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Pulp Friction



Is the paper in your life making your kitchen counter a fire hazard? Despite the increase in electronic communications, there are inevitable papers that play critical roles in our everyday family life. But many of us would consider hiring a bulldozer before we'd dive in and attempt to organize. Only when we're late with a bill, lose a child's permission slip or misplace a prescription do we consider getting help.

And speaking of paper clutter, you'll notice we have decided to go green! Welcome to the first electronic edition of Life Spaces! Same time-saving tips, same sanity-creating purpose. No paper to add to the pile.

Please let us know what organizing topics you'd like us to cover.

If you see ideas you like here, e-mail or call to schedule a consultation. You'll get a free tip sheet or white paper for mentioning that you read Life Spaces ... as well as a valuable introduction to your new Peace of Mind!

Environmentally Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue".

Quote We Like

"Be steady and well-ordered in your life so that you can be fierce and original in your work." - Gustave Flaubert

Life Spaces – In This Issue



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“Counter” Act Paper Clutter in 3 Easy Steps Organizing is as Much Thinking as Doing



Guess who’s staking out valuable space on your kitchen counters—and with your permission! Mail, artwork, brochures, investment statements, homework, field trip sign-ups, church bulletins, PTA news, bills, events you want to go to, vacation catalogs ... and the list goes on. Our schedules have turned from the relaxed summer pace to the hub-bub of clubs, sports and activities.



And our “friends” have returned. **Papers !** They make their home on the kitchen table. Then they are moved to counters or to the dining room table in the “big swoop” when we know friends are coming over. You know, the Big Swoop: we put our arms around the paper piles, swoop them up into our arms, and swoop them into the dining room where they rest on the dining room table!

What can you do so you don’t lose the papers, so you stop missing appointments and can find what you need, when you need it?

Three Keys to Managing Paper: Instead of managing the paper, think of it as managing the activities of the people in your life. The papers can help you! Raising your eyebrows yet? Here are the 3 concepts to remember:



1. What *process* can you use so that you spend enough time but less than you are now, dealing with the papers?
2. What *products* will you use to contain papers so they're not lost?
3. And what *people's habits* need to change, so that the system continues to work.

The three P's – process, product, people. All three have to work for you before you can feel more organized and in control.

Some Process Advice

Choose **one time of day, at roughly the same time** to go through papers. Tack this onto another habit or part of your schedule that's already engrained. One of my clients uses time while she prepares dinner. Another small business owner reviews mail at about noon, to give himself a break. Another client sits down at 9 p.m., the first quiet time of the evening, to review mail, figure out what calls need to be made, what papers need to be signed for the children – all paperwork for the household. Remember that these papers are helping you manage the lives of everyone in the household or parents living elsewhere. So please plan on ½ hour of quiet time **daily** to figure out what to do with each day's papers and get schedules together for the next few days.

Decide on the spot: what do I need to do next with this piece of paper?

Quickly skim each paper to see if there are things to do or deadlines to meet. Then you won't be surprised. No paper gets returned to the pile with "I'll look at that later." (Because we rarely do ...). If it's a magazine or newsletter, decide if you truly have time to read it. If so, toss it into a magazine rack nearby or make a folder of articles to read. If it's a form to sign, ask yourself: what else do I need to know before I can sign this? If nothing, sign it now and put it with your things near the door. Need more information? Write down what you need on the form so you don't need to rethink it later.

Gather your tools. Write in deadlines on your calendar or planner (paper or electronic).

More and more, I see a home laptop on the kitchen counter for calendar, mail, and internet access. So if you see that it's your time to bring snacks for next month's business meeting or for your child's classroom, write this on your calendar. And add this right away to your grocery list.

Some Product Advice

Find **products that appeal to your style and most importantly, your way of thinking.** Because you are writing deadlines on your calendar and you're keeping some form of "next actions" or "to do list," the papers don't have to be visible. You'll use them when you need to get to the details. Whatever style of product is fun and attractive, that's the one you want to use.



Keep this product in the same place so you'll always know where to find it.

Look for our "Organizing with Vintage Style" workshop on 10/16/2008 ... later in this issue. Or go to www.OrganizeNH.com and to the Teleclasses & Workshop Schedule.

Product ideas: One client uses a different colored folder for each child, parent, activity and committee. Another client set up a three ring binder with sections for each aspect of the family's life (kids, medical, parents, etc.); use a floral, fabric-covered expanding portfolio with handles for those of you on-the-go; and many clients use stackable letter trays for easy access (labeled) because they fit right into kitchen shelves. Another client loves the Longaberger baskets. And one working parent set up a bench with cubbies above it in the hallway, to catch everything on the way into the house.

Some "People" Advice

Probably the most difficult aspect is that your habits may need to change. Yet you will be a catalyst for others in your home to follow suit. Take small bites at first. Perhaps you start with a basket for bills or a box for receipts. Make it easy on yourself. Focus on progress, not perfection. The counter or table didn't get like this overnight. Try out a new organizer and label it. Figure out what time of day you'll go through the mail. While you prepare dinner, do you have 5-10 minutes? Continue for a few weeks to work out the kinks and get into new habits. Only then get children or significant others to participate. Once everyone who brings in the mail starts using your new organizing system, then move onto another issue.

The thrill for you may be the calm that comes from knowing you have control over the paper. Or maybe for you, the thrill will be in how little time it takes to clear the counters for dinner. Or the thrill will be inviting friends over and not spending an hour (or more) clearing the kitchen. Think of the mental calm you'll feel when you enter the kitchen and see clear counters. You're the CEO of the household and doing a great job at managing it all!



