

# Organising your small business for the new year: Going (almost) paperless

 By [Sophie Baker](#)

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Do you have papers lying everywhere in what you like to call 'organised chaos?' Not anymore! Make sure everything is in tip-top shape with our handy tips to go (almost) paperless and reduce business clutter...

If you have a lot of Microsoft Word, Excel or other documents that are often printed and distributed or sent to people for corrections, do yourself a favour and move it all online. [Microsoft OneDrive](#) allows you to upload files to a cloud, which you can then access from your PC, phone or tablet. You can then make these files private, public or shared. If you share them with your office, everybody can access and edit the photos from their PC or smartphone - meaning no more mass printing or printing of every single draft!



It's also worth remembering that if all your important files are accessible through OneDrive, [Dropbox](#) or similar, you're protected against theft and any other kind of crisis - be it fire, flood, or simply broken computers. Even if your computer is stolen or damaged, the files can still be accessed from any device remotely.

For the most part, you can email invoices, bills and receipts to customers instead of printing them. If you need employees to log their work hours, perhaps get them to update an Excel document or even just email their hours to you. This way you have a permanent record and no chance of misplacing or throwing away the papers. If you don't already do so, start paying your bills via EFT and request that your customers pay you in the same way.

## How the world of HDMI cables simplify your life

Meeting slides and print outs are no longer necessary in the world of HDMI cables. Simply display your meeting notes, slides or minutes for everyone to see on a screen by connecting your laptop or desktop via HDMI cable. If you want to share the documents afterwards, upload them to OneDrive or to Dropbox, where large files can be stored, shared and accessed remotely.

Rather than spending time looking for files, papers, invoices and print outs, spend a few hours or dedicate a whole day organising everything in your office. Go through all your files and shred papers you don't need (remember to recycle them!) and then organise them in a logical way; alphabetically, by content area, or however works best for you. If you have papers you're worried you might need one day but don't want to keep around, scan them into your computer and keep an electronic copy.

On a similar note, scan all your important documents anyway, to make sure there's a retrievable copy. Everything that comes into your office should be scanned and saved. Unless there's good reason to keep the paper version, recycle it and stick just to the electronic one. Remember, if it's important, back it up online!

Lastly, have something to take notes on. Whether that means keeping one small notebook and pen with you all the time, using a Dictaphone, or typing into your smartphone, it doesn't matter. Just try not to get into the habit of keeping all your notes stored in different places, leading to piles of disorganised papers lying around... and you not even being sure where to find the particular set of notes you need right that minute.

Now you have no excuse to not organise and declutter your business this week! Talk about getting the New Year off to a great start!

## ABOUT SOPHIE BAKER

Sophie Baker is the content producer at Biz4Afrika, a Microsoft-owned online hub providing help, information and networking opportunities for small businesses, through Content Studio.

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