My Sweet
Home Office Suite

The why and how to creating your own sweet workspace

Chris Jeub
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my loving and incredibly supportive family. My wife, Wendy, has never stopped encouraging me in my entrepreneurial ventures. My children are awesome, often helping me and carving out time for the family businesses. Home entrepreneurship is an awesome adventure for our family, and the spirit of my wife and children make that happen.
I work hard, I take care of my family, and I love to encourage others. I love life, as I believe everyone should.

Do you feel the same? I consider myself blessed. Unfortunately, I find few people who feel the same way. By “blessed” I mean doing what you love, making a good living at it, and returning that blessing to others.

That’s what I write about: living life to the fullest. I teach from what I know best – my life – and invite you along for the journey. It’s a simple proposition I have for you:

I will work hard to breathe life into every post, and in these posts I will encourage you to live free and prosperous lives in whatever direction life calls you.

Sound good? Subscribe to my site and receive updates. I hope our friendship grows as you resonate with the themes of this site. Life may be short, so there is no excuse to withering it away.

Subscribe at www.chrisjeub.com/connect
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By Chris Jeub
Chapter 1

What This Book Does for You

I walled up my garage years ago, making better use of the 20’ x 40’ space than parking our old vehicles. For the longest time one side of the garage served as storage, the other side split between an office and a laundry room.

But the more I got into home business, the more I needed a business hub. There had been several frustrations with my home office, and I was ready for a change.

Do you feel the same way? It seems that now-a-days everyone – no matter what your work situation – has a need for a home office suite. Perhaps you fit into one of these categories:

1. **Student.** You need a desk and a work area to keep your books.

2. **Commuter.** You head to the office for a portion of the week, but you need to get work done at home during the week. You need your space.

3. **Moonlighter.** You work during the day, but you need the space in the evening to take on that entrepreneurial venture.

4. **Stay-at-Home Parent.** The pantry or bathroom may be the only places to escape for a few moments rest. You need a room!

5. **Homework and Educator.** Perhaps a work room for the kids is what you need.
Whatever level you’re at in developing your home office suite, I want you to know that you CAN do it. And you can do it yourself! If you have space and a small amount of money to invest (less than you might think, as you will read later), you can build a beautiful room for your office, no matter what your needs are.

This book goes into some specifics – and I hope those specifics are helpful to you and your planning – but, more importantly, it tells you my story. I’m a simple businessman. I have a few businesses and a nonprofit that keeps me “employed” full time. I don’t need a huge building or warehouse with ginormous rental fees. I simply need to carve out a place in my own home to pound out my work.

The purpose of this book is to empower you to do the same. What you learn in this short read should give you the tools and determination to build YOUR Sweet Home Office Suite. Send me pictures at chris@chrisjeub.com. I want you to stay in touch.
Chapter 2

My Need for Space

I’ve been “on my own” since 2004, developing businesses and contracting my services out. It’s more than just trying to make ends meet; I sincerely love working on my own. It’s my forte, you might say. I make a living from my laptop and Internet connection. It’s more complex than that, but that’s it in a nutshell.

You’d think I would have valued my own workspace, but for many years I didn’t. I just made due with what I had. I went through stages of workspace – dining room table, coffee house, bedroom, friend’s basement. I strained myself through these flimsy alternatives before making the plunge and developing my own home office suite.

Before I spent time and money on the office, I needed to know if this was a good idea. I actually technically had a home office already (a room with a desk in it), so was a big expansion all that necessary? Could I get by without it? Here were some considerations:

1. **Sound.** I have several children at home. I need more soundproofing.

2. **Traffic.** My previous office had two doors in it, so to get from the living area to the garage/storage area, you had to go through my office.

3. **Copier.** My copier is used a lot by the kids for school and projects, so interruptions are frequent.
4. **Coziness.** My office at the time was pragmatic, but definitely far from “cozy.” I wanted carpet and a place to hang my elk antlers.

