Creative Office Manager

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Inside this issue

Revenge Quitting: Why Employees Are Sabotaging Employers on Their Way Out

By Lynne Curry

On Adam's last day, he recorded a TikTok video walking through his employer's facility, pointing out every OSHA violation. The video amassed millions of views, prompting an investigation and hefty fines for the company.

Maggie managed her company's social media accounts. After a heated argument with her boss, she changed all the account passwords and quit. The company's online presence froze overnight and attempts to reset the accounts revealed Maria had tied them to her personal email.

After being berated by his manager too many times, Sam quit during a staff meeting.

Before leaving, he sent out an email blast to the company's most important clients, listing every unethical practice he had witnessed.

Heather worked in a small boutique firm. Her boss allowed her to take frequent personal day—even entire weeks off—to deal with family matters. When Heather decided to leave, she deleted the records showing she'd worked a part-time schedule for full-time pay and filed a lawsuit claiming she had worked excessive unpaid overtime. She used her lawsuit to pressure her former boss into letting her steal reams of proprietary material so she could set up a rival company.

1

Barbara Manning Grimm
Editor

Revenge Quitting: Why Employees Are Sabotaging Employers on Their Way Out

Raj, an IT technician, hated his employer. On his last day, he deleted a series of crucial files, claiming they were no longer necessary. A week later, when the company scrambled to recover them, they discovered the backups were mysteriously corrupted.

Nancy handled payroll. On her last day, she "accidentally" deleted the master payroll file. Employees didn't get paid on time. Nancy claimed it was an honest mistake, but her smirk during the exit interview told another story.

Revenge quitting—abrupt resignations paired with destructive behaviors—has become the latest workplace trend, and the damage is real. A 2024 survey of 2,300 employees reports that that nearly one out of every six employees had witnessed a coworker deliberately alter crucial employer data prior to quitting. One in ten of those surveyed admitted to destroying files themselves before leaving.

Why the surge in revenge quitting? Experts point to a cocktail of rising workloads, difficult managers, and unpopular return-to-office mandates. Many angry employees see revenge quitting as a tool for sending a message or "getting even;" some, like Heather, are opportunists.

How employers can respond

Spot warning signs and red flags among employees.

Disengagement doesn't happen in a day. Employees telegraph their dissatisfaction through missed deadlines, lack of collaboration, and waning motivation. Leaders must tune in before frustrations explode. missed deadlines. Employers need to stay tuned to what's going on with their employees. As highlighted in *Managing for Accountability*'s chapter 8, top executives need to step outside their leadership bubble and discover what they don't hear or see when they live in the good-news cocoon that dilutes bad news.

Build trust and engagement.

Leadership starts with action.

Employers need to rebuild trust with employees by keeping their word. When employers promise employees growth opportunities and professional development, they need to deliver.

Business owners and managers need to show they're genuinely interested in their employees. They can do this by conducting skip-level meetings, and stay interviews.

Respect matters—yet only 37% of employees currently

Revenge Quitting: Why Employees Are Sabotaging Employers on Their Way Out

feel respected at work, a steep drop from 44% in 2021.

Plan for the worst.

No organization is immune to data sabotage, but many leave themselves vulnerable. Only 43% of companies have tools in place to ensure employee data is backed up. Employers must create redundant systems to protect critical information and prevent irreparable damage.

Act now.

The warning signs are clear if employers open their eyes. Gallup's November 2024 poll of 20,000 U.S. employees reveals over half (51%) are actively looking for a new job, the highest figures since 2015. With a cooling job market and fewer opportunities to switch jobs, frustrations among employees are boiling over. Employers must act now—through trust, engagement, and proactive security measures—or risk even greater losses.

Lynne Curry, PhD, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, authored "Navigating Conflict" (Business Experts Press, 2022); "Managing for Accountability (BEP, 2021); "Beating the Workplace Bully," AMACOM 2016, and "Solutions 911/411." Curry founded www. workplacecoachblog.com, which offers more than 700 articles on topics such as leadership, HR, and professional development and "Real-life Writing," https:// bit.ly/45lNbVo. Curry has qualified in Court as an expert witness in Management Best Practices, HR, and Workplace issues. You can reach her at https://workplacecoachblog. com/ask-a-coach/ or https:// lynnecurryauthor.com to see how real-life and the workplace can show up in novels and short stories. © 2025 ■

Key Financial Reports Every Employer Needs from Their Office Manager

The office manager is often the go-to person for financial insights that help keep the organization on track. Your ability to provide clear, accurate, and timely financial reports is critical to helping your employer make informed decisions. But what reports should you prioritize? Here's a breakdown of the key financial reports every employer needs—and why they matter.

