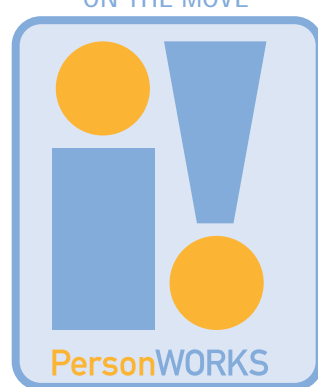




Welcome Summer By Getting Organized!

JUNE 2004

TIPS FOR THOSE ON THE MOVE



IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

- 10 Steps to planning a perfect surprise party
- Making the most out of your move – how to pack less and use more
- Great tips for an in town move

10 STEPS TO PLANNING A PERFECT SURPRISE PARTY

1. SET THE DATE

Try to pick a date and time where most people can attend. Consider your friends' social habits here. Sunday or Saturday afternoon can be perfect for some, while others may have activities or religious conflicts. Friday or Saturday night are better for others. From the outset, consider how that date will work into your cover story. Moving it off the expected celebration date (e.g. the day before the big anniversary) is a good way to keep them guessing. If your loved one has a birthday on a holiday, I suggest the weekend before or after. They will never suspect!

2. FIGURE OUT THE LOCATION

If you have the space, consider doing it at home. It is easier to get them home, assuming you are living together. Plus, you can control what time people get there and the menu. The big downside of having it at home is that the guest of honor may return unexpectedly, for example if they forgot something, and all preparations must happen on the day of the event. Another excellent option is to have it at a mutual friend's house. That way the preparations can be stretched over a longer time, and the guest of honor won't arrive unexpectedly.

3. CREATE AN ALIBI

Getting the person out of the way to get the party organized is always a challenge, which is why drafting a friend to assist is highly recommended. You need to think of something natural you accomplice would do with your friend, like hanging out watching a movie, playing x-box, helping with a re-model, etc... You could also fib and say you are going shopping. If the accomplice is married or dating someone this is another way to get them to help you and drive him/her home at the end of the night.

****TIP** – Fibbing always gets one into a pickle. Keep the alibi as simple and normal to your everyday life as you can. Once you have the plans established for him, make sure to have the accomplice name a time to come over. In the middle of the afternoon phone your friend and say you felt like cooking dinner and invite them over as well. Have the accomplice get a ride over with your friend, if he/she's spouse can give him a ride home. This will also excuse why he/she's car is in the driveway. He/she decided to help you cook the dinner. Ask the invitees to car pool and to park down the street to avoid suspicions.

4. CREATE A THEME

this is where you are allowed to be even more creative than the alibi. The theme should be based on the one you are having the party for. (keep in mind the food served can help you come up with something very unique) Think of what he/she loves.

Here are some example:

- Hawaiian theme
- English tea party
- French café
- Spanish food
- Korean food
- Sushi
- Pizza
- Deli (bagels & lox)

For my example, I am choosing my husband's favorite types of food: the theme is him, this is easy because he loves food!

5. MAKE A LIST OF ATTENDEES

This is a difficult process for various reasons. The most important rule is to think like the guest of honor: who would he or she want there? Don't invite your favorite people, invite his or hers! Here are some questions to ask yourself:

Do you know which co-workers to invite and which ones not to?

****TIP** – Either invite every co-worker that you know or don't invite any. If you invite only a few, word gets around work and people get catty. It's probably safer not to invite work acquaintances unless the guest of honor is especially close to them.

Should it be all female, all male or co-ed?

Co-ed is always more fun!

How many people is too few?

If not enough people RSVP, reschedule the bash!

How many is too many?

This of course depends on where you are having it. I suggested your home, so look at your space and determine the amount that can fit comfortably. (Also make sure you have adequate seating, plus a few extra card tables.)

The best way to get a list of names is to do one or all of the following:

- look at his contacts on his/her cell phone
- sneak a peak at his/her PDA
- look at his/her old address book or little black book
- if he/she has outlook look in the Contacts section

6. SEND OUT SAVE THE DATE/INVITATIONS

Make sure to do this, so people save the date on their calendars. This means you need to start planning at least two weeks to a month ahead, if you want a good turn out. Make sure to put all pertinent information on the save the date card such as:

- who** – the name of who the party is for
- when** – the approximate time it starts and ends
- what** – explain what the event is, (like surprise birthday bash for so and so)
- what** – to bring, if it is a potluck or gifts should be brought, I don't encourage this, I think it is more proper to say, "no gifts please."
- where** – make sure to include a map or full address so that they can Mapquest it. And look up the Mapquest instructions first to make sure they're accurate!