For Our Entrepreneurs & Home
Business Readers...



What a Great Meeting! But, Where Did all the Information Go?

Picture this. You're back to the office after an appointment. What do you have in your pockets or briefcase? **Business cards, receipts, meeting notes, presentation copies, new ideas for your business, a few web sites you want to keep track of.** What a mixture. Ideally you'd have the time and inclination to sit right down, write notes and do the follow-up while fresh in your mind. This is a common question I get from business owners – do I do it all now while it's fresh in my mind? Seems so little to add to my "to do" list.

But the phone is ringing. You have e-mail and ... and ... and ... How do you recover; how do you dispense quickly with the papers you've just brought in? What systems will make this quick and easy? Here are a few ideas that will allow you to easily and quickly find what you need later on. If you like these ideas and would like a more detailed consultation on your office paper systems, call Sue or visit www.OrganizeNH.com.

Business cards:

Before dropping the card on the desk, **ask yourself:** Will you ever refer this person? Do you anticipate a business relationship going forward? If so, add to your contacts database or book of business cards and toss the card (or at least put it in the back of your desk drawer, out of the way.) If you're going to refer someone to your client, you want to be confident. If you're not sure, keep the cards in the back of your desk drawer. Be aware of how often you go looking for someone's card in the next few months. Then decide.

Receipts:

Have a **drop-off point.** Just one. With clients, we've used an attractive leather box. We've used a ceramic bowl near the office door. We've used a green file folder (closed on two sides so the smaller receipts don't fall out). Mark receipts with the details to track for taxes. File away until your regular time to enter receipts into your accounting system. Added benefit: if you consolidate this task, you'll know how much time it really takes ... and realize you can outsource it.

Meeting notes, new ideas, and websites to check out:

I've done this for years and it works so well, I've begun sharing it when business owners ask this question. As you write meeting notes, **develop icons** for yourself: "F" for follow-up; do today/tomorrow (use #1 as your icon); neat web

site/book/resource to check out (write “www” or @pc); quick call or email (an e with a circle around it; or “call.”). Makes quick work to figure out what you need to worry about today and what can be added to your list.

Meeting Handouts:

Within 24 hours or so, **spend 15 minutes to review** meeting handouts. Ask yourself: Do I already know this material --toss it. Is this interesting but not useful to *my* business—toss. Is this a great idea that I might use someday – add to “someday” file, “business plan” file or bookmark the web site



What do we usually do instead? We write the meeting or conference name and file everything away – never to be viewed again, because we have no visual reminder of what was useful about the presentation. Decide what’s useful and make *that* the new file name. If the presentation was about marketing channels, but the newest information for you was about blogging... and you know you’ll be writing one, start a “blogging” file.

Try these ideas on for size. The ones that work best for your business will surface once you try a few. The better organized your space and files are, the more time you’ll create, and the more productive you will be. For more in-depth business organizing workshops and teleclasses watch for our announcement or visit the web site.

This Issue’s Question and Answer



Q. My banker, my realtor and my mother all give me different answers about **how long to keep important papers**. Do you have a definitive source of information on this topic?

A. The IRS. You will hear varied answers to this question. But, to be comfortable creating your own procedures, take a look at this article, reprinted with permission, from www.OnlineOrganizing.com You can find similar summaries on the Kiplinger web site, Bankrate, the IRS web site, and on Jean Chatzky’s site. ***Always check with your accountant as your personal situation expert.***

<http://www.onlineorganizing.com/ExpertAdviceToolboxTips.asp?tipsheet=24>

And the IRS link, the best place to begin understanding the issues is at www.irs.gov Search on “keep records.”

Workshops Coming Up!

Organize with Style ~ Using Vintage and Antique Products.

Thursday, October 16 at 7:00p.m. Hosted by The Shoppes at 326.
326 Nashua Road, Milford, NH 03055

Tired of using plastic and fabric organizers? Need organizers with more vintage or antique style for your unique home? Join Sue West, a local professional organizer, and Sara Harkins, one of the shop dealers, to discover new ideas for organizing the hot spots around the house. We'll cover organizing tips for three areas: kitchen, home office and bed/bath. We'll give you practical ideas for managing these "clutter spots." And we'll show you how to use **vintage and antique products** to untangle clutter spots and keep them organized for good!

Please contact Robin directly at The Shoppes at 672-3900 or print their registration form from the Space4U website (www.OrganizeNH.com and go to the workshops section).

Conquer Your Home's "Clutter Hot Spots" & Experience EFT to Support Your Efforts.

Thursday, November 6th 6-7:30 p.m. Held at The Holistic Self Care Center, Nashua.

Join Sue Nordemo, of Healing Crossways Hypnosis & EFT Center, and Sue West, of Space4U Organizing. You'll hear practical solutions to the top 5 clutter hot spots; learn three ingredients for successful organizing systems; and experience a new tool, Emotional Freedom Technique. Tapping on acupuncture points helps you get to the causes of your own issues related to organizing. You'll learn how to tap on yourself as part of our session.

Contact Sue Nordemo healingcrossways@cirelle.net or 882-4944 or Sue West Sue@OrganizeNH.com or 765-9267 for questions or to register.

And coming up in 2009 ...

- ❖ Downsizing Dilemmas – Jan./Feb., Nashua, Rivier Institute for Senior Education;
- ❖ Downsizing Dilemmas – February 4, Manchester, Elliott Senior Health Center;
- ❖ Home Organizing – Your space, your stuff, your time. February 12, Manchester Community College;
- ❖ Entrepreneurs/home businesses: time management and organizing tele-classes – regular schedule to be released.

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