5. **Space.** My previous office only had room for a desk, a printer and file cabinet. I needed wall space for a dry erase board and room for a conference table.

6. **Storage.** A closet and a big bookshelf would have been awesome. I’m almost embarrassed to admit that I own a publishing company and I didn’t own a book shelf.

7. **Temperature.** I didn’t mind too much scooting to our local coffee shop on afternoons, or cuddling in my bedroom on cold winter days. But it thwarts work. I needed an office that can control the temperature.

8. **Studio.** I’m into video and audio projects, but my old office was an awful studio.

If you’re self-employed or have a job that requires a significant amount of work-at-home time, you’ll agree: your workspace is incredibly important. In fact, I’d go so far to say:

| The most important thing to consider in your work is the space from which you create. |

You might be able to get by without one, but if you are going to take your career seriously, you have to create space that is accommodating to your work. It is that simple. So let’s give this some thought.
WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

Take a good, hard look at that list I gave you. Which of them do you identify with? You can agree with all of them or just a few, or you can add your own needs for your home office.

The action items at the end of this chapter will ask you to flesh out specifics, but I want to act like a soothsayer and speak into your life. Your work involves creation – the ability to create things for others. No one can create something from nothing; they need the right elements to make what they make.

This goes for anyone. An artist needs her easel, paints, brushes, and subject. An architectural drafter needs his table, squares, and pencils. A salesman needs his desk, phone, and rolodex. A mom needs her lap, her love and her laughter to raise her children. We all do things, and we create.

And we need our space to do this. To create the things we need to create. The artist’s painting, the drafter’s plans, the salesman’s leads, and even the mothers time with her child to work on math – space is of the essence in how successful we are in the good work we do.

In other words:

_________________________________

Your work is incredibly important to your livelihood and your financial well-being.

Therefore, your workspace should be a top priority.

_________________________________
You probably agree with me because you’re reading my book. But let me tell you a story that will convince you to take the time and money investment once and for all.

**GET A ROOM, MAN!**

My previous office did not have air conditioning, so last summer I escaped the afternoon heat by going to a favorite coffee shop in town. I’m at the point with my business that most of my work can be had with just an Internet connection and my computer. So, when the temperature got uncomfortable, I’d hop in my Excursion and head to Serrano’s for a cup of iced coffee.

I remember one afternoon a guy with a bluetooth earpiece alone in a booth. He talked on the phone too loudly for me (or anyone) to ignore, and it was obvious he was talking with a client. It was also obvious that he was designing websites, and it was further obvious he was soaking the Internet connection in the coffee shop.

I cast judgment on him like a Pharisee of old. I mean really, what was he doing? Treating the coffee shop as a home office. The nerve of some people!

Then it hit me: *I was doing the exact same thing!* I may have had an office at home, but I was using another business to escape the heat. Who knows, maybe this web designer was doing the same. It was free rent, you might say. What a hypocrite I was.

But do you know what a hypocrite is? Someone who criticizes others for that which they desire (or do) themselves. I wanted a workspace of my own,
period. My escape to the coffee shop was kicking the can down the road of what I needed most: a home office space needed for my work.

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*I needed space to call my own.*

*I needed My Sweet Home Office Suite.*

That was the summer. It’s now Christmastime, and I’m sitting in my cozy office with Christmas music playing through my Bose speakers. I still may pack up my laptop and visit Serrano’s for a hot pumpkin latte – or maybe kick my feet up on my desk, peer out my picture window overlooking the creek in my backyard, and take a nap.

The choice is mine, and I’m loving the options. You’ll be there soon enough. Let’s get started.

**YOUR ACTION ITEMS**

1. Every chapter has “Your Action Items” at the end. This is a short list of action items for you to get done before moving on.

2. Make a list of the things that frustrate you about your current office conditions. Write it out and be descriptive. You’re about to find solutions for your frustrations with *Your* Sweet Home Office Suite.

