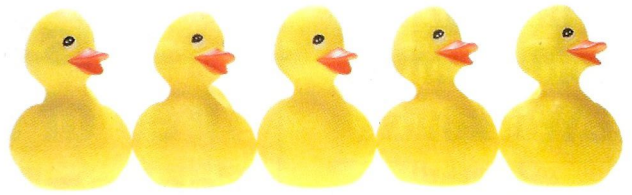


Get Your Life in Order in 2012



Solutions to boost your organizing success

By Rena Larrañaga©

It's sad, but true. Only about 10 percent of us who make New Year's resolutions will actually stick with them for an entire year. With those kinds of odds, what's the point of even trying?

If getting organized is on your list of New Year's resolutions, we can help set you up for success.

First, start with a specific, measurable goal that you can realistically achieve. Instead of resolving to "get organized," think of something more specific, like "remove unnecessary papers from the office and create a storage system for filing incoming documents." Next, write your goal down and post it somewhere you can see it. A regular visual reminder will help boost your success, as will making yourself accountable to friends and family. Letting others know about your resolutions can help keep you on track — and they may even pitch in to help if you're willing to do the same for them.

Here are just a few areas where you may want to focus your organizing efforts in the new year.

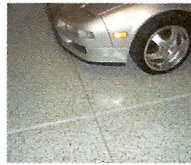
Garage

If your garage is like mine, it's still a mess from the Christmas decorating frenzy that began before the holidays. Boxes litter the floor, leaving little room to maneuver around the cars. Tools from various projects haven't found their way back to their permanent home — wherever that is. Cleaning supplies, pet supplies, sports equipment, gardening supplies, paint, recycling... the garage is home to a mountain of clutter.



Imagine having a place for everything, no matter how obscure. Great Spaces (www.greatspaces.com), 505-344-2551, can create a storage solution for your garage with an off-the-floor design to provide protection against damp floors.

And speaking of floors, get rid of spots and grease stains forever with a beautiful, durable garage floor coating. Gorgeous Garage of Albuquerque Metro, 505-217-8806, can install a floor coating system in a variety of colors that is easy to clean and warranted for five to 10 years. Your garage will be the envy of the neighborhood.



Closet

Closets are the "garage" of your home's interior. Crammed to the seams with linens, toys, clothes, shoes, hobby supplies and other miscellaneous stuff, the idea of cleaning out your closets can be an ominous task.



But, if you had a closet storage system customized to how you use the space, it would be easier.

Albuquerque is home to several upstanding closet organizer companies. Contact a few to compare their systems and prices to see which fits your needs. Not Just Closets, 505-281-9435, offers a free design consultation to help you determine the best use of your space — whether it's a bedroom closet, a hallway closet, or a pantry. They also provide detailed com-

puter renderings of the finished project. www.njclosets.com

Office/Craft Room

While many of us would envy those who have a dedicated office or craft room in their home, not all of us have the



extra bedroom to spare. We still need the sleeping space, in case overnight guests come. You don't really want to put Grandma on that uncomfortable, fold-out sofa in the middle of the living room, do you? Nothing adds flexibility to an office or craft room like adding a wall bed. Most are easy to operate, and allow you to use the space for multiple activities — crafting or working during the day, and sleeping at night. Slide-a-Shelf, 505-449-7464, installs wallbeds, creating more room in your room.

Finances

Organizing your finances can help you get out of debt or reduce your tax burden this year. Maybe you need to plan for a college education or two. Or maybe you want to be sure you have adequate resources for your upcoming retirement. Whatever challenges you face, a financial planner can help you through the process of setting goals, reviewing and evaluating your current financial status, and creating a plan to get you where you want to be.

Instead of traditional commission-based brokers, you may want to consider a fee-only financial planner. Fee-only planners typically charge by the

hour, or as a percentage of assets under management. Since they do not represent a particular fund or company, they are able to provide unbiased, professional financial advice.

Cole Financial Consulting (www.colefinancialconsulting.com) encourages clients to reduce debt, increase retirement savings and create an emergency fund as part of their customized plan. Jennifer Cole, CFA, even conducts regular financial forums where she speaks on topics such as money management for couples and singles, planning for the unexpected and preparing for retirement. Call 505-286-7915 to schedule a free consultation.

Everything Else

If your life's clutter seems too overwhelming, maybe you should consider enlisting the help of a professional. Certified Professional Organizer, Hazel Thornton of Organized for Life, works beside you in the process of organizing your desk, closet, kitchen, garage or whole house. It begins with a consultation to discuss your goals. Hazel will even coordinate the removal and/or donation of your unneeded items. She is one of eight Albuquerque-area members of the National Association of Professional Organizers. Call 505-242-6762 or visit www.org4life.com for a quote.

UNM Continuing Education is also offering a course on February 15 called "File Anything in Your Home... And Find it Again." For only \$45, you'll learn a system to help you locate appliance warranties, magazine articles, insurance paperwork and more. Visit dce.unm.edu to register.

Tackle one problem area at a time, and by year's end you may get to count yourself in the top 10 percent! Happy organizing!