frank

Of Counsel
Howard M. Fields, APC
Dennis J. Seider
Michael K. Zweig, APC

“THE NO PAPER OFFICE™ - The Key to a Green Work Environment”*

**By: William K. Mills
PARKER MILLS LLP**

The move from paper based business operations to paperless is conservation conscious and inevitable. Within 10 years, most business communications will be made without paper. In anticipation of that inevitable transition away from business' reliance on paper **THE NO PAPER OFFICE** has been developed as a comprehensive program to eliminate the use of paper in a business environment. It is designed to provide guidance to forward-looking companies that are committed to “going paperless” and are facing the daunting challenge of where to start and how to do it effectively.

THE NO PAPER OFFICE is a concept founded on the comprehensive, well-planned and efficient use of technology to finally achieve a paperless work environment. By contrast, traditional - paper reliant - offices commonly receive a document and immediately copy and distribute it to a list of people who might have some interest in or relationship to the document. It is then predictable for one or more of the recipients of a copy of that document to immediately discard it (confirming that their copy was unnecessary) or throw it in a pile where it sits forgotten until someone in the business makes the affirmative decision to discard it. That old-school workflow approach is mindless, inefficient and anything but green. Copying first makes the creation of another copy inevitable, and promotes the use of paper without considering how or whether the “original” document or the copy will even be utilized. Additionally, in the operation of a business, paper documents require pens, staples, clips, files, boxes, storage rooms, and people to collect, organize and manage the pens, staples, clips, files, boxes and rooms. Obviously, each of those components has a price, but the price we all pay includes the direct and indirect impact that each of those components has on the environment.

While it might be rather obvious that in concept a “paperless office” saves trees, the reality goes far beyond merely eliminating paper in its potential environmental impact. THE NO PAPER OFFICE eliminates paper, and also saves energy, space and time. However, to truly eliminate its reliance on paper, a business must change its mindset, and embrace and more fully take advantage of available and ever-developing technology. That technology has the capacity to make every business greener by increasing its thoughtful use of renewable resources.

THE NO PAPER OFFICE is founded on these principles:

- **FREE YOUR MIND**

- Prepare yourself emotionally and intellectually to work without the need for paper.
- Realize that business actually (legally and practically) **requires** retention of few originals.
- Understand that most documents received by business are not **originals**.
- Visualize clearer and cleaner workspace, reduction of onsite storage space, and lessening costs of off-site storage.
- Embrace hardware and software that makes it all possible.

Page 2

- **SCAN FIRST**

- Converting documents into digital files gives them flexibility and avoids the waste of unnecessary copies.
- Digital documents can be viewed, stored and shared electronically.
- Document security and confidentiality can be managed locally or remotely.
- Hardware and software choices are critical to speedy, efficient and cost-effective document conversion.

- **ACHIEVE GREATER WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY**

- Digital documents can be readily accessed through the internet.
- Multiple people can more easily collaborate on projects locally and remotely.
- Exchange of digital documents is faster.
- Relational management of documents increases accessibility, efficiency and productivity.

- **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INCREASED FLEXIBILITY**

- Write, research, compile and publish or present projects electronically, without paper.
- Transmit or receive large documents easily.
- Conduct business anywhere computer or internet access is available.
- Work faster and smarter.

- **SAVE MONEY**

- More efficiently use business resources, including space, supplies and personnel.
- Spend less on paper and related items required to manage paper (i.e., clips, folders, files, etc.)
- Eliminate document storage and retrieval costs.
- Reduce costs of mail, overnight and personal delivery.

- **WORK “GREENER”**

- Use less paper.
- Shred and recycle unnecessary documents.
- Save time and energy by working remotely.
- Use less workspace and a smaller environmental footprint.

LEED designed offices can and should incorporate THE NO PAPER OFFICE principles by focusing on the efficient reduction and elimination of paper document collection, reproduction and storage. With THE NO PAPER OFFICE, the goal of a paperless office is within reach. For more information or a consultation, please contact mills@pmmlaw.com or smallwood@pmmlaw.com.

About the author: Mr. Mills, a graduate of Harvard College and UCLA Law School, is a partner in the Los Angeles law firm of PARKER MILLS LLP, a boutique firm emphasizing business litigation, professional liability consultation and representation, risk management, and an MCLE provider certified by the State Bar of California

* Originally published in [US Green Building Council - Los Angeles Feb. 2008 Newsletter](#).