1. Budget vs. Actual Report

This report compares the office's projected budget to actual spending, highlighting any discrepancies. It's an essential tool for tracking financial performance and identifying areas where spending might be off course. For example, if office supplies consistently exceed the budget, you can investigate why and recommend cost-saving measures. Regularly reviewing this report helps your employer maintain control over expenses and stay aligned with financial goals.

2. Cash Flow Statement

Cash flow is the lifeblood of any organization, and this report shows how money is

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2. Cash Flow Statement

Cash flow is the lifeblood of any organization, and this report shows how money is moving in and out of the office. A cash flow statement details income (like client payments) and expenses (such as payroll or utilities), providing a clear picture of the office's financial health. Employers rely on this report to ensure there's enough cash on hand to cover operating expenses, plan for upcoming costs, and avoid potential shortfalls.

3. Accounts Payable and Receivable Report

This report tracks what the office owes (accounts payable) and what it's owed (accounts receivable). An accounts payable report ensures that bills are paid on time, helping maintain good relationships with vendors and avoid late fees. On the other hand, an accounts receivable report highlights outstanding payments from clients, allowing your employer to follow up on overdue accounts and improve cash flow.

4. Profit and Loss Statement (P&L)

Also known as the income statement, this report summarizes the office's revenues, costs, and expenses over a specific period. It provides a snapshot of profitability, helping your employer understand whether the office is operating at a profit or loss. By analyzing trends in the P&L statement, your employer can make strategic decisions about where to cut costs or invest resources for growth.

5. Expense Report

An expense report provides a detailed breakdown of all expenditures, from office supplies to employee reimbursements. This report is especially useful for identifying spending patterns, spotting unnecessary costs, and ensuring compliance with company policies. Sharing regular expense reports helps your employer maintain transparency and accountability in managing the office's finances.

6. Payroll Summary Report

This report outlines payroll expenses, including wages, taxes, and benefits. It's a critical tool for understanding labor costs, which often represent a significant portion of an office's budget. A payroll summary report also ensures that

Key Financial Reports Every Employer Needs from Their Office Manager

continued from page 4

employees are paid accurately and on time, keeping morale high and avoiding compliance issues.

7. Financial Forecast Report

Employers appreciate knowing what's ahead. A financial forecast report estimates future income and expenses based on current trends and historical data. This report helps your employer plan for upcoming challenges, such as seasonal fluctuations in revenue or anticipated increases in costs. With this foresight, your office can avoid surprises and make proactive adjustments.

8. Vendor Performance Report

Tracking vendor performance isn't just about service quality—it's also about cost-effectiveness. A vendor performance report shows which suppliers are meeting expectations and where there may be opportunities to renegotiate contracts or switch providers to save money. Your employer can use this data to make smarter purchasing decisions.

9. End-of-Year Financial Summary

At the close of the fiscal year, a comprehensive financial summary is essential. This report compiles all key financial data—revenues, expenses, profits, and losses—into one document. It provides a big-picture view of the office's financial performance, helping your employer evaluate

successes, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for the next year.

How to Deliver These Reports Effectively

Providing these reports isn't just about handing over numbers—it's about presenting them in a way that's easy to understand and actionable. Use visuals like charts or graphs to highlight key points, and offer a brief summary of insights and recommendations. Anticipate questions your employer might have and be ready to explain the data in detail.

By staying on top of these financial reports, you're not just managing numbers—you're empowering your employer to make smarter decisions that drive the office forward. Your expertise and proactive approach to financial management make you an invaluable ∎

Ditch the Busywork: How Automation Can Transform Your Office Workflow

Your to-do list probably feels never-ending. From scheduling meetings to tracking expenses, you handle countless tasks daily. While many of these tasks are crucial, they can also be incredibly repetitive and time-consuming. That's where automation comes in. By automating repetitive tasks, you can free up your time, reduce stress, and focus on more strategic aspects of your role.

