CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY RESTORATION

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CONTENTS PROS DON'T COST THEY *SAVE*

THE CASE OF THE
ASSAULTED ANTIQUES

CLEVER CONTENTS
SPECIALISTS
INNOVATIVE IDEAS!

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CONTENTS PROS DON'T COST THEY SAVE

You may have seen one of those YouTube testimonials in which a contents manager explained that her cleaning team had been able to process about one box of dishes, forks, knives, or assorted bric-a-bac per hour, per person. And with the addition of a new technology, she was able to increase her output dramatically with the same personnel.

But the contents pros, the adjusters, and the agents came to the decision years ago that doing the job efficiently is far more important than doing it with unbridled speed (you may recall an earlier article in Contents Solutions in which we described the troglodytes who were seen tossing small statuary from one to another in an attempt to get the pack out done quickly – they dropped two of them and ended up with $30,000 worth of porcelain confetti).

Real contents professionals don't throw valued items. They don't pack bowling balls in the same box with laptop computers, they don't try to hide smoke odors with perfumed sprays (even when the process is far faster than using hydroxyls to purify the air and the surfaces that have been affected).

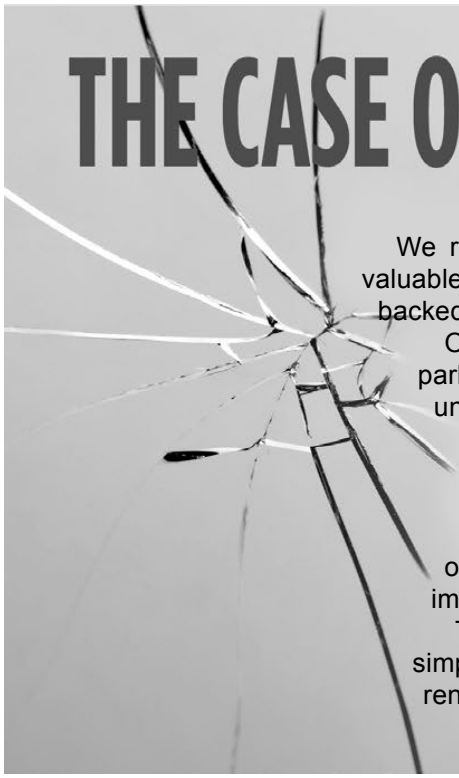
Items don't go missing because of careless packing techniques or inadequate inventory methods. With digital photo inventory, every item is seen, accounted for and processed – with all images made available to adjusters, agents and homeowners alike. And every restored item is returned to the place from which it was originally moved. Nothing is discarded without the owner's written consent.

The reason that adjusters value contents professionals so highly is that they save the insurance carriers massive sums on virtually every job – even when they "slow down to speed up."

And sure, it would be faster to "total loss" a lot of items and simply throw them away – but the contents pros are in the business of cleaning, restoring and saving valued items. Anyone can fill up dumpsters with an owner's belongings. That is why some adjusters and agents still opt to have "two guys and a truck" swing by and clear out a home, offering the owner a small check to let them do it.

In fact not long ago an adjuster explained to Barb Jackson CR (North America's leading authority on contents restoration), how he would offer a "low ball" check to an owner and get on with the next job. They went to a contents warehouse and had a friendly contest to give value to a vault that was opened at random. He gave a deliberately low estimate as to the "cash out" worth of the items. Barb gave a professional, item-by-item valuation of the genuine budget to restore the articles. When he saw how much she could save, even over his "low ball" estimate, he became an avid fan of restoring versus cash out. He even went to his regional manager to recommend re-evaluating their tactics because of the serious money that could be conserved on virtually every job with the contents pros.

Restoring saves, it doesn't cost.



THE CASE OF THE ASSAULTED ANTIQUES

We recently read about a condo owner who hired a moving company to pack out his valuables. The transport vehicle they sent was too big to fit in his parking lot, so the movers backed in and unhooked the trailer.

Once the trailer was full, the movers backed the cab up and tried to reattach it, but the parking lot was at an incline so the workers literally had to ram the trailer over and over until the hitch reconnected.

"The result?" the author explained, "Damaged antiques, with broken, scratched legs and cracked glass tops."

Contents pros, to whom we showed the story, are of two minds. Either the antiques were not properly packed and padded in the first place (which is most likely), or the impact of the cab against the trailer had to be remarkably forceful (think of the impact in a car accident).

This sort of thing seems to happen to movers, but modern, trained contents specialists simply don't have stories like these to tell – much to the agents, who are hoping for policy renewals, delight!

OH THOSE CLEVER CONTENTS SPECIALISTS!

We have received some very kind words from our readers who have enjoyed the contents pros' ingenuity (clever tricks) on the job.

