CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY RESTORATION

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CONTENTS PROS INNOVATE

SAVING MONEY FOR CARRIERS

THE SWEET SOUND OF SUCCESS

QUICK CONTENTS TIPS

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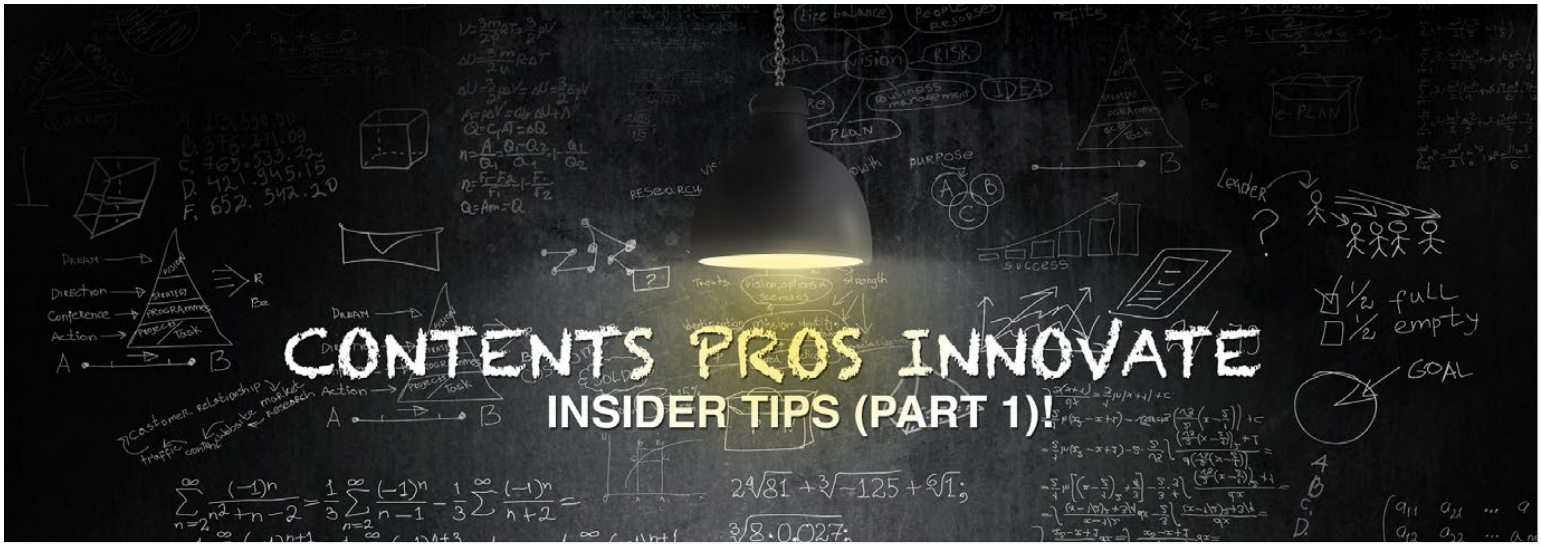
NOT MUCH SLOWS A CONTENTS PRO DOWN



CONTENTS PROS INNOVATE
INSIDER TIPS (PART 1)!

A few years back we shared articles that told of clever innovations the contents pros created for challenges met on the job. Agents and adjusters seemed to really enjoy them (one broker wrote to say that her favorite part was the tips, techniques and advice straight from the front line workers), so we have gathered a whole new batch of revelations from the contents pros for this issue.

The contents pros like toothbrushes! They normally use the softest bristles they can find to get into tiny nooks and crannies (cleaning out soot and other unwanted contaminants). But they will switch to even softer sable paint brushes for delicate work. For example, when cleaning a painting that does not justify being sent to a conservator, toothbrushes are much too harsh a tool – even microfiber cloth poses some decided risks to fragile paint flakes that it might dislodge. So they use cans of air and the softest artist brushes they can find to remove particulates.

Also, the contents pros have lots of sharp implements at their "restoration stations" and they are cleaning and restoring any number of fragile items (everything from glass, to leather, to silk and more) in the same area. So one team brought along Styrofoam blocks for their workers. When one of the team is finished with scissors, he (she) sticks them point down in the Styrofoam. Pointy screwdrivers are likewise inserted in the block. Pens, awls, drill bits – almost anything with a point is placed in the convenient (and inexpensive) substance. Plus, all members of the team can see what is available to them and don't have to go searching.

We have probably mentioned the scoops that they create out of old, empty, plastic milk cartons in an earlier edition. These are easily and quickly created by slicing off the bottom of such a milk container (usually at an angle). They already have a handle and can scoop up lots more packing "popcorn" with each pass than a worker could with just bare hands – this saves huge amounts of otherwise wasted time.