Here's how you can get started with automating your office workflow.

Identify the Repetitive Tasks

The first step in automating your tasks is identifying which ones are repetitive and time-consuming. Think about the daily, weekly, or monthly tasks that take up significant chunks

Ditch the Busywork: How Automation Can Transform Your Office Workflow

continued from page 5

of your time. These might include data entry, scheduling, email responses, or generating reports. Make a list of these tasks and prioritize them based on how much time they consume and their importance.

Choose the Right Automation Tools

Once you've identified the tasks you want to automate, it's time to find the right tools. There are plenty of automation tools available, each designed to handle different types of tasks. For instance, if you're looking to automate email responses and scheduling, tools like Calendly and Boomerang can be lifesavers. For data entry and report generation, consider using Zapier or Microsoft Power Automate. These tools can integrate with your existing software, making the transition smooth and efficient.
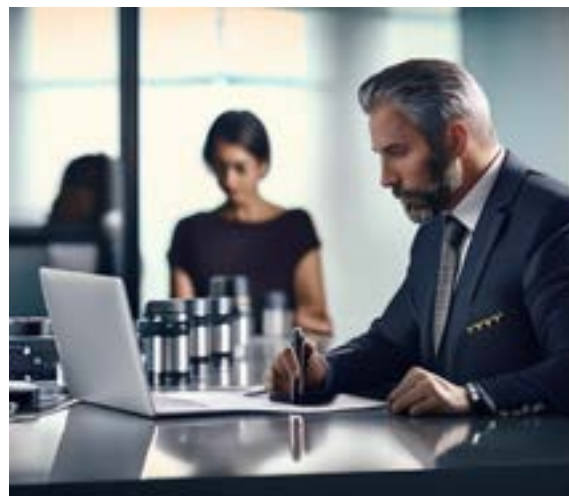
Set Up Your Automation Workflows

Setting up automation workflows might sound technical, but most tools are user-friendly and come with step-by-step guides. Start with simple tasks to get the hang of it. For example, you can automate the scheduling process by integrating your calendar with an automation

tool. This allows clients and colleagues to book meetings based on your availability without the back-and-forth emails. Gradually, you can move on to more complex workflows, like automating expense tracking and report generation.

Test and Adjust

After setting up your automation workflows, it's essential to test them thoroughly. Run through the processes to ensure everything works as expected. Pay attention to any errors or glitches and adjust the workflows accordingly. Most automation tools offer support and troubleshooting guides, so don't hesitate to use these resources if you encounter issues.

Monitor and Optimize

Automation is not a set-it-and-forget-it solution. Regularly monitor your automated workflows to ensure they continue to meet your needs. Look for ways to optimize and improve them. For instance, if you notice that certain automated emails are not getting the desired response, tweak the content or timing.

Continuously refining your workflows will help you get the most out of automation.

Train Your Team

Automation doesn't just benefit you; it can also make your team's work more efficient. Train your team members on how to use the automation tools and incorporate them into their workflows. This collective effort can significantly boost overall productivity and create a more efficient work environment.

Enjoy the Benefits

By automating repetitive tasks, you'll notice a significant reduction in your workload. This not only frees up your time for more important tasks but also reduces stress and the risk of burnout. You'll have more time to focus on strategic planning, team management, and other high-value activities that contribute to your office's success.

Final Thoughts

Automation is a powerful tool for office managers looking to streamline their workflows and enhance productivity. By identifying repetitive tasks, choosing the right tools, and setting up efficient workflows, you can transform how you manage your office. Embrace automation, and you'll find yourself with more time, less stress, and a more smoothly run office. Remember, the goal is to work smarter, not harder, and automation is a key step in achieving that. ∎

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New Staffer Onboarding Checklist

Pre-Start Preparations

A well-structured onboarding process sets the stage for a new hire's success and contributes to their long-term engagement with your team. This checklist is designed to help you cover all the essentials of onboarding a new staff member, ensuring their first days, weeks, and month are productive and welcoming. By following this guide, you'll create an experience that fosters confidence, clarity, and connection from day one.

Workspace Setup:

✔ Assign and prepare a desk or workstation for the new staffer.

✔ Set up a computer, phone, and any necessary equipment.

✔ Ensure access to required software and company systems.