And we would like to tell them that all the ingenious innovations of the contents pros were well planned, well thought out and the result of brainstorming sessions at some corporate headquarters, but the truth is that they are usually "on-the-fly" and are from the school of "necessity is the mother of invention."

Contents pros learn to shift their thinking into creative modes to save and restore their clients' valuables. It is just that simple. Often they are faced with challenges that none of their contemporaries have ever seen.

For example, the structural guys on one job kept setting off the smoke alarms with the amount of dust they were making from their efforts. The alarms were wired in sequence and had no batteries to remove. The workmen didn't want to turn off the power to the house or go searching for the right breaker switch (none of the breakers were marked) because they needed electricity for their co-workers, which left them with a conundrum.

Then a contents supervisor ascended a ladder with a lightweight plastic bowl and placed it over the nearest smoke alarm, sealing it to the ceiling with rubber cement. Of course it worked – when the particulates could no longer penetrate the sensors, the alarm was neutralized.

The structural team set about doing the same thing to the other sensors and continued with their assigned duties.

Another simple fix (known to most contents teams) is to put your cell phone in a clear, sealable plastic baggie – that way it stays clean, germ free, dry and doesn't pick up smoke odors. Plus, it can still be dialed and used through the plastic without opening the baggie.

The contents pros move jobs forward – their motto, "Adapt, create, proceed," is their standard of excellence.

WET BOXES? NOT ON OUR WATCH

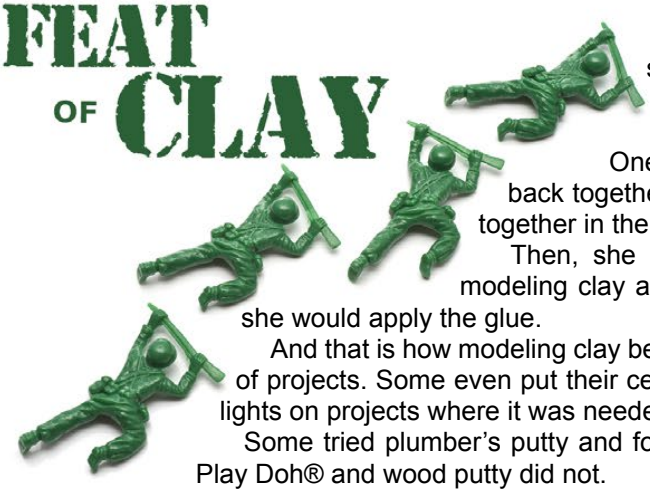
Less experienced workers will do things that are detrimental to a contents job. We have seen smoke damage jobs where rain is coming down and the workers will carry boxes out to the truck, then will set them down on a wet sidewalk while they go back in to get more containers. So now they have both smoke damage and water damage!

And many adjusters have observed untrained workers setting cardboard boxes down on snow-laden grass before loading them into the waiting vehicle. Of course snow is made of water and cardboard absorbs the moisture very quickly, transferring it to the objects (clothing, books, photos, etc.) in the box.

Real contents pros will stretch wrap the boxes or place them in plastic "transport" bins (they protect the cardboard boxes until they are in the truck, then they are unloaded and the plastic bins are brought back to the home or office to repeat the process).

It isn't as fast as simply carrying the box out to the truck through the rain or snow – but it is a whole lot more efficient and saves the valuables from further damage.

FEAT OF CLAY



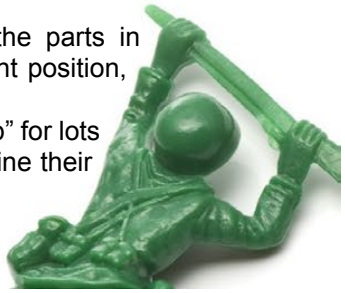
So it appeared that the firemen had inadvertently stepped on some little, fragile, hard-plastic, vintage soldiers and broken them. The adjuster was in no mood to pay to replace them or to get some conservator to repair them.

One of the contents pros had an idea (as always)! She would glue them back together with modeling glue. But they were small, thin and hard to hold together in the right angle for the glue to set.

Then, she had another idea. She would embed the parts in modeling clay and once they were reattached in the right position, she would apply the glue.

And that is how modeling clay became the new favorite "positioning clamp" for lots of projects. Some even put their cell phones in a wad of it so they could shine their lights on projects where it was needed.

Some tried plumber's putty and found that it worked equally as well – but Play Doh® and wood putty did not.



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COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUES OF CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

AFTER THE STORM CONTENTS PROS ARE ON THE JOB

RESTORING VALUED ITEMS IT IS WHAT WE DO BEST

IF IT MATTERS TO YOU IT MATTERS TO US!

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