Tiny nails in tiny spaces often result in fingers getting in the way, but the contents pros discovered easy ways to hold a nail while hammering. They use things such as clothespins, bobby pins and even an ordinary comb to secure the nail while holding the hammer in their free hand. Even the structural workers have started using these little tricks. Maybe you will find them useful as well.

Keep reading to see even more useful tips…

Not Much Slows a Contents Pro Down

Sometimes sliding a heavy object through a room or into position for a dolly, is preferable to lifting it. And if a piece of equipment breaks or is wrong for a specific task – they continue with whatever is at hand.

Of course we have all seen those hard plastic sliders – but the pros never use those on hardwood surfaces (they do work well on carpet though). We have seen all manner of items used as "slides." Frisbees, plastic lids, even hard picnic plates have served on carpets. But moving blankets, pieces of carpet (backing side up) and even old, discarded clothes have been used with success on hardwood and linoleum floors.

The contents pros really like to explore all possibilities, especially when it looks as if a job is going to be paralyzed or slowed down. They thrive on the opportunities.

Ever find yourself without shoe covers? Well, when the structural workers on one job hogged all the protective booties, the contents pros had a choice of waiting for someone to bring more from the warehouse or getting on with the job! So they slipped some clean bags over their shoes, and ran a piece of duct tape around their ankles, creating a new fashion statement and allowing them to "adapt, create, and proceed."

Another team was faced with a leaded glass coffee table and wanted to protect its edges before moving it. One of their members brought in "pool noodles" made a slit down the center and pushed them onto the table edges. It worked perfectly. Now lots of uses have been found for the cheap source of foam protection. In fact it was subsequently discovered that foam pipe insulation (which comes in a variety of sizes) can be used to "clip" onto chairs, computer monitors, table legs, expensive antique book spines, picture frames and more. They have become one of the most versatile and useful packing tools the pros carry on most every job.

Not long ago we saw a contents manager take a call on her cell phone and kept working at the same time. At first, the phone was put on "speaker" and sat flat on her work table, but the structural guys were making a lot of noise with their hammering, sawing, drilling, etc. So she put the cell phone in a bowl and kept on talking – the bowl seemed to double the volume of the speaker! Try it some time to see what we mean – great idea.

You may have seen those "lifting straps" on television (the ones where two men are picking up a refrigerator with straps that fit under it and over each of their shoulders). Well, a couple of contents pros wondered if something similar could be done to pick up a large bed mattress.

Turns out…it could! They threaded an ordinary rope through an inch thick, four inch long piece of PVC pipe on either end, tilted the mattress up on one edge, put the rope under the end that still rested on the floor and lifted. It worked! Each of them used one hand to balance the mattress with the other doing all the lifting.

Innovation is the contents pro's "secret weapon."

CASE OF | THE RECALCITRANT RECLINER

You say you have a recliner chair and it won't fit through the door? The contents pros were faced with the challenge of trying to fit a large, leather recliner through a door that was obviously too small for it. But one project manager pulled a pair of long nosed pliers from her tool belt, pushed the back of the recliner to the down position, fiddled with something we could not see on each side of the chair, then voila! She pulled the back of the recliner right off its base.

Next she wrapped some stretch wrap around the footrest part so it stayed closed during moving.

Now there were two pieces that were undamaged and easily reassembled at the packout truck.

As it turned out, many recliners have "lock and release" levers that owners rarely see (but store assembly employees know all about).

By the way, this worker knew lots of other things too. She said that no one should ever lift a recliner by the footrest (but lots of untrained workers do just that). And you know those handles on the edges of bed mattresses? They aren't for lifting (they aren't strong enough) – they were just put there to make it easy to adjust the position of the mattress once it is place.

When you hire the contents pros, you are also hiring their money-saving and time-saving experience. They make you look very good to your bosses and the insured.

So, the pros were stretched pretty thin in a huge mansion. One fellow was supposed to turn off the power to an upstairs master bedroom and he did not have an assistant. He could have turned on the lights up there, run downstairs, flipped a breaker, and run back up just far enough to see if the lights went off. If they didn't, he could just repeat the process until he found the right one.

Or, he could do what he did – he brought an old radio from the truck, plugged it in, found a strong station and turned up the volume.

Down at the fuse box he flipped switches off and on until the radio went silent.

Now we are looking forward to using that tip ourselves. We know it is just a dumb trick – but it is one of those "hacks" that make you look like a contents genius when no one else thinks of it!

By the way, if you use this one, flick the lights on and off to make sure that all the circuits in the room are off (maybe even plug the radio into a couple of other sockets).

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COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUES OF CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

CONTENTS PROS SECRETS FOR MOLD REMEDIATION

RESTORING VALUABLES AFTER STORM DAMAGE

WHEN TIME IS MONEY CALL THE CONTENTS PROS!

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