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Economic tough times & organizing

By Amy Stanley

With the economy in the state it has been, I wondered "How would this effect the organizing business?" Surprisingly, it has continued to grow in my case. I'm still working with clients & getting new ones that are contacting me for assistance. Which lead me to ask – **Why during a recession are people willing to take their hard-earned money and put it towards organizing services?** I came up with a few different ideas.

We have seen the past! We have seen over the last years how possibly over-consumption has triggered the state we are in. We live in a world that bombards us with what we SHOULD need and or WANT. We buy into that theory and continue to shop, bringing home purchases that don't add to our lifestyle, but rather detract from the simplicity and balance we are striving to achieve. It is counter-intuitive that we are buying things to fill our need to live a balanced, simple life. So what do we do, when we need a change in our home? Nate Berkus on a recent episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show had a great idea. He said **why not shop in our own homes for change? Is it possible that we already have what we need?** And Professional Organizer Peter Walsh says to **stop bringing things IN!** Our home should reflect how we feel. Look around your home; does it reflect how you feel? That is a reason I think during these times, people might be turning to Professional Organizers – Our get-away is now our homes. We want them to reflect calmness, peace and balance we have been trying to achieve by buying our way there. Sometimes we need a professional to come and show us the way. We become numb to the cluttering surrounding us to the point that we don't see what we already have. A professional can give you a new, fresh perspective on your items. **You can reinvent your home with things you already have.** It is just repurposing. Before you go out and buy that thing you feel you can't live without, think. Do you have something already that might serve that purpose or could be reinvented by you to serve your needs? I love the idea of shopping in your own home. Nate says to put on your shoes, coat, etc., and go shopping! That might be extreme for some of us, but whatever works for you is what you should do.

We don't want to go on like this! When you keep buying and buying, **what need are you fulfilling; what hunger are you feeding?** Take a second and breathe; what are you really missing or lacking in your life? Does that item fill that void? Probably not. Don't get me wrong – I enjoy shopping, sometimes! I have recently found the ability to shop and enjoy what I'm looking at without buying. I enjoy the fantasy of the item and how I would use it, letting myself go off on a mind-splurge, but then I try (not always successfully! ☺) to come back to reality. Reality speaks to me and says – do you REALLY need that item? Will you have the time to put into that item to get out of it what you want (i.e. an electronic item will require some learning curve and time before it – POOFS! – works how you envisioned!)?

During these tough times, we all have seemed to come back from the living-beyond-our-means ways, even if it was just those little splurges here and there, we are learning to live basically again. We can take the negatives of this time and turn them into a positive by looking around us and seeing what we already have. And what I'm learning from my clients is that sometimes we need help with that because we just can't see the clutter, but we feel it.

My challenge to you is to take some time and look around your home. First, look around the room and see what I can I get rid of that I really, TRULY, don't enjoy in this room? What doesn't add to your lifestyle? Could

this item be used somewhere else in my home? If not, do you know someone who could use it? And finally, if not, maybe it is time to pass that item along to someone else or a charity. Recently, I was cleaning my kitchen. I realized how many knick-knacks I had in my kitchen and thought – I don't like this clustering feeling of stuff-stuff-stuff! So I looked at my one display shelf & 2 things that had no true meaning or gave us enjoyment, I got rid of them. It felt so wonderful! Now I look at that shelf, a little less cluttered and feel peace. The best part about this project is that you can use whatever time you have to do this. If you have an hour, great, but if you are like most people, and have only 5 minutes, you can still do this!

Answer to my question - *Why during a recession are people willing to take their hard-earned money and put it towards organizing services?* I think we now see that it is important to enjoy the blessings we already have. And because we might not be able to get to that point on our own, we are willing to hire professional help to show us what we already have & how to enjoy it.

HAPPY ORGANIZING!

Readers Share Organizing Tips...

June's Monthly Question: **What is one thing you are going to say NO to?** To follow up with this question so long ago, remember, it is not too late to say NO to things that you have already said YES to.

September's Monthly Question: **What have you repurposed in your home?** For those of you who send an email answering this question or sharing other organizing tips, we will post it in our next newsletter. You will also get 10% off any organizing service provided by **ORGANIZING BY AMY**.

Calendar – September/October/November 2009

**** Mark your calendar NOW ****

September, 2009 – *National Preparedness Month - focusing on becoming better prepared for and more resilient in the face of emergencies of all kinds. Due to the H1N1 flu concerns, now more than ever it is a must to be prepared.* http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1251814368356.shtm OR <http://www.ready.gov/>

September, 2009 – *National Literacy Month. Something we all take for granted – READING! Read to someone today!* <http://www.nifl.gov/>

Monday, September 7, 2009 – *Labor Day. Hang your flag with pride! Celebrate the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of America.* http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Labor_Day.shtml

Sunday, September 13, 2009 – *Church Food Festival (St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Greensburg)*

Sunday, September 13, 2009 – *Grandparents Day. Call your Grandparents and ask them what they have been up to. If you don't have a Grandparent, contact someone special in your life to let them know you are thinking of them, especially someone older.*

Friday, September 18, 2009 – *Westmoreland Sale for Kids Starts through the weekend (Consignment Sale)* <http://www.saleforkids.com>

October, 2009 – *Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog Month. Pets add so much to our lives, especially dogs.* <http://www.aspca.org/adoption/>

October, 2009 – *Breast Cancer Awareness Month* (<http://www.nbcam.org/index.cfm>). Some business will celebrate with the Lee™ Denim Days (<http://www.denimday.com>).