Places to stay – for out of town people

And most importantly, THIS IS A SURPRISE PARTY—don't leave the invite around or tell the guest of honor!

7. PLAN THE MENU

Make sure to find out of any food allergies. I think the best way to plan the menu is with a lot of finger food (dinner is too much added stress). If you are only having 6-8 people then dinner may be reasonable. Once you decide how many you can plan the menu accordingly.

Put your food into three main categories:

Savories –

- salmon cream cheese with bagel chips
- flavored goat cheeses, (like herb crusted) with 2 or 3 types of crackers an assortment of olives
- chips & salsa

Desserts – (my favorite)

Get 2 boxes of your favorite brownie mix, cut the brownies into tiny squares purchase frozen, already baked Sara Lee tart shells – fill them with cherry pie filling, (after you add 1 tsp. of almond extract) lemon curd, (make sure to squirt some fresh lemon juice into these!).

Hearties –

- cherry tomatoes stuffed with goat cheese, blue cheese and cream cheese mixed together
- focaccia bread with roasted red pepper spread on top, cut into finger size triangles
- a baguette cut in thin slices, covered with chutney spread and lace Swiss cheese, (a tooth pick helps to hold it all together)

Trader Joe's has excellent pre-prepared party food at very reasonable prices.

8. SHOP FOR SUPPLIES

Here is a partial list to get you started (a great source to purchase most of this is the dollar store):

- paper plates (be sure to get dessert and dinner plates) (Costco)
- paper napkins (Costco)
- plastic ware (Costco)
- trays
- serving spoons
- plastic bowls
- paper table cloths (Costco)
- plastic glasses
- bags of ice
- soda (one diet cola, one regular cola, one lemon-lime soda, root beer)
- bottled water
- staple liquor, (like vodka, gin, brandy, scotch, wine, beer)

9. ORGANIZE THE SPACE INTO SUBJECT AREAS

designate spaces for:

- food
- games
- dancing
- drinks
- AND most importantly where the surprise guests should hide!

10. DESIGNATE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER TO VIDEOTAPE OR PHOTOGRAPH EVENT

Make sure of the following:

- the tape is new
- the battery is full
- you have a tripod set up and ready
- the person filming takes the job seriously
- that you have plenty of film

Good luck! You are on your way to having a great surprise party.

WELCOME SURPRISE



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MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MOVE – HOW TO PACK LESS AND USE MORE TIPS AND TOOLS ON WHAT TO GET RID OF AND WHAT TO KEEP.

You have bought your dream house, be it your first or third. You have a ton of items that you haven't looked at in years. What should you get rid of?

KITCHEN CUPBOARDS

There are always a ton of mismatched glasses and plates in cupboards. Keep the sets of glassware and donate the rest. If you have plastic cups that you never use, get rid of the bulk, but keep two for small guests. If this leaves you without enough glasses, then pick up an inexpensive matched set from Ikea, Costco, or Fred Meyer after the move is complete. They have great inexpensive glassware, so it is not a huge financial burden to replace. Be sure to get rid of Tupperware-type containers that have no lid. I suggest keeping ten pieces of Tupperware. (Keep this as a general rule: 2 tiny pieces for condiments, 2 small for side dishes, 4 medium, 2 large for leftovers)

THE JUNK DRAWER

This is the place where you need to be diligent about donating and or throwing things away. Every time I pack a home, I have to sort through things with my clients. Remember, you don't want to pack your junk! Throw away souvenirs from take out like chop sticks, plastic forks, and condiments. They are easily replaced, and chances are you will never use or need them. If you have a time where you are packing a lunch that requires such items, pick up a bulk pack of chopsticks from Costco and keep them contained for later use. The papers you will find will range from throw-away items like old receipts to important documents like the warranties on appliances that the new renter or buyer will need for the house. Be sure not to pack these! I usually leave them in the top kitchen drawer along with the garage door openers and extra sets of keys.