3. Share this list of frustrations with your spouse or a business friend. He or she may give you some pointers as you move into the planning phase of your project, and that’s good.
Chapter 3
The Best Use of Space

If you’re thinking of transforming a part of your house into a home office suite, I suspect you need to think carefully on how you use your space. I had only a certain amount of home “space” to work. Simply throwing a desk into a room served a purpose, but more analysis could serve me and my business much better. Let me share with you my thinking on how I planned to transform my old garage into a useful home office suite.

My Original Space and Its Problems

The space I was utilizing used to be a garage. I walled it up several years ago, making 1/4 of it into a large laundry room, 1/4 for my current office, and 1/2 for storage and workshop.

It was extremely useful to have my original diagram laid out to see, especially in three-dimensions. It just so happened that my son, Isaiah, was a whiz at Google SketchUp, an architectural drafting tool that is incredibly easy to use. The free version is plenty for a simple layout of a garage or living area that you need to measure up and use to analyze your space. You can download Google SketchUp at http://sketchup.com.

On the following page is the layout my son came up with of my original office space plus garage.
You can see a number of problems with this office space. First, it is used to travel from our basement to the garage (see the two doors on each side of my office). Sure, someone can go all the way around to the exterior door (bottom left), but that isn’t usually the case in a busy family. My desk space should be at the end-of-the-line in the house plan with one single entryway. Secondly, the living area is right outside my door, and the door is a hallow interior door. Third, my printer (a nice Konica Minolta c353) is heavily used by my family. Fourth, I had very little wall space for a whiteboard. Fifth, there was virtually no room for another person (my accountant, a coach, a
Sixth, I had virtually no office storage space like a closet or bookshelf.

I know, exhausting. Honestly, my office was just a desk in a room. Sure, I clunked along and got work done, but it was definitely not a “suite.”

I had to come to terms with the fact that I needed more. You probably do, too. I mean really, you and I need to get the important work done that makes a living and provides for our family. I told myself:

_You need a workspace that empowers the good work that you do._

That started with rethinking the space that I had.

**RETHINKING THE USE OF SPACE**

The “rethinking” is where most people get stuck. They kick back in their less-than-optimal office and redesign in their heads the office of their dreams. After tearing down imaginary walls, rewiring the rooms, etc., etc. they give up and abandon the idea. Months go by and they’re still slaving away in their piece-of-junk office.

Instead, enjoy the rethinking stage. For me, my creative juices started with rethinking the use of the entire garage. I replaced the garage items (storage and Micah’s workshop) in our storage bin and our outdoor shed. Then, again using Google SketchUp, I rearranged my office on “paper.” Here was my new layout:
Here’s my strong suggestion to you: take a lot of time to think through your home office space. The purpose is to maximize the use of the space as much as possible. Notice the following solutions with this new layout of my office:

• **Traffic.** My desk is at the END of the flow of traffic.

• **Sound.** You can’t see it in this layout, but all the walls are insulated to keep household noise to a minimum.
• **Storage.** Two closets – a large one right inside the front door and on from inside my office – for space.

• **Workroom.** The space under the printer (it’ll be nice that the printer is outside my office) will be a work room for projects.

• **Wall space.** Notice the round table in my office. The spaces to the sides are pure open walls, one for a large white board (the other for my elk antlers).

Can you visualize the difference? The original use of the space before served little purpose other than providing me a desk to work from. This was hardly an effective use of space. But my new use of space makes a tremendous amount of sense. I couldn’t wait to get started.

**YOUR ACTION ITEMS**

1. Download Google Sketch Up and plot the space in your office. Even if you’re not moving walls, you can download all sorts of furniture and decorations to rearrange everything just the way you want it.

2. Take measurements of your space and apply accordingly. Print your plans up and bring them for a remodeling permit (as needed). Take the time to ask your family and friends for their advice. I showed mine to a professional contractor friend, and he gave me great pointers.