Account Creation:

✔ Create an email account and login credentials for company systems.

✔ Set up any required accounts for internal tools or platforms.

Welcome Packet:

✔ Assemble a welcome packet including the employee handbook, organizational chart, and any necessary forms (e.g., direct deposit, benefits).

✔ Prepare a list of key contacts and their roles.

First Day Schedule:

✔ Plan the new staffer's first day schedule, including meetings, training, and a tour.

✔ Arrange for a welcome lunch or team introduction session.

Day 1

Arrival and Welcome:

✔ Greet the new staffer upon arrival.

✔ Provide an overview of the day's schedule.

✔ Introduce the new staffer to immediate team members and key contacts.

Workstation Orientation:

✔ Assist the new staffer in logging into their computer and email.

✔ Review phone setup and voicemail instructions.

✔ Ensure they have access to necessary software and databases.

Office Tour:

✔ Show key locations (e.g., restrooms, break room, supply room, emergency exits).

✔ Introduce the layout of the office, including meeting rooms and communal areas.

Paperwork and HR Meeting:

✔ Complete any remaining HR paperwork (e.g., tax forms, direct deposit).

✔ Review company policies, benefits, and emergency procedures.

Initial Training:

✔ Provide an overview of the company's core systems and tools.

✔ Begin any immediate job-specific training.

Week 1:

Role Orientation:

✔ Meet with the new staffer to discuss their role, responsibilities, and expectations.

✔ Introduce them to relevant workflows and procedures.

✔ Provide access to any necessary documentation or manuals.

Team Introductions:

✔ Arrange meetings with key team members and other departments they'll work with.

TOOLBOX: New Staffer Onboarding Checklist

✔ Encourage participation in team meetings or projects to understand office dynamics.

Continued Training:

✔ Schedule additional training sessions for software, tools, or specific tasks.

✔ Provide opportunities for hands-on practice with guidance.

Check-In:

✔ Hold a quick check-in at the end of the week to address any questions or concerns.

✔ Provide feedback and offer support.

Weeks 2–4:

Integration into Daily Tasks:

✔ Gradually assign regular tasks and responsibilities to the new staffer.

✔ Monitor progress and offer assistance as needed.

✔ Encourage the new staffer to start contributing to team projects or initiatives.

Ongoing Support:

✔ Set up regular check-ins to discuss progress, challenges, and goals.

✔ Provide feedback and recognition for early achievements.

✔ Ensure continued access to resources and support as needed.

Team Integration:

✔ Encourage participation in social or team-building activities.

✔ Facilitate opportunities for the new staffer to collaborate with colleagues.

✔ Address any integration issues and support relationship-building efforts.

End of First Month:

Performance Review:

✔ Conduct a formal check-in to review the first month's performance.

✔ Discuss strengths, areas for improvement, and set goals for the next period.

Feedback Session:

✔ Invite the new staffer to share their experience, feedback, and any suggestions.

✔ Adjust onboarding or training plans based on feedback.

Plan for Ongoing Development:

✔ Identify any additional training or development needs.

✔ Set clear objectives and timelines for the new staffer's continued growth.

By following this checklist, you'll ensure new hires feel supported, empowered, and fully integrated into your team. With thoughtful preparation and ongoing guidance, you'll set the stage for their success and contribute to a thriving office culture. ■

Think Like a Hacker: How to Secure Your Office's Data

Data security is a crucial aspect of managing any office, no matter the size or industry. As an office manager, ensuring that your organization's sensitive information is protected from breaches, leaks, and unauthorized access is a top priority. Here are some best practices for data security to

Think Like a Hacker: How to Secure Your Office's Data

help you safeguard your office's data effectively.

Understand the Risks

The first step in data security is understanding the potential risks. Data breaches can occur due to various reasons, including weak passwords, phishing attacks, malware, and insider threats. Knowing the types of threats your office might face will help you implement the most appropriate security measures.

Implement Strong Password Policies

Weak passwords are one of the most common vulnerabilities. Ensure that all employees use strong, unique passwords for their accounts. A strong password typically includes a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and special characters. Consider using a password manager to help staff generate and store complex passwords securely. Also, enforce regular password changes to add an extra layer of protection.

