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My secret spring cleaning tool at the office - by Diana Perry

March 23, 2018 - Retail

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Though we've had snowstorm after snowstorm lately, spring is on all of our minds and with spring comes rejuvenation which also means, spring cleaning! No, I'm not talking about cleaning the dust bunnies out from under the bed or finding those Cheerios your kid threw under the car seat (though you should still do those things too). Instead I'm talking about getting organized at the office. With multiple email accounts overflowing with unread messages, four half-filled notepads on your desk, iPad meeting summaries, to-do post-its and probably a few other things, it's time to kick up your organization game and say hello to my new favorite project tool – Trello.

Trello is an organization tool that allows you to create visual work boards of any number of projects from the big picture to the minute details. What I like best about Trello is that it's meant for projects, not just various to-do lists which helps keep track of where you are in the process of each project. Whether in marketing, leasing, asset management or acquisitions, Trello will allow you to organize and prioritize projects on a collaborative level.

Each Trello board that you create consists of cards that are subsets of an over-arching project. You can invite other team members to the various boards and work on items together. Give a team member viewing or editing permissions and say goodbye to status update meetings and searching through email to figure out where you left off on a project because with Trello, it's just all right in front of you. And it's visually stunning with crisp background photos you choose of a theme that matches your board. The system even has an easy notifications message board on the right which keeps note of which items have been edited or moved. You can also receive notifications on your phone as pop-ups if you like. The tool spans across all devices including a website for desktop and Apps for both your phone and iPad, so you and all your team members can take it on the go.

So this may sound good but you're probably wondering how it all works. For example, if you're a broker or leasing rep, you can update the status of leads directly in the sales pipeline for all to see. So you'd create a board called "leads" then when you click into the board you have separate cards you can create like "leads" – "contacted us" – "contacted." Think of a giant wall bulletin board with different headers and then items under each header. But with the digital version you can drag and drop to reorder tasks, create checklists, add images and documents, set due dates and even

integrate other business tools you may use frequently like Salesforce, Slack, MailChimp, Dropbox, Twitter and others.

For another example: In marketing, you may have boards labeled, “email blasts,” “ICSC,” “public relations,” “signage” and “website.” If you click on the “signage” board you could have cards that say, “signs needed” – “signs in the works” – “done but need photos” – “completed 2018” – “ongoing vendor notes.” Within each card you would potentially have various project notes for each property, keeping your team in the know of where you are in the process of each window, façade or post sign that needs to be designed and fabricated. Think of it as big picture to small picture.

Whether you adopt Trello or something similar, I promise you it will change your work life and chop internal email by half. So deep clean your project list with beautiful organization this spring.

Fun Fact: Research has shown that when people hear information, they are likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later. However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later. (Source: LifeLearn, 2015 <https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics>).

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