3. Set aside the work time to tackle this project. I knew the fall months would be slow for business, so I took two whole weeks off – almost as if
it were vacation – with very little time devoted to work. I put this on the calendar to get it done.
Chapter 4

Building Phase

Wendy and I bought a “fixer-upper” twelve years ago. We have done a lot to the house, and when folks come over to my house, they marvel over my explanations. Over the years, I...

- Moved the stairwell to depart from the living room.
- Created another bedroom upstairs.
- Installed all new windows.
- Remodeled the kitchen.
- Designed a walk-in pantry and laundry shoot.
- Landscaped the backyard and built a toolshed.
- Built a huge back deck overlooking the creek.

This list is actually much bigger, but you get the picture. I have great pride in my building projects and I like to show them off. But do you want to know something funny? Most of these things were done BEFORE I became self-employed. Honestly,

I got more work done employed than I did self-employed. I knew that wasn’t right.
What’s up with that? I believe there is a total misconception about self-employment that says we sit around, sleep in late, and work half as much. “All that free time” is a lure that some people are attracted to when it comes to self-employment. Friend, if that’s you, you’re in for a rude awakening.

But therein lies the rub. Self-employment – whatever you do, and it doesn’t matter if that is just a dream right now – may be a lot of work, but it is good work. You need that office space and you need to build it right. That’s why you are going to do this and do it right.

I believe there is a right way and a wrong way to tackle home development projects.

THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY

If you’re like me, you don’t start some projects. There is too much to consider. I know guys who stay in jobs they hate because, well, getting a new job takes too much time. The years go by and their life stories are filled with complaining and misery. Sad, and if there is one single purpose of ChrisJeub.com it’s this:

___________________________________________________________________________

You were meant to love your work, not hate it.
So start building toward that end.

___________________________________________________________________________

The wrong way to build an office: never start. Or to put it another way, plan yourself out of it. You have got to make that first trip to the hardware store, tear down that first layer of old drywall, crack open that how-to manual to figure out the mechanics. The wrong way is to never start.
The right way is to start when you’re somewhat (not totally) confident with your plans. I started with a fleshed out shopping list, a cleared credit card for an anticipated numerous trips to the hardware store, and the time cleared from my schedule to get into rebuilding. I cannot tell you how important it is to get started without have the plans perfected.

PERMITTING AND SEEKING ADVICE

I’ve seen projects done by overly ambitious do-it-yourselves that turned out disastrous. You don’t want to be one of those people. A lot depends on where you live or how much access you have to experienced contractors, but you should take the time to get the proper advice and permits for your project.

I am blessed to have some hearty contractor friends who are always ready to give me their two-cents on the projects I have in mind. Advice is incredibly handy and can save you a ton of money and time in the long run. This is one reason I dropped $250 for a round-trip ticket to fly my dad in from Minnesota. He has years of fixer-upper experience (I’m a chip off that block), so his expertise was invaluable as we ventured through the project.

Permitting should be seen as an additional layer of advice. It is most necessary if you live in a covenant community with strict building rules. When you set up an inspection, do the due diligence of asking the inspector for advice on the next stage. This will likely save time and expense in the long run.
You may be asking, “Do I really need to bother with a permit?” I find myself asking this constantly. I live in the country (city rules are usually stricter) and I don’t live in a covenant area, so I am free to do most simple remodeling myself. But a contractor friend of mine explained to me long ago two attitudes every homeowner should have toward permitting:

1. Building codes exist for the good of the community, and the building offices are filled with kind people who care about making your project successful.

2. This is still the United States of America and your home is your home. You may operate within the rules of your community as much as you want.

Keeping these two attitudes will likely strike the balance you need to permit your Sweet Home Office Sweet.

**OUR FIRST WALLS**

This section of the book is best shown with pictures. Follow along as I tell my story with the photos of our family project to build My Sweet Office Suite.
This is the view into the garage from the door. It was packed full of storage that we relocated. You can see that we had a long way to go from where we began.

