

on the job

Clean Sweep

>>Can't get enough of those home-organizing shows on HGTV? Neither can Diane Schraffenberger—and she lives it every day. California Closets in the International Design Center in Estero contracts with Schraffenberger to swoop in and organize people's closets and home offices before their custom-built closets are installed. Then she returns to the client's house or office to show them how to keep things put together.

What's your process? It starts with the clean-out process, and then I put clothes away the way they should be. For an average closet, it takes six to eight hours to pull everything out. Afterward, we make the closet as functional as possible; the design of the closet is so important to enable me to utilize the space best.

What about home office space? A lot of times people bring their personal stuff into their office space. You have to define [certain] spaces as personal space and other spaces as office space. I organize files, label them, but always talk to people about how they like [their office] to function. It's good to put things in boxes and to have reference material kept separately. And I'm big on color-coding what's important versus less important things.

Does the job get personal? I have put together photograph albums for people. But those sorts of things you have to do with the person, not by yourself. It's a matter of getting them to express how they like to live. I'm not trying to impose my way of organizing. I like to take what they like to do and make it workable for them.

Tips? Spend some time every month to throw things away. If you bring something in new, take something out that's old or something you haven't worn. That way you're always purging. In office spaces, it's a matter of, if you open it and it's not of any value, then just throw it away.

How did you get started? I worked in corporate America for 30 years for Cincinnati Bell Telephone before coming [to Southwest Florida]. [Organizing] was my forte; they moved me from department to department to organize. When I moved down here I started working in the office at California Closets, taking appointments, helping customers; but as they needed to help customers organize things, they asked me to do it. So for five years I've been contracting with them.

Ever had a nightmare job? One lady had made her entire second floor of her house on Marco into closets. She had more clothes than I had seen in a department store—most of them in sizes that she could never wear. It took us three days just to sort through it and get it hung up in some order.

Why do you do this? I really like to organize. It's one of those things where you go in one day, it's done and you're out of there. There's a sense of satisfaction after you get it in order, and people love it; they didn't know it could look that way. [Home-organizing shows] wrote the book, but [these are] things that I've been doing forever.



What's your house like? It's perfect. All my clothes are hung in color order. Everyone looks in my closet and goes, "Geez. How do you do this?" But that's the way I live, everything goes back in the same place.

—Rebecca Loveridge

The Qode Word

>>Gulfshore Business is partnering with Fort Myers-based NeoMedia Technologies to provide readers with more interactive access and information. Let us know what you think. You'll need a Web-enabled cell phone, and to download the software.

Here's how to use it:

1. Download qode. From your cell phone, text "qode" to 66268, or go to <http://get.qode.com> on your phone browser and follow the instructions to download the software. If you cannot download it, you will be directed to a mobile Web page. Bookmark this page.
2. Open the qode software. Select "quode@reader" and take a photo of the smartcode, or open "qode@window" in the qode software and enter GSBiz, or go to the bookmarked page and enter GSBiz. You will automatically link to the *Gulfshore Business* mobile Web page.

