

Anders, Kelly Lynn. *The Organized Lawyer, Second Edition*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2015. 146p. \$24.

*Reviewed by Alison M. Hancock**

¶1 Kelly Lynn Anders's second edition of *The Organized Lawyer* is different from other organizational guides. For one, it does not try to impose any particular organizational system on readers, but instead guides readers to develop organizational systems that work for them. Second, it focuses exclusively on the organizational needs of those working in the legal industry. The second edition updates the first edition published in 2009. It adds social media to the chapter on marketing and accounts for the many recent changes in the legal industry. Anders factors the changes in the legal industry and individual organization styles into a broad, flexible discussion of organization across the multiple arenas in which a lawyer needs to maintain order.

¶2 The book first gives readers a general overview and then allows them the flexibility to pick and choose chapters based on what they wish to accomplish. Anders believes that there are four main organizational types: stackers, spreaders, free spirits, and packrats. The first chapter includes a quiz to help readers determine their type or types. Each ensuing chapter begins with an inspirational quote followed by an overview of the topic, a breakdown by organizational type, and a chapter checklist. The chapter topics include office layouts, desk arrangements, files, financial recordkeeping, organizers, home offices, portable offices, libraries, marketing, and wardrobes. This flexible approach enables attorneys to tailor their organizational projects to their needs and time constraints.

¶3 Throughout the book, Anders attempts to relate organizational practices to trends in the legal industry and studied patterns of attorney behavior. She discusses the changes in typical office layouts that have occurred in recent years, including smaller offices, and the increased use of cubicle space, conference rooms, and war rooms. She also discusses how the greater rate of turnover has increased the need for organizational systems that can be passed along to an attorney's successor or to another attorney at the firm. This awareness of current trends in the legal industry combined with discussion of issues specific to the legal industry, such as organizing time tracking for billing purposes, set this book apart from more general books on organization.

¶4 Anders claims that the scope of her book is intentionally broad. The book does cover many topics. However, it does not provide much in-depth coverage of any of them. When discussing organizing some of the more traditional areas, such as office space and files, the book gives vague recommendations about the most useful types of storage for each organizational type rather than specific examples. For example, the book suggests that stackers should use open storage and free spirits should use closed storage. When the book discusses organizational concepts in relation to less discussed areas of attorneys' lives, such as wardrobe and marketing, much of the advice tends toward matters of etiquette rather than tips on getting organized. For example, less than a page of the chapter titled "Looking the Part" discusses organizing one's wardrobe. While this book is useful for starting to

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conceptualize creating organizational systems in many areas of readers' professional lives, it does not provide illustrative examples of what those systems might look like.

¶5 This book could be useful to anyone working in the legal industry. However, it is especially useful for attorneys in small firms and solo practitioners. Solo and small-firm practitioners have less administrative support staff to help them handle things like marketing, library resources, records management, and financial records. They also tend to have less guidance on organizational matters from experienced colleagues. Since small-firm or solo practitioners more frequently meet clients in their offices rather than in conference rooms, it is even more important for them to maintain an organized office space. Practitioners in large firms might be more concerned about organization for succession planning purposes or for collaboration with colleagues on large projects. However, the small-firm lawyer or solo practitioner will get the most use out of this book.

¶6 Overall, *The Organized Lawyer* is a useful guide for the attorney who is ready to get serious about being organized. The book helps readers develop their own organizational systems rather than imposing a particular system on them. This makes it more likely that changes made as a result of reading the book will be lasting changes because those changes will be based on the conscious decisions of the readers. Perhaps a third edition will include some illustrative examples based on organizational systems that its readers have created. However, there is something of value in this book for anyone who is employed in a legal environment and ready to work toward a more organized life.