

How Many Square Feet of Office Space Do You Have?

How many staff do you have? Are you happy with the amount of space?
Thinking of taking on a larger space and looking for any input. Thanks.

I have 5 acres of office space, plus an on-demand time share in the city.
No staff. Just me, solo. I love it. The dog takes up 2 square feet, or
maybe 3 when he stretches out. I'm pretty happy with 5 acres, but I'm
thinking of adding a couple of goats to mow down some brush that currently
makes about a half acre inaccessible. And, my wi-fi extenders need a little
boost. In the not-too-distant future, I hope to add a second floor, but not
over the entire 5 acres -- just over about 64 square feet where there is
currently a deteriorating hunting stand.

John T. Mitchell, Washington, DC

100 square feet, plus a portion of the garage, most of the basement, the
dining room table and a Regus Office Space.

Jeena R. Belil, New York

I have 1,900 square feet. It's me, an associate and 2-4 additional staff. I
have a conference room and a separate "living room." We take meetings in
whichever environment is best suited for the task.

It's a fairly large space given the size of the crew, but I could use a
little more for a dedicated video studio. Right now, when I step into my
personal office (12x16), I have to go through the video area in order to
get to my desk. It's not very feng shui, which I think is an Icelandic word
that means "I trip over cords."

Cheers,

David Allen Hiersekorn, California

I have 706 SQ Ft. Two comfortable offices, a conference room, and a small lobby area.

Rod Alcidonis, Pennsylvania

SoloSez Popular Threads, August 2013

I have a small 10x10 office for myself but the building I occupy has several other offices and we share two kitchens, a conference room and a lobby all on a first come, first serve basis. I am just starting out and I am trying to maintain a low paper office by scanning everything and keeping minimal hard copies so my space needs are low.

Adam Kielich, Texas

I have 2 spaces: (1) a 458 sq. ft. suite that has my office (not sure how many sq. ft.), a small reception area, and an office I sublet to another solo, and (2) a 259 sq. ft. conference room that also has filing space, cabinets for my office supplies, a fridge and microwave. We share the conference room, which is down the hall from the main office. We'd love contiguous space but haven't found anything suitable.

We are working on the conference room, in the hope that soon we will be able to rent it out on an hourly or daily basis to help pay our rent. It has a nice desk, phone, large table and chairs - I want to carpet it and am fixing up some screens to hide the utility stuff.

We could also use more space for staff and files, and my suite mate wants to hire a PT assistant (I have two who each work about 5 hrs/wk. - they use the desk in the reception area).

Cynthia Hannah-White, Hawaii

I'm in an old library building (built in 1910), converted to an office building shared by a bunch of relatively-new solos and the attorney who owns the place.

My office is 267sqft and is more than enough (no staff yet; I use Ruby for reception). Another attorney is 241sqft, a third is 145sqft (both of them solos w/o staff as well). We all share a lobby, a conference room, a full kitchen, a full bathroom (including shower), and two "regular" bathrooms.

-T.

T. Greg Doucette, North Carolina

1,700. Proud new owner! I take possession Monday!

Jennifer J. McCoy

SoloSez Popular Threads, August 2013

About 325. Waiting/reception area, small office for me, and conference/file area.

Marshall D. Chriswell, Pennsylvania

I have 80 sq. ft. presently, dedicated to just me. I can seat one client (I have one chair in the office beside my desk chair), but I have access to several conference/meeting rooms in the suite, as well as training/seminar rooms, a lunch room, and a copy/work room.

I have a good deal of stuff in my "home office" (a spare bedroom) from when I downsized from my previous office share, all of which I hope to fit into a larger space within the next 6-8 months as things get on-track.

I have no dedicated staff at this time, but I use Anna Ford (paralegal, on the list) from time to time for drafting and a little research, and I've used my sister for transcription and collections. I occasionally use law students for some research when appropriate.

I am currently Of Counsel with a small firm in Hickory, in a test/transitional phase toward joining that firm, and that have a suite there with a number of staff, and offices in three other cities, so...

-Rick

Richard J. Rutledge, Jr., North Carolina

My office is 25 by 20 and has 3 work stations plus plenty of room for printers and storage. We share the building that has a small conference space, larger conference room, reception/waiting area, and kitchen. Actually, I own the building and lease two smaller offices to another law firm (one is 8 by 15 and the other 8 by 8).

Melanie Ford

It would have been good with this thread as well to say how much everyone is paying for their space. May or may not be important because there are so many variables to consider (location, location, location), but interesting nonetheless.

