

RE-ORGANIZE YOUR WORK SPACE

In the last issue of HOUR HOMES Magazine, organizers Cara Brook of S.O.S., LLC and Betsy Krobot of Betsy K. Home Choreography, LLC got a plea for help from Ann: "There are piles and piles of papers in my office and I have nowhere else to put anything. I can spend an entire day clearing it out; just to find it back the way I started within a short time. I know there is stuff in here I don't need but I don't know where to begin and subsequently feel paralyzed."

Cara says: "As a Professional Organizer, it is not often that I am amazed at the progress made during a client re-organization session. In Ann's case, however Betsy and I were pleasantly surprised by her unwavering enthusiasm to get herself and her office organized. Ann decided she was ready, she set the parameters of what that change would look like, and then remained focused as she followed through to completion.



"There are piles and piles of papers in my office, and nowhere to put them."

This may sound like an easy task; however, getting organized isn't always as straightforward as one might think. There are a lot of emotions tied to the things that we own – papers, clothing, collectibles, and family heirlooms – and to make a blanket statement as to what you are willing to throw away, is a lot easier said than done. Ann made the decision to purge any file containing information that was more than two years old (except personnel files). At the end of the day, I think she stuck to that decision about 99% of the time.

When Betsy and I begin working with a client, the person is usually concentrating

on all of the visible stuff surrounding her. We find that it is actually not about the 'stuff' at all. It is about what that stuff represents. For many, the items represent a person's sense of accomplishment.

These items help define her success as an accountant, financial advisor, sales person, artist, musician, etc. As much as the items can be a source of frustration or an eye sore, they can also offer a sense of comfort.

Ann and I didn't speak directly about what her stuff represented, however, I did recognize times when she seemed a little uncomfortable. From our conversation during the sorting and purging process she vocalized the struggle between feeling relief and feeling a slight panic about letting things go. This contradiction in feelings is very common with our clients; and that is one of the reasons we let the client set the pace, as I stated earlier.

At the beginning of a job, I bring my label maker and other labeling supplies with me. For this session, I brought two packages of 50 hanging file labels in the 3-inch size. By the end of the day, all 100 labels were gone. So if Ann kept 100 files, I would estimate that she threw away at least 150 more! (And by the way, when I say "threw away", I mean "recycled".) While Ann and I concentrated on reducing the number of files, Betsy's team were able to remove two of those cabinets from the office and replace them with one, 2-drawer unit that will still allow her room to expand in the third 4-drawer file cabinet.

I always enjoy working with my clients along-side Betsy who gets to do the make-over portion of the work while I keep the client focused on the details. There were a few times when we could see that Ann really wanted to walk back to her office to see the progress that was being made, but she remained focused and continued her work with me and Kathy. At the end of eight hours, Ann had a brand new, clutter free office.

Cara Brook is a Professional Organizer and public speaker. Since 2004, her company, Strategize. Organize. Simplify., LLC (S.O.S.) has successfully worked with clients to become more productive in their work day, and ultimately create order amid the chaos surrounding them.

This Month's Cover Photo

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Ann's story: "It was obvious from the first consultation that I was dealing with committed professionals. After seeing the office, Cara and Betsy recommended a date, and a plan. On the arranged date, Cara, Betsy and her 'crew' arrived armed with boxes, labels and assorted items.

I was prepared to be accommodating and went with Cara to a location away from my office to go through files. Meanwhile, Betsy and her assistant, Emily, proceeded to pack up my office. They filled boxes and brought them to Cara and I to go through and consolidate, update and label. They emptied every file and desk drawer, cleared every surface, each tiny corner of my office.

A table in my office was switched with one Betsy had seen in another space. Two file cabinets were moved from my office. Personal items surfaced in one of the boxes and I realized, oh no! They are going through my drawers! I was nervous that I was throwing out too much. What if I suddenly needed something? Finally the day drew to a close. It was time to go see my office.

It was amazing - a complete transformation and an extraordinary process. I finally had a professional looking office that I wanted immediately to strive to maintain."



Cara's mission as a Professional Organizer is to work with individuals who are ready to make a change in their lives and become better organized in the process. She is a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Speakers

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Betsy, the owner of Betsy K. Home Choreography, LLC has been professionally organizing and re-decorating homes and home business since 2003. Betsy is a Certified Professional Organizer and the current VP of the CT Chapter of The National Association for Professional Organizers. www.betsyk.com
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