UTENSIL DRAWER

If you have multiple sets of silverware, keep your favorite set and donate the rest. You can always purchase a new set at <http://www.amazon.com> or at Ikea. I guarantee you will find great deals at both places. I always seem to find multiple copies of the following items:

- Spatulas
- Wooden spoons
- Plastic server spoons
- Ladles
- Soup spoons

Keep three of each at most donate the rest. They are taking up precious space in your drawers and counter tops! You really don't need nine of each.

PANTRY

A lot of the people I pack feel guilty not packing all of their food. If you are moving to a home in the same state this is ok. If not, either donate the excess food to a food bank or toss it. There is probably some outdated cans and frozen food in the mix that should be tossed. (Check the expiration dates on all before donating.) As a general rule, don't pack open items. An open bag of flour or sugar is a nightmare when you are unpacking and it decides to explode on your new clean kitchen floor!

GARAGE RECREATIONAL

Chances are you will have way more outdoor gear than it is possible to use. Take an inventory of how many hiking boots, skis, snow boards, snowshoes, kayaks, ski boots, two packs, and camping gear you really have. If there are only two of you in the house, keep at most to back sets per person. For example, if you are an avid skier and have a pair of regular skis and snow blades (shorter skis for tree weaving) it is ok to keep both, if you DO USE both during the ski season. If you have five sleeping bags and there are only two of you, donate the rest to a donation station of your choice. Keep in mind you can sell your skis in a variety of places. Why clutter your garage space with things you don't need?

SEASONAL

Be sure to sort through your boxes of Christmas and other holiday decorations. A lot of times you will find old dusty items you no longer care for. Put all of the items you intend to keep in some kind of plastic bin for safe-keeping. I also suggest using color coded bins, such as these from Ikea: <http://tinyurl.com/2mxgb>

They come in different colors, such as green for Christmas or Chanukah. Be sure to be consistent with the color and type of bin you purchase for each holiday. If you run out of room, this may mean you need to get rid of a few things. Keep in mind the sorting task every year you go to decorate. You will find you have way more that you will every use or need.

BOXES YOU HAVE NEVER OPENED FROM THE LAST MOVE

If you have never opened these boxes, there is absolutely no reason to keep them. If you haven't needed anything in them by now, chances are you won't again.

CLOSETS LINENS

Often people have more towels than they need. However, these are a great padding device for breakables. I like to use these for padding in larger boxes or for items like TVs and stereos. You can put a note on the box saying, "TV and old rags" that way when you are done unpacking you can get rid of them. This can also be done with old sheets you will no longer have the bed for, or you just don't care for anymore. If you have a pet, keep at most 10 old rags for wiping his/her feet at door. I wouldn't recommend using old towels to dry the car, as they may scratch.

SHOES

Be sure to do an inventory of your shoes. A lot of times there are many pairs of shoes you haven't seen or thought of in years. Keep in mind, most of us only wear 20% of what is in our closets. This is because we can't get to or see the rest. While taking inventory of your shoes, take an inventory of your clothes and see what shoes best fit most outfits. Get rid of the ones that don't go with a thing, like the dyed pumps or uncomfortable tuxedo loafers from that dear friend's wedding.

COATS

I am personally a coat junkie. I love and wear all of my coats, I really do! I do however get rid of a few each year. The ones that are on their last legs, or I know I won't wear again. Don't ever keep "the just in case I lose the weight" coat. The truth is by the time you lose the weight they will probably be out of style. When you do lose the weight, think of how fun it will be to get the new wardrobe!

BEDROOMS KNICKKNACKS

A lot of people are collectors. They love their stuff. They keep things like a sticker from their first date with their hubby, or the collection of hinged Pooh boxes. Take a look around your room and look at it through a stranger's point of view. Ask yourself the following questions:

Is it cluttered? What is overtaking my bookshelves? Which of these items would I be ok with getting rid of?

After taking the inventory, I suggest getting rid of half of the knickknacks in your bedroom. They are cluttering up the space and your mind. Keep the items that hold real sentimental value for you. The odds and ends that were gifts from a friend can be donated. You don't have to keep everything. These kinds of items come into your life continually, and if you don't clear them out continuously, you'll be overwhelmed by them.