Yep, Isaiah was the master at Google Sketch Up. Putting the layout into a digital format like this allowed us to really stretch our creativity and come up with just the right plan.
Isaiah was also gifted with electricity. He wants to be an electrician someday, and putting his skills to work on a home project is a great start.

Our project started with marking the floors for the yet-to-erect walls. Micah (Isaiah’s little brother by a year) is more of the builder than the meticulous electrician.
There were several tight moments that took some rebuilding and rethinking. The previous builders didn’t have studs for the drywall to set against, and we had to drill some into place.

You can see from the floor plans that we installed a storm door in the office (see to the left). This replaced the original interior door to give the office more soundproof effect.
There is little more enjoyable than raising a wall with your family. The closets took some thinking and planning, but with my dad’s expertise, we did a great job.
This picture doesn’t show it very well, but we re-insulated the walls to the garage. I had noticed how cold the garage got in the winter, and I didn’t want that for myself.

I think everyone should have a certified electrician in their family. He’s not quite certified, but he’s “wired” to be someday!
We had to extend one of the light fixtures to the new hallway. We wanted a light in the new hallway for the large closet. Isaiah transferred this from an end-of-the-line to a middle-of-the-line light.

We had quite the workshop set up in the soon-to-be office. Two chop saws made a world of difference.
Investing in the plane ticket for my dad to fly out not only gave me the confidence to raise the walls, but it was a great time together as a family.

This is a good shot from the front door. You can see the old office to the rest of the basement, Isaiah standing in the now-present workroom, me standing in the now-present office.
You can start to see it, can’t you? My 3x3 office closet is to the right, the large coat closet wall on the other side of Isaiah and me.

Putting up drywall is an exhausting project, but we did it. And we did it ourselves.
Want to know something? I think everyone should drywall sometime in their life. It’s hard work and teaches you patience, care, and satisfaction in good work.
A Note on Your Family

This was our primary crew, from L to R: Isaiah, Chris, Micah and Grandpa (Bernie). Three generations hard at work. This makes the project all the more worth it!

I’m self-employed because (1) I love life and (2) I love my family. Those two themes are threaded throughout my blog, ChrisJeub.com. As you can tell, this remodeling project is bringing the love of life and family to the surface. You should consider the same.

The first few days into My Sweet Home Office Suite, I noticed a few things:

1. A plane ticket to fly my dad out to help us was well worth the expense. Three generations building a home office suite is priceless.

2. Two of my sons have exemplified incredible trade skill (Isaiah with electricity, Micah with framing). I’m so proud of them.
3. The rest of the family help out where they can, even if it is helping make lunch for the crew. Everyone’s excited about the development in the basement.

Conversations, cracking jokes, thinking through difficult constructions – isn’t that what life and family should be filled with? I think so.

YOUR ACTION ITEMS

1. Take a bunch of pictures of your original space. And take pictures of the project as it unfolds. Think of this as a vacation, not a chore, so take pictures of the journey.

2. List the people in your family or community who could breathe some wisdom into your plans. Call them up and ask them out to coffee. Schedule a time to bring your plans into your city or county building office. Show them your plans and ask them for all the advice they can give you.

3. Send me your pictures and tell me your story. I especially like to hear how your family is involved. Send to chris@chrisjeub.com.
Chapter 5

The Finances of the Venture

Doing your office remodel yourself saves a bundle of money, and I suppose you’ll have to figure out which is worth more: your time or money. Anything can be contracted out nowadays, so you will have to figure this one out for yourself. In this chapter, I’ll explain my thought process. Then I’ll give you the hard-core specifics to what I spent as a backdrop for your planning.

Time vs. Money

I run a nonprofit (www.trainingminds.org), and nonprofits were getting hit hard through the recession. Because of the downturn I took some contracting jobs that required home office action. I needed the hub to make phone calls, schedule interviews, and run events. It was more important than ever to have my office.

