

**Inside the Mind of an Professional Organizer - By Jessi Bushman aka “Organizer Jessi”
Space Planning and Home Customization**

Beauty and Fashion is all around us! Our clothing and accessories are visual ways we display our image in effort to stay current with the latest trends. Its safe to say, many designs come and go, but there are always the classic choices that stand the test of time.

The concept of Beauty and Fashion absolutely relates to our home furnishings and how we choose to display our possessions throughout our home. My intention is to purchase timeless pieces that I can see myself enjoying for years, if not decades to come!

Like all trends, particular design elements in the housing industry have received some “minor tweaks” to reinvent what's already been proven popular. Wallpaper is making a come back and many design choices revolve around all shades of gray. We are seeing a high demand for white kitchens featuring a pop of color (lots of blue) for the island, floating shelves in place of cabinets, large statement vent hoods and tile... lots of it! I anticipate in 2050, when all of our design choices will be considered “outdated” and need updating to what's trending then.

Back to reality and some insight to consider when personalizing and staging (also known as space planning) your home. In any situation, **less is more** when it comes to the appearance and functionality of your space. Creating useful and inviting zones within your home help establish the **role** and **purpose** of a specific room or area. For example, I designed my home around 3 simple zones to compliment our lifestyle.

Zone 1: Garage, storage/utilities and Primary Suite #2 for my dad.

Zone 2: Entry/sitting area, coats/shoes, gathering room, kitchen and dining.

Zone 3: Primary Suite #1, laundry/storage, guest bed/bath and my office.

I like to think my design choices were practical and cost effective. Every room serves a purpose and most important, I'm using 90% of my home every day! This was very important to me since the last 20 years I NEVER used my basement.

That being said, all homes are built with a layout in mind. We, as homeowners, need to fill the rooms with items that work for the space and meet our functionality needs.

There are **so many** elements to consider when you are designing and staging the layout for your home.

Start with your lifestyle:

- ◆ Single
- ◆ Couple or have a roommate
- ◆ Kids
- ◆ Extended Family Members
- ◆ Pets

Identify your primary spaces:

- ◆ Front door/garage door entry
- ◆ Kitchen/pantry
- ◆ Coat/shoe storage

Evaluate the features of your home or rental:

- ◆ 1, 2 or 3 levels?
- ◆ Garage?
- ◆ Open Concept or enclosed layout?

Acknowledge the amount of items you have:

- ◆ Furniture
- ◆ Bedding
- ◆ Dressers/tables
- ◆ Knickknack's

The biggest factor to embrace is **HOW** you and others function in your home. Evaluate your routine and habits, beginning the moment you pull into your garage or step inside your entry door.

Do you have a dedicated zone for shoes, coats, keys, bags and groceries? Your first step is to address that space since its the first and last impression while entering and exiting your home. The goal is to eliminate any resemblance of a tornado!

Making the most of your space may include rearranging furniture, hanging hooks and installing shelves. Routine clean up, decluttering and organization is an effort needed to maintain your entryway. Once you have established your method, you can move into other areas of your home.

Your family/gathering area is where you probably spend most of your time. What activities are you and your family doing together? Board games, reading, video games, watching TV, looking at photos or creating crafts? It's ideal to store items where you use them. Many people forget to tap into unused, vertical wall space.

Everyone can relate to this. Toilet Paper. Where do you store it? I've seen many homes where the Toilet Paper is stored in the laundry room, garage or hall closet.

Time to Customize!!

If you are short on cabinet space in your bathroom, create an inexpensive solution. This could

be placing a basket above the toilet, mounting a shelf above the door or screw a wooden crate to a blank wall, instantly creating a nook for 6-12 spare toilet paper rolls. Or...simply declutter the bathroom cabinets by relocating non-essentials to create space!

Organization impacts our daily lives. Learning ways to customize your space to meet your needs can be overwhelming in any situation. Either you have moved into a new space, or your stuck in your “old ways” after living in the same house for years, if not generations. Professional Organizers have a way of visualizing alternative options in a matter of hours, possibly something you've struggled with for years.

The greatest advantage of organization is there is no right or wrong way to do things. You can always modify your strategy as you learn what works for you. The most important step is to **START!**

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Jessi is a member of the **Iowa Professional Organizers Association**