Use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) adds an additional layer of security by requiring users to provide two or more verification factors to access an account. This can include something they know (a password), something they have (a security token or smartphone), or something they are (biometric verification like fingerprints). Implementing MFA significantly reduces the risk of unauthorized access.

Regularly Update Software and Systems

Keeping your software and systems up-to-date is vital for data security. Regular updates often include patches for security vulnerabilities that could be exploited by hackers. Ensure that all operating systems, applications, and security software are updated regularly. Set up automatic updates whenever possible to streamline this process.

Encrypt Sensitive Data

Encryption is the process of converting data into a code to prevent unauthorized access. Encrypting sensitive information, both in transit and at rest, ensures that even if data is intercepted or accessed without authorization, it cannot be read or used. Use encryption tools for emails, files, and any other data that needs to be securely transmitted or stored.

Educate Your Team

Human error is a significant factor in many data breaches. Regularly educate your team on data security best practices, including recognizing phishing attempts, avoiding suspicious links, and the importance of securing devices. Create a culture of security awareness where employees feel responsible for protecting sensitive information.

Implement Access Controls

Not all employees need access to all data. Implementing access controls ensures that individuals only have access to the information necessary for their role. Use the principle of least privilege, granting the minimum levels of access needed to perform their job functions. Regularly review access rights and adjust them as needed.

Backup Data Regularly

Regularly backing up data ensures that you can recover information in the event of a data breach, system failure, or other incidents. Store backups in a secure, offsite location and test them periodically to ensure they can be restored when needed. Having a robust backup strategy minimizes downtime and data loss.

Develop an Incident Response Plan

Despite your best efforts, data breaches can still occur. Having an incident response plan in

9

Think Like a Hacker: How to Secure Your Office's Data

place helps you respond quickly and effectively to security incidents. Your plan should outline the steps to take in the event of a breach, including who to notify, how to contain the breach, and how to recover compromised data. Regularly review and update your incident response plan to ensure it remains effective.

Monitor and Audit Systems

Regular monitoring and auditing of your systems can help detect suspicious activity early. Implement tools and processes to continuously monitor network traffic, user activity, and access logs. Set up alerts for unusual behavior and conduct regular audits to identify potential vulnerabilities.

Use Secure Communication Channels

Ensure that all internal and external communications involving sensitive information are conducted through secure channels. Avoid using personal emails or unsecured messaging apps for work-related communications. Instead, use encrypted email services, secure messaging platforms, and virtual private networks (VPNs) for remote access.

By implementing these best practices, you can significantly enhance the data security of your office. Remember, data

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security is an ongoing process that requires vigilance, regular updates, and continuous education. By staying proactive and informed, you can protect your office's sensitive information and maintain the trust of your clients and employees. ■

Creativity Meets Strategy: Planning for the Unexpected.

As an office manager, you are no stranger to the unpredictable. Whether it's an unexpected staff absence, a sudden tech glitch, or a surprise client visit, challenges will inevitably arise. The key to navigating these situations lies not only in your ability to react but also in your proactive approach to problem-solving. Combining creativity with strategy can help you stay ahead of the curve, adapting quickly and effectively to unforeseen circumstances.

In this article, we'll explore how blending creative thinking with strategic planning allows you to tackle unexpected challenges in a way that's not only effective

but also innovative. By embracing both creativity and strategy, you can become more adaptable, proactive, and prepared for whatever comes your way.

1. Prepare for the Unpredictable with Flexible Systems

When it comes to preparing for the unexpected, the first step is to create systems that are flexible and adaptable. As an office manager, you likely

Creativity Meets Strategy: Planning for the Unexpected.

continued from page 10

already have some processes in place, but incorporating creativity into your planning can enhance their effectiveness.

For example, think about your office's workflow. Instead of having rigid procedures that only work under ideal circumstances, build in buffer zones that allow for creative problem-solving when things don't go as planned. If a deadline gets pushed back, can your team quickly pivot to another project? If a client meeting falls through, do you have a flexible space that can be repurposed for other needs?

Combining creativity with strategic foresight means you're always thinking a few steps ahead and ensuring your office systems can adapt quickly to changes without losing momentum.

2. Develop Contingency Plans with a Creative Twist

Strategic planning often involves contingency plans—the "just in case" strategies you put in place to ensure the smooth running of operations during disruptions. However, a lot of contingency plans are overly focused on the most obvious issues, leaving you unprepared for more creative solutions to those problems.

