The Case for Clean – Marie Kondo Clean!

Mike O'Brien

I recently took on an interim worship director position at a 25-year-old church that had several worship leaders before me. One of my self-imposed jobs was to clean out and organize the worship office, the soundboard area, and backstage. In the first couple of hours, I quickly filled over five massive trash bags with old VGA cables, Microsoft keyboards, countless cheap cables covered in electrical tape goo, stereo systems, and broken, outdated amps. Much of this gear had literally not seen the light in years. It was just taking up valuable storage space.

The Cluttered Church

In the Church, we have a unique relationship with the things that collect in our sound and media spaces. Many times people "gift" the outdated gear collecting in their homes or offices; we feel obligated to keep those donated items. A quick web search shows you that 300-foot spool of network cable goes for $12 on eBay — so you think, we need to hold onto this. Often people have purchased things for church programs or events and then leave it at the church; there's a 1 percent chance we might need it again, so in an attempt to be a good steward, we keep it. Sermon illustrations from 1997 are still blocking the door.

One of the chief enemies of creativity in the church is disordered, cluttered, and mismanaged spaces. That well-meaning clutter pile needs to be purged. We must take action for a new, functional, and creative space for your teams.

The Case for Clean

Cluttered spaces are like kryptonite for certain personalities. Although some are fine with chaotic spaces, more people will be attracted to and work better in organized areas. Also, in emergencies, it's easy to navigate well-labeled and orderly areas to find solutions.

Training and deploying volunteers is much easier when space speaks for itself vs. only one or two people knowing their way around the maze.

Clean begets clean. People are less likely to use your area as their area when your area is already tidy.

Mission-Minded Space

Organized, labeled, and de-cluttered work/storage spaces can serve the mission of a local church. Our computers, sound mixers, guitar cables, and drawers of tape help communicate the mission of the church. It's actually really important how these tools are used and stored. Yes, we don't want to throw away valuable items the church might actually need to fulfill its mission, but that well-meaning clutter pile might be becoming an obstacle. This is the perfect time to ask: "What needs to be trashed, donated, sold or kept?"

Finally, consider storage space when committing to purchase props for special events. Space is finite and valuable. I recommend this valuable resource: "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up", by Marie Kondo "Clutter is caused by a failure to return things to where they belong. Therefore, storage should reduce the effort needed to put things away, not the effort needed to get them out."