Rick Bryan, New York

SoloSez Popular Threads, August 2013

For my 80 sq. ft. + 10h. conference + Internet + Receptionist, I pay < \$300/month.

Offices with windows are considerably more expensive....

-Rick

Richard J. Rutledge, Jr.

I have 2 rooms I'm guess less than 1500 feet. I also have a parking space access to a law library and a conference room that if the historical marker is correct where some President dropped by and had dinner I think it was Taft. I just have one paralegal./clerk/bagman/sherpa working for me.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

Well, cost is really only interesting as it correlates between the fees we can charge, which we can't discuss.

So, you and I probably pay enough for our small offices that many people on the list would gasp about, but I'm assuming our fees are correspondingly higher.

I had a lovely large office that I loved in a sublet, with no lease and was asked to move after two months because my landlord needed the space. So. the first office I found is tiny, but I have a great assistant space and THREE large conference rooms, which I'm in constantly. I wouldn't mind the teeny office as much if my L shaped desk wasn't the wrong way for this office and I didn't have to hop over the extension cords every time I get up from my desk!

Ellen Victor, New York

Two years ago I downsized from 1,000 square feet to 200 square feet. Did away with the staff at the same time. I pay \$360.50/month. I share a waiting room and kitchen, although I have my own sink, fridge and microwave so I don't bother with the kitchen. I wish I had about 1/3 more space, but am not willing to go up in rent to increase my comfort. The low overhead has been a godsend and I don't want to upset the apple cart.

Michelle Kainen, Vermont

There doesn't seem to be a lot of information available as to small law firm profitability metrics (assuming that would be part of the input you're seeking).

The number of folks you have on staff and the amount of space you have are all cost factors which impact your bottom line.

Because if everyone worked for free and you could get as much space as you wanted for nothing, you wouldn't be asking the question.

After income taxes, employee costs and rent are your largest expenses, would you say?

What else? Dozens of items. Medical insurance. Life insurance, professional liability insurance. Lexis/Westlaw and other subscriptions. Wealthcounsel (or whatever); bar dues. Telephone, internet, cell phones, iPad AT&T subscription. The list is endless. Well, not endless, but pretty expansive.

So I think one of the ways to answer your query is to ask you to look at your revenues and expenses carefully and consider where "more office space" fits in to your individual profitability metric. But you also have to consider non-revenue factors. For example, I don't have a little kitchenette in my office or to share. And that's a pain in the neck; it's hot as heck outside and I can't even keep a cold bottle of water around. Some folks have nice windows and a view; others have interior offices. Same square footage, dramatically different costs. How far do you want to commute? Does your practice produce enormous amounts of paper which needs to go somewhere, and do you need a conference room, or are those issues not a factor in your field? I don't know.

So I'm not sure how helpful my comments are. I tried.

Rick Bryan, New York

I have colleagues who give me crap about doing my own photocopying, etc. and tell me what a time waste that is for me. I have tried it the other way. I can safely say that I am far more profitable with this arrangement.

I recently called one of those colleagues and asked if they could hear that sound. They said "what sound" I said "the sound of me not paying an employee to play on Facebook because I don't have enough for them to do today". I have about 4 - 6 hours per week of clerical work that needs to be done. The rest would require either a very high-end paralegal or a law license. I'll suck up the 4 - 6 hours of clerical work so that I can keep all the money.

SoloSez Popular Threads, August 2013

My building has bigger suites and there are times when I have considered that, but I actually feel relieved when I write that tiny rent check each month.

Michelle Kainen

I'm not sure about square footage, as I haven't measured. I have enough space for right now and enough to have another lawyer or staff person, but we would be getting cramped beyond that. I have a waiting room with seating for four and an storage closet and hooks for coats. The receptionist desk with a high counter is in there also. Then I have a small office for one of my staff where basically there isn't much more than an L shaped desk and filing cabinet. I have a meeting room that is a good size with two big windows that are almost floor to ceiling. We have a room that houses our copier and mail stuff (that sits on a small desk) and our server, small fridge and coffee maker. My office could easily have two desks in it. Then we have another room with no door that has a spare desk and almost all of our filing cabinets (this would be where another lawyer or staff would work). The bathrooms and kitchen are in common areas and shared with other tenants. I pay very little for a great location and I have no plans to move any time soon.

Michele Allinotte, Ontario, Canada

The top 1/3 of my house is office, storage, and general utility room. That's about 666 ft. sq. I don't find that necessarily portentious, I'm just sayin'.

CJ Stevens, Montana