Thursday, October 1, 2009 – *Schramm's Farm Festival Starts today* <http://www.schrammfarms.com/home.php>

Thursday, October 8, 2009 – *Children's Day. Take some time to spend with your child. Ask him/her/them what special activity they would like to do with you today. Give them your time and attention. If you don't have a child or yours is all grown up, what about a niece, nephew or another special child in your life. I guarantee the parent(s) would love to have some free time as well!*

Monday, October 12, 2009 – *Columbus Day*. Remember there might be some businesses closed due to this holiday.

Saturday, October 24, 2008 – *Make A Difference Day*. This is a national day of helping others. It was created by USA Weekend Magazine. For more information, visit <http://www.usaweekend.com/diffday/aboutmadd.html>

Saturday, October 31, 2009 – *Halloween*. Don't forget to check your local community to find out when Halloween-ers will be Trick or Treat -ing so that you can prepare. Remember, if you are a parent of a Trick or Treat-er, to prepare. This involves having safety items so cars see them. Who will stay at home to hand out candy?

Sunday, November 1, 2009 – *Daylight Savings Time ends*.

Wednesday, November 11, 2009 – *Veteran's Day*. Thank a Veteran today for his service. Remember there might be some businesses closed due to this holiday.

Thursday, November 26, 2009 – Thanksgiving Day.

Monthly Checklist – September/October/November

**** Mark your calendar NOW ****

This section provides readers with a monthly reminder of things to do. There are so many things we have to remember. Some of those things can be done on a monthly and or yearly basis. Here is a reminder of what to do THIS month (each month will have a different list):

Yearly/September:

- Have a physical. When was the last time you went to the doctor? Do you only go when you are sick? When you meet with your doctor to have physical, they can schedule a base line list of blood tests (cholesterol, thyroid, sugar, etc.). This can help spot problems before major issues.
- See a dermatologist. Summer is over and our days out in the sun are limited. Now is a great time to have a dermatologist check you. They will look for suspicious moles, lesions, etc. Skin cancer is serious. For more information, visit <http://www.skincancer.org>
- Check your credit report. Everyone is entitled to one free credit check yearly. Visit <https://www.annualcreditreport.com>
- Video your house. Then put the video/DVD in a fire safe for "safe" keeping. This could be used in case of a home emergency. For \$35, **ORGANIZING BY AMY** is willing to do this for you – just contact us.
- Prepare for Halloween. Start looking for costumes.

Yearly/October:

- Shop for Halloween. Remember enough candy according to the number of Halloween-ers you usually get. Don't forget some decorations. Do you have everything for everyone's costumes?
- Start preparing for the holidays. Make a list of who you shop for and ideas for them. Start thinking about your holiday cards as well – who is on the list, how many cards will you need, will you do a picture card (make an appointment!) or pick out your card.
- If you have a ceiling fan, make sure if you switched the direction of it, to turn it the opposite direction (blowing down heat versus pulling up heat).
- Winterize list. Bring in your table and chairs, put in any storm windows, turn off water to the outside, fertilize lawn, check your car (antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid), clean up the yard.
- Flip mattress. Maybe it is time to refresh that mattress and flip it. In 3 months, consider just turning your mattress.

Yearly/November:

- Check smoke detectors and flashlights – Change batteries in smoke detectors when you change your clocks.

Monthly September/October/November:

- Women – SELF BREAST EXAM!
- Download pictures from digital camera
- Back up computer

- o Change your furnace filter or clean the one you have.
- o * This one isn't a monthly, but QUARTERLY – put and or change baking soda in your refrigerator and freezer. It cuts down on smells and food tasting funny.
- o * This one is a chore AS NEEDED – put a Clorox™ Toilet Tab in your toilet. It will keep things fresh. Check on it every 3 months or so to see if it needs replaced.
- o Use Jet Dry™ to clean your dishwasher inside out – literally. Store it some place safe for insurance purposes.

Monthly Special

In our featured article, we discussed why hire a Professional Organizer during hard economic times. **ORGANIZING BY AMY** is giving all clients a \$45 off of any service to get you started. Email organizingbyamy@comcast.net

Product Highlights

Here we like to highlight products/ideas that you should check out...

In preparation for the upcoming holiday season, start thinking about any shopping you have to do online. Here are some of our ideas we like to share –

Ebates.com. If you are going to be shopping online anyway, why not get paid to do it. Many of the sites you already visit give cash back via Ebates.com. FREE to join! No strings attached. I have received over \$200 back in a 2 year period, just by shopping online at the stores I like. Use us for a referral – redprincess006@comcast.net. The referral is greatly appreciated!!
https://www.ebates.com/editUserInfo.do?navigation_id=18574

Sports Fans. Have a sport fan on your shopping list? Visit these sites for great deals.
A price comparison website that finds the best prices & deals on the web.

<http://www.myfootballshopper.com/>

Steeler's website - <http://pittsburghsteelerscollectibles.info/>

Penguin's website - <http://pittsburghpenguinscollectibles.com/>

But remember, the best gifts to give are priceless – YOURSELF! During these hard times, spending time with family & friends is the gift that keeps on giving through the memories made. It doesn't need dusted or organized!

Visit **ORGANIZING BY AMY.**

We have many product sites that can be helpful in giving balance to you & your life.

Gift Certificates make great gifts as well –

Birthdays, Holidays, Weddings, Births, House-warming, Graduation, etc.

*** Referrals will be rewarded through discounts or other services. ***

<http://www.organizingbyamy.com/products.html>

Announcements

ORGANIZING BY AMY'S Newsletter welcomes all of those who are new. If you haven't responded yet, please be sure to let us for our own purposes, how you found us. This way we can tell what is working for our marketing.

- Before you know it, a new year will be here – 2010! Start thinking about getting organized! And we can help!!
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'Unity is strength. Knowledge is power. Attitude is everything.' – Lance Armstrong

HAPPY ORGANIZING!

Amy Stanley

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