

## **Spring Organizing Is More Than Buckets and Brushes**

by Helen Kornblum

Publix recently mailed out a sales flyer listing products that stimulate our urge to spring clean for a “fresh home.” Instead of promotional text, the piece has photos of products that offer the promise of change for the better—bleach, liquid cleaner, fabric softener, refresher spray, sponges, and fresh flowers. The flyer conveys a simple message that relies on our sensory memories and feelings about spring.

As an organizer, I can offer a similar brochure for everyone who vowed to change their ways in 2007 so they would never again face late charges on bills or have to redo reports that were lost in the office. What products, real or imaginary, offer the magic ingredients to capture the essence of spring organizing in your life?

Let’s start with a quart of *motivating oil*. Getting organized for its own sake isn’t enough. You will work hard to change habits and behaviors, but if you don’t know why you want to invest so much of your effort, you’re not likely to succeed. Pinpoint the reasons for making changes in your life and the benefits that mean something to you. Write these down and post them for future inspiration.

A jar of *realistic expectations*, packaged with a complimentary sample of *small goals*, belongs in your organizing shopping cart. Getting organized doesn’t change the state of the world or your life right away. Pick a few goals that are manageable for you and resolve to keep your focus on just these. Achieving these first will make you feel competent and ready to tackle more.

Buy the super size package of *positive thoughts* because you will need them often. You will want to luxuriate in new, self-generated feedback that gives you visions of gradual but solid accomplishments. Look for the brand that repeats “You can do this” and “Be patient with yourself and keep at it every day.”

A large tube of *anti-procrastination cream* is perfect for your initial efforts at creating new behaviors. The cream helps soothe your fears of failure, of making mistakes that will embarrass you. When you use the extra-strength formula, you also override perfectionist tendencies that keep you from taking action or making decisions. Once you experience progress by taking small steps toward completion, you will need less of the cream to get started on new projects.

One or two boxes of *guilt erasers* help you cope with saying “no” to temptations like over-committing your time. They will also get you past the guilt of recycling

old gifts that you have never liked or used. These erasers loosen emotional attachments that you imagined or imposed on yourself.

I'm tempted to add other items to your organizing product list—don't we all need a powerful *obstacle-dissolving spray*?—but you have enough to get started. The season to address your organizing issues doesn't matter, although the extra light in spring could boost your energy. Just keep your organizing product list around for frequent reference. One of these days, you will realize that you are ready to start. Spring cleaning may begin with a jug of bleach, but organizing begins with mental readiness.

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