But I knew I couldn’t afford just hiring someone to do it. Figure about 2.5 times the cost of materials to have someone else do it for you. I was figuring about $2k in materials, so the equation was looking like this:

\[ \$2k \text{ material} \times 2.5 = \$5k \text{ material + labor} \]
Perhaps if I really stretched it, I could do it, but at the time $5k was a lot of money. I’m not a wealthy guy, and I figured I could do a lot more with the extra cash than pay someone to do the job for me.

Besides, I knew that doing it myself brought something of value to me. This is very, very important to understand: I am self-employed because I love it. The money isn’t the issue. I hope you do what you love, too, because life is too short to be wasting it away at what you hate. Write that one down and memorize it:

_______________________________________

Life is too short to be wasting it away at what you hate.

_______________________________________

This office project was much the same way: I needed to do it myself because I love creating my own place. It wasn’t so much the money savings; it was knowing that I would be creating the place myself. That’s what was worth more than the $3k savings.

But time was still not with me. I came up with my initial plans in the summer – the busiest time of my curriculum publishing year. Time wouldn’t let up till at least October when all my yearly curriculum was published, my camps were over, and my family would be onto schooling. Always still busy, but not crazy busy.

So I put off the remodel till October. I spent a lot of time at the coffee shop during the hot summer (my old office was not air conditioned), and I relied on my trusty 11” Macbook Air more than ever. But I was determined to do the remodel in October. I’m so glad I did.
COST BREAKDOWN

I have a Google Doc that breaks down every single receipt item, all the way down to the drywall sandpaper. If you want to get that detailed, follow this link to the spreadsheet: http://chrisjeub.com/books/sweet-office-suite-cost-spreadsheet/. The reason I’m not publishing this spreadsheet in this book is because it probably won’t reflect your prices in your area. These receipts reflect prices in the Colorado Springs USA area, so it may or may not be useful to you.

Allow me to break this down into a more general framework so you can apply it to your situation. I then will focus on key expenditures that should get your crank rolling for YOUR Sweet Home Office Suite.

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>$2,355.84</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
All things considered, this isn’t too bad, both time-wise and cost-wise. It took approximately two weeks to complete the project myself to the point of moving my desk into my office. Consider that I used to spend approximately $1,000 per month for rent for a larger office in town. I’ll have *My Sweet Home Office Suite* paid off in just a few short months.

Consider this carefully, my friend. If you are paying rent to sit in an office to “look professional,” you’re spending a pretty penny. Sure, some small businesses need a physical address, and I get that. But if you are able to break free from the physical address like I did, you’ll no doubt save thousands in the long run.

**Unique Items**

I want to narrow my expenditures down even further. They each have some justification behind them that you should be aware.

- **My Dad’s Plane Ticket.** My dad and I try to find reasons to get together, and this was one of them. He was a banker his whole life, but he understands basic home development. Besides, $250 to have him hang with me and his grandkids for a few days was well worth it. I didn’t list this on the expense list.

- **Carpet Laying.** The Home Depot makes it much too easy to have them install. At the time, they had a $37 installation fee. Good gravy, I love doing things myself and learning new trades, but laying my own carpet would have taken me at least a couple days. The Time
Money equation tilted the other direction for me on this, and we had the carpet laid.

- **Tools.** There were quite a few assets purchased that put me over the $2k projection. I figure this is okay, because I could really use these for future projects. These tools included a new cordless drill, a three-pack nail gun set I couldn’t say no to, a drywall square, and new saw blades.

You’ll find you’ll have those expenditures left over, and you may – like me – figure that’s fine. I chalk up these items for the future. You could seek other ways to go, and that’s fine too. You may hire more out than just the laying of carpet, or you may rent tools instead of buying them. In the end, do what’s best for you and your situation.

The point is this: make sure you do the job efficiently and to reach the end goal of creating a workspace suitable for the good work that you do.