JEWELRY

I love my jewelry. I have a few pieces I wear and that is it. I have quite a few clients who have a ton of jewelry and love to wear a great deal of it. However, even they have managed to get rid of quite a bit that they don't wear regularly. It is impossible to wear hundreds of pieces of jewelry in anyone's lifetime. Keep what you love, not what you think you may wear, or that which was given to you. You will enjoy what you do have all the more.

First of all because you will be able to find it, and second of all because you won't feel the guilt of not wearing the other stuff you don't care for. Use the money from the sale of the jewelry you're getting rid of to buy yourself a massage and you won't feel a moment's regret!

BOOKS

Books weigh a ton! First off, get rid of the paperbacks. You think you will read or re-read them, but with all of the other books you have on you to be read list, when will you really find the time? If you love the book, toss it, and if you miss it later buy a hardcover. Think hard about the following before you decide to pack them:

- Book sets
- Hard back classics
- First editions

Try to channel future-you who is lugging around heavy boxes and buying new bookshelves, and ask yourself: "Am I really going to be that upset if this book doesn't make it to my new home?"

FAMILY ROOM/DEN MAGAZINES

Magazine weigh a ton to move and the likelihood of you looking through them again is not high. Either keep your favorites in magazine organizers, but to a minimum of one bookshelf (That is all you should allow yourself!); or tear out the things you will refer back to. Once you've done that, either file them or use Scanalog, <http://www.scanalog.com>

VHS TAPES

Unless you have a VCR you regularly use, get rid of these tapes!

CASSETTE TAPES

Unless you have a tape player you regularly use get rid of these tapes!

If you can't bear to part with them, consider converting them to CD or DVD. They take up less room and you can listen to them with your current audio/video equipment.

Just remember: keep what you own down to a minimum. You will not only save money on the move (including boxes, packing materials and tape) but you will enjoy the items, and use them more.

10 TIPS ON HOW TO PACK WHEN DOING AN IN TOWN MOVE WITH PROFESSIONAL MOVERS

1. Never use used boxes. The boxes are at risk to buckle, and when boxes buckle the mover is more likely to drop the box. If you are packing wine use new boxes. Avoid going to the liquor store to avoid spending a few extra dollars. If you need boxes, contact me. I have a great connection to a box surplus store! Unless you are moving all of the boxes yourself. Keep in mind the movers expect that you have packed everything adequately enough that they can stack three boxes on top of each other on a dolly down a flight of stairs. Always use extra padding on the bottom, be it packing paper, pillows, towels or newspaper.
2. Pack like with likes. If you are packing the glasses in your kitchen try to keep them all together.
3. Be sure to put your address on the box, just in case there is a screw up. This way your boxes won't end up in Bell town instead of Queen Anne.
4. Get a copy of your floor plan. If you can't get one, sketch it out and take measurements. Be sure your furniture will fit up stairwells and doors. A friend of mine had to buy a new bed because he couldn't get it up the stairs! Make sure all of your current furniture will fit into your new home. There are plenty of needy people out there who could use what you cannot (see my list of donation stations at the end of this article).
5. Be sure to contact the following to notify them of your address change:
 - Phone company
 - Gas & Electric company
 - Waste management
 - Sewer
 - Water company
 - Newspaper
 - Security company
 - Post office (you get a ton of discounts with the address change booklet! These may come in handy if you decide to do any work on your new home)
6. Never assume that your framed artwork will be ok on top of other boxes in a moving truck. (if the company is good, they won't let you move it that way) Always use bubble wrap and or boxes for mirrors for your valuable artwork. Sometimes spending a few extra dollars on a box can save you thousands later.
7. Purchase standard sized boxes, instead of irregular ones. When the movers pack the truck it is a lot tighter packed (a good thing for you and your things) if they are able to use uniform boxes.
8. Always label what room your boxes are to go into. This way you can have the movers move them into that room and start unpacking!
9. Avoid packing flammable objects at all costs. These include:
 - Turpentine
 - Aerosol sprays – including spray paint and household cleaners
 - Lighter fluid
10. Try to avoid packing food. When you are aware you are moving, be sure to stop purchasing groceries the week before the move. Only keep dry object liked boxed crackers and unopened tea. If you do pack opened articles, like flour, be sure to tape them shut. Pack condiments in a box that has separators, to avoid breakage. For refrigerated items, purchase an inexpensive