

# RE-ORGANIZE YOUR WORK SPACE

By Betsy Krobot

**A**s organizers, Cara Brook of S.O.S., LLC and I, Betsy Krobot of Betsy K Home Choreography, LLC are very familiar with the plea for help that Ann called us with. "There are piles and piles of papers in my office and I have nowhere to put anything else. I can spend an entire day clearing it out; just to find it back the way I started. I know there is stuff in here I don't need but I also don't know where to begin and I feel paralyzed."

Research proves that the most effective people are those who not only have great ideas and great thinking, but those who are organized and focused enough to put those ideas into practice. The only way to do that is to set up systems, adhere to plans and priorities that you have intentionally set for yourself and gently adjust them as time passes when they no longer work for you.

Now we admit that organizing is not rocket science or brain surgery and that many people have a natural instinct to organize. However, that does not mean they have the discipline or time to execute what is necessary to stay organized. It is like many of us who know how to work out and stay in shape, but we don't do it, so we hire personal trainers, join a gym or go to nutritional consultants to hold us to task. Thus, the role of an organizer is essential in your life if you wish to live it with intention. For Ann, Cara and I have designed the following steps and the reasons behind them to help get her office space in shape and keep it there for good.



## The Plan for Ann's Office

- 1) Ann will first go through the current, urgent files on her desk and place them in a box to be put in an immediately accessible location. It is important that Ann is still able to work and to find things during the clearing and organizing process.
- 2) Betsy will clear away the table and chairs that are not being used for their intended purpose.
- 3) Ann and Cara will put the piles of papers into separate boxes labeled by the locations they came from, so that things can be found while organizing.
- 4) Personal items will be placed in boxes to be removed from the office temporarily. Once the office is seen clear and open, the temptation to put them all

back is less tempting. It is much harder to remove each item one by one because most things are emotionally charged in some way.

5) In a separate area, away from the office, Cara and Ann will go through and sort the papers and personal items by:

- a. Project
- b. Things that require immediate action
- c. Papers to be filed in existing files
- d. Papers to be filed in new files
- e. Papers to be archived
- f. Papers to be tossed
- g. Things to be donated

6) While Cara and Ann are sorting through boxes, Betsy will be arranging Ann's office for optimum productivity and ease using the principles of Feng Shui (the ancient Chinese practice of space clearing and object placement).

7) Betsy will assemble and install cubbies for Ann's projects. These cubbies will allow Ann to store her projects in piles, the way she likes to; however, the piles will be exhibited in a way that Ann can still have them visible. Each cubby will have an easy labeling method so that the label can be replaced when the current project is finished. It's important to keep things simple.

8) Once Ann and Cara have completed the sorting process, they will start going through the large filing cabinet in Ann's office. Ann confessed that a lot of the files in the drawers are outdated and that some of the piles in the office have accumulated because the filing cabinets were full. Some of the files, however, are used on occasion, so she did not want to store them elsewhere. For these files, we recommend purchasing a scanner and software that enable her to load large documents into her computer and barcode and index the documents for future retrieval. The software will also enable Ann to find documents by searching for key words and titles. We recommend this method for people who have large quantities of papers that are frequently accessed for resources, research and reference.

9) Ann has a constant need to refer to different publications, so well-labeled periodical holders and magazine racks will be put on accessible shelves and walls for quick retrieval.

10) Once all files have been sorted through and the organizing solutions assembled and installed, the projects and files will be put back in their places, keeping the following principles in mind:

- a. Things that are being worked on currently will be well displayed and easily accessed in the labeled cubbies close to Ann's desk.
- b. Things that are used frequently (at least once a month) for reference will be organized in the filing cabinets or put into the labeled periodical holders or magazine racks.
- c. Things that are rarely referred to but are needed from time to time will be scanned into Ann's computer and indexed, and the actual file will be tossed.

11) The final box to be brought back is the personal items. Once Ann sees the office in its new cleared-away state, her desire to load it up with mementos will diminish. The process of taking things away that are emotionally charged is difficult for everyone. But somehow, the desire to put these little items back wanes when a clear space is presented. Plants are important in one's office,

as they affirm life and growth. However, if you don't have a green thumb, beautiful artificial plants are better than dying, real ones.

12) The final stage is to put things that have real meaning in a place of honor so that they can be cherished and noticed. When there is "too much," the mind is overwhelmed, shuts down and sees nothing. But when things are respected and carefully placed, they hold real meaning and stand out. When putting these little things back, keep this in mind: Always have items around you that remind you of success, completion, functionality and life (thriving plants only!). These objects will create feelings of accomplishment and the universe will in turn bring you more of the same.

When your area is cluttered...well, you are creating your future with the thoughts you are having at this moment. So, if your thoughts are stressed, over-whelmed and you are constantly being reminded of unfinished projects that you "will get to someday," this is the future you are creating for yourself. Take control of your life by first taking control of your environment. If your environment reflects that you can't handle what you have now, then how can the universe allow you more?

An organizer will design programs and systems that work specifically for you in your office and your home. We hold you to task, show you from our experience what will work best for your learning style, resources, demands and personality. We will teach you the thinking and mindfulness that will enable you to live out your days doing the things that mean something to you, and help you work towards your goals, rather than helping others to get to theirs.

Stay tuned for stories, tips, systems and products in future issues of *Hour Homes Magazine*.

Cara Brook is a Professional Organizer and public speaker. Since February, 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. 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.

Prior to founding S.O.S. Cara spent many years in a variety of senior project management positions in the large corporation, small business and non-profit arenas. She is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and is the past Treasurer for their Connecticut Chapter. She is also the past Treasurer for her BNI Chapter, and a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Speakers Association. [www.organizewithsos.com](http://www.organizewithsos.com) (203) 348-4767 [sosllc@optonline.net](mailto:sosllc@optonline.net)

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 of Professional Organizers. She has worked on projects with one of Fairfield Counties' most prominent decorators and faux painters. She has attended classes at New York School of Interior Design and studied faux painting and Feng Shui. She has attended the last three National Professional Organizer Conferences in Boston, Minneapolis and Reno. Betsy's clients include professional women, busy housewives, and busy career women. [www.betsyk.com](http://www.betsyk.com) (203) 273-7751 [bkrobot@yahoo.com](mailto:bkrobot@yahoo.com)