**YOUR ACTION ITEMS**

1. Consider *time* versus *money*. Which parts of your project will you hire out? Which can you do yourself? Which can you make into a project that you could enjoy with your family? Plan this out, and for fun figure out how much you’ll save by doing it yourself.

2. Write out all the big-ticket items for your project. Price them out in a spreadsheet. Figure on spending twice as much for the remaining resources. This is the amount you should budget for.
3. Make sure the funds are available on one credit or debit card. Line up your online banking accordingly so you can log in whenever you want and see how spending has been going. This gives you the ability to keep track of the finances throughout the development of the project.
Chapter 6

Finishing Phase

Okay, time for more pictures. In Chapter 3, I showed you the first half of the project: the Building Phase. Now was the time to wrap it up in the Finishing Phase.

Before I get into the pictures, I have to warn you about this. It’s easy to get tired and slop this phase together. My dad flew home after the building phase and left me alone with my boys to wrap up the project. Not only was I tired, I needed to get back to work – you know, the kind of work that makes me money to pay for projects like this. And I didn’t have an office finished.

It just so happened that I had scheduled an elk hunt the week following, and it was just what I needed. The time away from the office to hop around the Rocky Mountain wilderness was perfect. I returned with a newfound enthusiasm to get that office done. (I also returned with a freezer full of elk, harvested by my 14-year-old son, but that’s another story – a really good one, too!)

That’s what I needed: enthusiasm. The job wasn’t finished, and the only one that would get it done was me. So I set out on the Finishing Phase with my boys!
We sought a lumber yard that specifically had tongue-and-groove pine boards. They stain nicely and really bring out a rustic grain.

Putting up the pine boards was the funnest of all the projects. We covered the walls in polyurethane and sanded it gently with fine brown paper.
Isaiah also loves to paint, but this was his first time spackling. He did a fair job and the walls look great.

Laying carpet was the only project I paid labor for. The Home Depot had a $39 installation special that I couldn’t pass up.
Finished with the first wall. I'm so glad I went with the more expensive pinewood walls. A drywalled/taped/sanded wall would have cost about $75 total, this cost about $400 in material. But it was so worth it.

The finished office! The perfect atmosphere for the good work I do.
YOUR ACTION ITEMS

1. If you’re like me, you will want to get the job done and get back to work. Consider some fine-tuning to your plans that will add to atmosphere. The pine walls, for example, took more time and more money, but it was worth it in the end!

2. When moving your furniture back into your office, take the time to clean out clutter. How refreshing it is to have a clean desk, cleared out drawers, and a workspace ready for productive work. Now is that time.

3. Before you start messing the place up with your hard work, take a ton of pictures. I’d love to see them! Send them to chris@chrisjeub.com.
Chapter 7

Your Office Is Your Business

I remember when I was – or thought I was – about 1/2 way done with the development of My Sweet Home Office Sweet. At least the toughest work was behind me. In three days my family and I had demolished a small part of the basement, erected closet walls, insulated, dry-walled, replaced a window and a door, wired reciprocals and lights, taped the drywall seams. We still had to sand the drywall and reapply the mud, paint, trim, woodwork, build a bookshelf, assemble two closets, lay interior flooring, lay carpet, and anything else we overlooked.

I was tired, but it’s a good tired. There’s a lot to say about good, hard work that makes doing it yourself so totally worth it. It has gotten me to reflect:

The indisputable lessons of business can be learned in a do-it-yourself project.

And vice versa. It’s true. This home office project you’ve enjoyed with me has been a great example. I’ve come up with 10 business lessons in this do-it-yourself project, and these lessons can be applied to any entrepreneurial project.

10 Lessons for Your Sweet Home Office Suite
1. **Plan.** Consciously set aside time to layout the plans. Having my son Isaiah – somewhat of a whiz with Google SketchUp – draw up plans was a great idea. We spent good time thinking through the details of our planning.

2. **Consult.** Ask for advice from those who know better. This is one of the reasons I flew my dad out from Minnesota. His contracting expertise was invaluable. It was a $250 plane ticket, and I wrote that expense off as a consultation fee.

