

# Making Life Better

## Overcoming Life's Messes

(NAPSA)—Each January, people set resolutions for the New Year, but according to U.S. News & World Report, approximately 80 percent of resolutions fail by the second week of February. If organizing is your Achilles' heel, the solution is to tap into local professionals to help guide you through the process and give you the tools necessary to sustain order. Whether you commit to downsizing a storage unit of inherited items, want to find more family time, or desire to design a more peaceful living space, a Professional Organizer or Productivity Consultant can help you tackle these tasks when you don't know where to begin.

"Studies prove that a decluttered environment contributes to productivity and happiness, so getting organized should be at the top of your list of resolutions," explains Ellen Delap, CPO®, president of the National Association of Productivity & Organizing Professionals (NAPO). "Finding and hiring a productivity professional is no different than choosing an accountant, personal trainer, or doctor. You'll want to work with someone who takes the time to get to know you, understands your needs, and has the expertise to advise you and help you achieve your goals."

January is Get Organized & Be Productive (GO) Month, an annual initiative sponsored by the National Association of Productivity & Organizing Professionals. To help, Delap offers this advice on how to get organized with the help of a Professional Organizer or Productivity Consultant:

Get specific about your needs. Professionals offer a wide range of residential and business services, so make a list of what you want to accomplish. Are you just clearing out years of clutter or do you need someone experienced in dealing with a mental health or traumatic situation? Do you need help organizing your office or guidance on how to manage your time more effectively?

Make a connection, interview candidates and be honest. It is in your best interest to be as candid as possible about your needs and goals. You will be inviting this person into your home or work-



**You don't have to live with clutter and chaos; a professional organizer can help.**

place so it is critical to have a good rapport. An experienced professional will ask questions about you and your needs and dig into the issues that thwarted your past attempts to move forward.

Set a budget. As with most professions, fees vary widely based on experience, geographic location, and the type of services rendered. Some professionals may charge by the hour or project, while others offer packages of services. Avoid selecting someone strictly on price. Investing in a consultant with the personality and skill set that match your needs will offer greater, and faster, returns.

Identify an expert. We all have friends and neighbors who pride themselves on being organized but this isn't a job for your mom! Hiring a certified professional or one who has aligned him- or herself with a professional organization that has a code of ethics offers an added level of security.

Applaud yourself for taking the first step! Your choice is not irreversible. If you begin working with an organizing or productivity professional and are not happy with responding to his or her style, speak up. You are rarely under obligation to continue the relationship. More than likely, he or she will be happy to recommend a colleague.

When you are ready to find a professional, you can check out the NAPO Professional Organizer and Productivity Consultant Search Tool at [www.NAPO.net](http://www.NAPO.net).