

Entrepreneur: Getting green part of getting organized

SHOREVIEW — Sara Pedersen, a professional organizer, said a new industry trend called eco-organizing is a natural fit for clients with a green propensity.

"I've always been enthusiastically earth-friendly and clutter-conscious," noted Pedersen, a Shoreview mother of two with a background in marketing. "Incorporating 'green' techniques and products into my organizing services seemed like a natural next step. Most of my clients are already utilizing their communities' recycling programs, and they want their cast-off clutter to go to a good home. I'm just helping them take the next steps to green up, at whatever level and pace they're comfortable with.

The Press conducted an email interview with Pedersen last month.

Q: Tell us about your business.

A: Time to Organize® was launched in 2000. My ideal clients are motivated people looking to maximize their space and time. I frequently work with busy moms who need to get control of their homes



Pedersen

and the flood of daily paperwork. Working alongside my clients, I help them purge the things they no longer love or need, which makes room for what's truly necessary and important to them. After decluttering, I provide a strategy to create useful, organized, beautiful spaces. I work throughout the Twin Cities, focusing mainly on the northeast metro area, especially Shoreview, Arden Hills, North Oaks, White Bear Lake, Roseville, Blaine and Lino Lakes. I also offer marketing assistance to other professional organizers around the country ... (and) coach prospective and new professional organizers so they can be successful.

Q: What's the average time frame for an organizing job?

A: On-site organizing can take anywhere from one session (three hours) for a small space like a closet or laundry room, up to multiple sessions for a large kitchen or home office. The size of the room, its current state, and the client's motivation level will determine the amount of time to complete a job.

Q: What's your five-year plan for the business?

A: I see the organizing industry growing at a steady pace. People realize that making smart use of smaller spaces makes more sense than upsizing to bigger houses they can't really afford. They're also realizing the great personal benefits of being organized, such as being able to easily find things, saving time and money and becoming more productive. Another great benefit to living an organized life is the positive impact you can have on our

Tips for eco-organizing your home

REDUCE

- Reduce the amount of paper coming into your home. Switch to online bill paying and banking, reduce junk mail by visiting www.dmachoice.org, cancel magazine and newspaper subscriptions that you never read, and opt out of receiving phone books by visiting www.dexknows.com.

- Reduce the toxins in your home by using safe cleaning supplies. Make your own (download a free how-to guide at www.timetoorganize.com/services) or switch to natural brands like 7th Generation, Method or Mrs. Meyers. Instead of using air fresheners, open some windows and add plants, which absorb chemicals and odors.

- Before you buy anything, think about the time you'll spend in cleaning, storing, and maintaining that item after you bring it home. Borrow or co-op large lawn tools such as snowblowers, lawn mowers, air compressors, etc. with a neighbor.

REUSE

- Reuse paper or plastic shopping bags or bring your own sturdy cloth tote, thus reducing a messy pile of bags littering your home. Keep the bags in your car or hung on a hook by

your door.

- Used is more eco-friendly than new. When you need something, consider buying it used at a secondhand store. You can find everything from upscale clothing to furniture, books, building supplies and more.

- Rather than spend tons of money on plastic organizing bins, reinvent common household items. For example, shoe boxes, tissue boxes, tall potato chip containers, egg cartons, and mason jars can hold a variety of items. (See <http://pinterest.com/saraped/organizing-ideas-for-inspiration>).

RECYCLE

- Explore your local recycling programs, and set up an easy recycling station in the kitchen. Also stash small recycling bins in locations where you handle papers so they don't get lazily tossed in a garbage can.

- In the bathroom, keep a small basket for recycling empty shampoo and lotion bottles, cardboard packaging from toiletries (such as toothpaste and soap boxes) and even cardboard toilet paper tubes.

- Keep a box stashed in the entryway or bedroom closet to capture items that need to go to the donation center.

environment. And that's right on trend.

Q: What do you do when you're not working?

A: I've lived in Shoreview for more than 15 years with my husband and two school-age boys. In my spare time, I enjoy digging in the garden, taking evening walks,

attending my kids' sporting events, drinking good coffee, and exploring the North Shore.

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— Compiled by Michelle Miron

More info:

Pedersen has written and self-published a book "Born to Organize: Everything You Need to Know About a Career As a Professional Organizer" as a guide for people interested in the field, as well as "The Busy Mom's Guide to Getting Organized," a booklet filled with more than 80 of her favorite tips for moms on the go. Both are available on Amazon.com.