3. **Finance.** In my planning, I had large-ticket items earmarked. I had a credit card specifically cleared for this job alone. I’ve been stacking my receipts neatly in a folder – located on the dash of my truck – and I kept careful track of each line item.

4. **Start.** There comes a time to “just do it,” take the plunge and do the job. I can’t get so wrapped up in my planning and consulting that I never move forward and get the job done.

5. **Work hard.** A good work ethic is incredibly valuable in life. There are times to turn down hard work, but never turn it down to just avoid the work. Embrace hard work; it’s enjoyable and rewarding.

6. **Be risky.** Consider the return on the time invested now. The week’s worth of work will bring great returns later. Keep your eye on the return and it will make the risks of expense and time worth it.

7. **Be adaptable.** The plans will change as you dig into the project. I started out with plans that, by the end, changed considerably. You know
what? That’s okay. Change is usually worth making, so be open to it, be adaptable.

8. Be ready to spend twice as much. I’ve done many construction projects over the years, and I have grown to expect this. Time and money will be spent, and I expect it so it doesn’t frustrate me.

9. Include the kids. Sure, there are times you have to shoo them off, but don’t get into that habit. There was a day when Isaiah and Micah were annoying, curious kids that “got in the way.” I’ve always resisted that urge to keep them away. Today as strong young men, they sure came in handy.

10. Learn. I greatly enjoyed this project. Why? It forced me to sit down and reflect upon the good things about it. When you do your office, take pictures, discuss the details, enjoy one another, reflect on things learned – it’s all part of the business.

But I’ve got my eye on the ball: a home office area that will be the perfect set up for my home business.

THE 11TH, MOST IMPORTANT, LESSON

There is an 11th lesson in all of this. Brace yourself; it’s spiritually deep and profound. I saved it for the end of the book, but its enthusiastic and optimistic message has been threaded throughout.

You see, there is something magical in building YOUR Sweet Home Office Sweet that you may not have realized. If you walked with me in the journey
of carving out your personal work space in your home, you did something extraordinary.

You’re different than most people. Most hide and resist projects like this. Most people prefer the cubicle life. Not you. And I suspect why. It is because you...

Create.

Creativity. The work of an artist. You love creating your own workspace, and that workspace will be your place to continue your own creations. Allow me to elaborate.

You may have heard that man is created “in the image of God” but you never thought about what that means. Creativity is, in my opinion, an “image of God trait.” It’s one of those peculiar things that separates us from animals.

Consider this: all other creatures on the planet react to their environment. Mankind is different. We act. When it rains, animals seek shelter out there. We build shelters and call it home. We create.

You didn’t think I’d get all spiritual on you, did ya? Please don’t get your shorts wrapped up on this one, just go with it. Your Sweet Home Office Suite is your creation. You are a beautiful creation of God’s, and your personal journey through building your office suite is one that, I believe, God smiles on. You’re created to create, so take joy in your building.

And one last thing. Keep me posted. Subscribe to ChrisJeub.com and email me (chris@chrisjeub.com) with your pictures of your office creation.
We’re friends on this journey of life, and I look forward to seeing you succeed.
I work hard, I take care of my family, and I love to encourage others. I love life, as I believe everyone should.

Do you feel the same? I consider myself blessed. Unfortunately, I find few people who feel the same way. By “blessed” I mean doing what you love, making a good living at it, and returning that blessing to others.

That’s what I write about: living life to the fullest. I teach from what I know best – my life – and invite you along for the journey. It’s a simple proposition I have for you:

I will work hard to breathe life into every post, and in these posts I will encourage you to live free and prosperous lives in whatever direction life calls you.

Sound good? Subscribe to my site and receive updates. I hope our friendship grows as you resonate with the themes of this site. Life may be short, so there is no excuse to withering it away.

Subscribe at www.chrisjeub.com/connect