When developing contingency plans, use creativity to expand your options. For example, instead of simply having a backup staff member for each role, think about alternative work arrangements like remote work, cross-training employees, or redistributing workloads in creative ways. Ask yourself, "What if we didn't follow the usual process to fix this? How could we use our resources differently to meet the challenge?" The key is being open to non-traditional solutions and not just relying on the same set of responses.

3. Leverage Technology to Innovate and Streamline

Technology can be a strategic asset in navigating the unexpected, but it's creativity that can unlock its full potential. As an office manager, you already use various software tools to help with scheduling, document management, and communication. However, by creatively utilizing technology, you can build more robust systems that adapt to change seamlessly.

For example, if a major project deadline is unexpectedly moved up, you can use project management tools like Trello, Asana, or Monday.com to reorganize tasks, prioritize

work, and keep the team aligned in real time. You can also automate certain tasks to free up your time for more critical problem-solving. A little creativity in integrating tools and thinking outside the box can help ensure you're not caught off guard when the unexpected happens.

4. Cultivate a Team Culture of Creative Problem-Solving

The ability to handle the unexpected doesn't rest solely on your shoulders—it's a team effort. As an office manager, fostering a team culture that combines creativity with strategy can help everyone stay on their toes and be ready to handle any challenge that comes their way.

Encourage creative thinking among your staff by making problem-solving part of your daily office culture. Whether it's through regular brainstorming sessions, team-building activities, or encouraging employees to share innovative ideas during meetings, you can help your team develop a

11

Creativity Meets Strategy: Planning for the Unexpected.

continued from page 11

creative mindset. The more they think creatively, the easier it will be for everyone to collaborate on unexpected challenges.

Additionally, involve your team in strategic planning. Having everyone involved in developing contingency plans or identifying areas for improvement helps build a proactive, solution-oriented environment. When the unexpected arises, everyone will already be prepared to respond creatively, with a strategic plan in mind.

5. Embrace Change as an Opportunity

One of the most strategic ways to deal with the unexpected is to view change as an opportunity, not just a challenge. Creativity allows you to look beyond the immediate disruptions and see the bigger picture.

For instance, if a client cancels a meeting, instead of immediately feeling stressed, ask yourself: "What could we learn from this? Is there another way to engage with the client or optimize the time in another way?" You can turn these unforeseen moments into growth opportunities for both you and your team. Whether it's learning a new tool, rethinking office processes, or developing new ways to communicate with clients, embracing change with a creative lens helps you turn challenges into advantages.

6. Create a "Plan B" That's Not Just a Backup

In many office environments, a "Plan B" exists to cover emergencies or last-minute changes. However, a traditional "Plan B" often follows the same patterns as Plan A, just with a slight variation. To be truly prepared for the unexpected, you need to think about creating a "Plan B" that incorporates creative, forward-thinking strategies.

For example, if a critical team member is suddenly unavailable, don't just have someone step into their role immediately. Consider how the team's workflow could shift without relying on that one person. What tasks can be automated? Can other team members share responsibilities? And could technology or new processes help bridge the gap creatively? The goal is not just to fall back on a "safe" alternative, but to leverage every possible resource in a way that challenges the status quo and leads to new opportunities.

7. Build Strategic Relationships for Support

No office manager can predict every challenge, and sometimes, the unexpected requires external support. Building strategic relationships with external vendors, freelancers, or industry contacts can offer creative resources when the unthinkable happens.

Consider relationships with temp agencies, IT support services, or consultants who specialize in your office's unique needs. Cultivating these connections allows you to have creative, strategic solutions on hand when a surprise challenge arises, whether it's a sudden staffing need or a tech issue.

Conclusion: The Power of Creative Strategy

As an office manager, handling the unexpected doesn't have to feel like a crisis. By combining creativity with strategic planning, you can not only manage surprises more effectively but also position your office to thrive when challenges arise. Flexibility, forward-thinking, and innovation are key to staying adaptable, and when you approach every unexpected situation with a creative mindset, you'll always be prepared to find new opportunities even in the face of uncertainty.

Embrace the unexpected with a creative strategy, and watch how these challenges can evolve into growth and success for you, your team, and your office. ■