

# CONTENTS SOLUTIONS

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THE GO-TO-GUIDE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY RESTORATION

## CONTENTS PROS

"Yes Men" of the Industry

## Saving On the Front Lines

Assembly Line Efficiency

Provided by your Contents Restoration partner

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## Carpet into Cars

New life for old fibers

# Contents Pros—"Yes Men" of the Industry

Contents restoration has earned its place as one of the hottest topics in the home insurance world.

It took almost two decades but now adjusters often make it a priority, before they hire a contractor, to ask, "Do you offer contents restoration?"

They do this because contents professionals have been saving them millions of dollars (one soft contents group estimates over \$60 million just for their small portion of the business).

And lately it has become a hallmark among contents workers to be able to say, "Yes," to some really remarkable requests.

"Can you restore water-damaged electronics?"

"Yes we can," is their first response – if you haven't waited too long to call. Many restoration companies now clean and restore electronics (televisions,

computer hard drives, cell phones and more). Others have a network of associates that they use for such specialized work. But if you had asked the same question ten years ago, they would have simply shaken their heads sadly and said, "You can't restore wet electronics." Today, with modern contents cleaning techniques, a very high percentage of wet electronics can indeed be restored to working, pre-loss condition.

"How about a smoke or water-damaged couch?"

"Yes we can," say the contents pros. With the remarkable new methods for extracting water, decontamination, even re-dyeing that can make the couch even better than pre-loss condition.

"Antique furniture?"

"Yes!" And if the antiques require specialized expertise that is beyond the contents team, they always have their "million dollar rolodex," to call upon their expert associates.

"Fire damaged art?"

"You bet!" There was a time when damaged paintings were routinely "total-lossed." But now, virtually all contents restoration companies have a method by which

they can contact top professionals to ask their opinions and to engage their expertise in saving works of art that once would have cost the insurance companies many thousands of dollars.

"How about smoke-damaged furs?"

"Yes we can!" That was an easy one – many soft contents processors also have techniques for restoring furs. Rarely is this done in house by the contents pros, but they always have a trusted company to whom they refer such specialized services.

"Wet books?"

"Yes!" Almost all contents companies have teams who will deal with wet books and documents – it all comes down to the worth of the paper, the severity of the damage and the method used for restoration. For example, some popular books can be replaced by simply finding a used, but good condition copy from online booksellers.

Others might be dried in special chambers, and still others might undergo the extraordinary process of vacuum freeze-drying.

All these processes (and many, many more) are making it possible for the contents pros to restore instead of replace and to save massive amounts of money for insurance adjusters and the companies they represent.



## Contents Processors Look to the Future

Imagine this, a huge company with dozens of outlets, is now accepting used and discarded carpet. A recent estimate stated that about 5 billion pounds of the stuff is being hauled out to landfills each year.

They will charge you to drop it off with them, but they charge less than the landfill guys, and wait until you hear what they do with it!

So far they have transformed it into roofing shingles, railroad ties, automotive parts, carpet cushion, stepping stones, and a whole lot more.

Ford Motor Company recently announced that it recycled so much of the nylon from old carpets that in 2010 alone it was enough to carpet 154 football fields – 4.1 million pounds.

But Ford did not carpet football fields – it used the born again

carpet to make the cylinder head covers on its Ford Escape, Fusion, Mustang and F-150 model vehicles. And in doing so, it says that it saved 430,000 gallons of oil.

That is the "upside." The downside is that when we checked with the frontline companies which accept old carpet, they didn't seem to mind if it had smoke fragrance in it, but they absolutely drew the line at wet carpet.

Of course there is still carpet that has been dried but is unacceptable to the client. There are "leftovers" from installation and there is the future – we expect that with billions of pounds being thrown away every year, it is only a question of time before a new plant opens that not only accepts wet carpet, but actively solicits it!



## Assembly Line Efficiency

Barb Jackson, Certified Restorer (CR) is the leading spokesperson for the contents restoration industry. We caught her between speaking engagements long enough to ask her what she thought was the foundation of a successful contents facility.

She said, "The main function of a contents restoration company is to restore. They evaluate the contents of a home or office, then determine the most cost-effective means to clean, restore, or recondition those items that can be restored to pre-loss condition and to bring to the attention of the adjuster and owner, those items that it would not be cost effective to repair.

"The contents contractor wants to process large volumes of contents with consistent results, meet deadlines for returning contents and process more jobs.

"The underlying goal is to produce more and waste less, clean and pack out contents with fewer steps, fewer procedures, fewer supplies. Don't cut corners, but do use the tools and technologies available to you.

"For example, instead of carrying one box from a workstation to the storage vault, why not use a cart and carry a dozen or more? Instead of cleaning a box of metal, ceramic or plastic items with cotton swabs and a

tooth brush, you might consider using an ultrasonics machine to restore items that would have been a total loss if processed by hand.

"Packing and cleaning supplies should be easily accessed when needed.

Bottlenecks in the traffic flow of the warehouse need to be eliminated. Set up dedicated processing areas and create assembly line procedures.

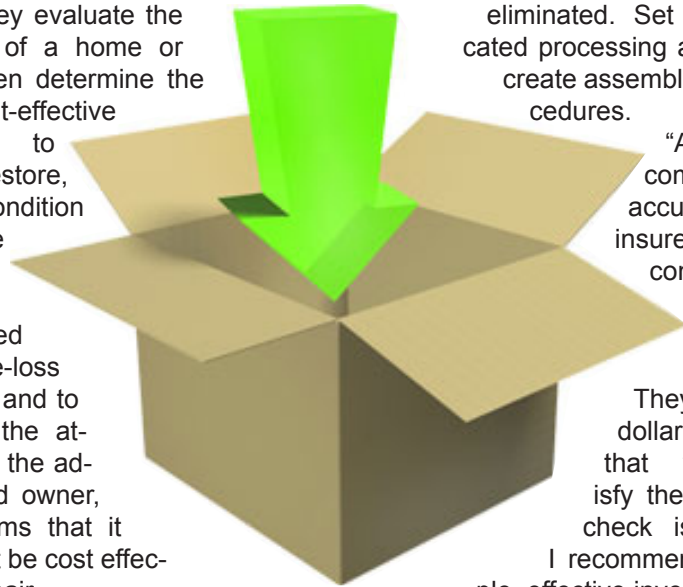
"A common complaint (or accusation) of insureds is that contents are damaged or missing.

They state a dollar amount that will satisfy them, and a check is issued.

I recommend a simple, effective inventory system, in which pictures are taken of every item before it is moved, as it is being packed, as it is cleaned and re-boxed.

"That makes an irrefutable record of the condition the items were in before they are ever touched by the contents staff and how they look when they are returned to the home or office from which they came.

"Adjusters like it, the insureds are very happy with it and it gives the contents pros a tool not only as a shield against unfair claims, but as the ultimate way to know where all the items are and how to quickly access them."



## Liquid Sealant is a New Favorite

The company that created a disinfectant so powerful it can kill the Coronavirus (SARS) in under ten minutes and H1N1 in under three minutes, is well known to contents professionals, so it was not unexpected that they were among the first to hear about a new mold-resistant coating and mildew stain remover from the same company.

This new compound is a liquid that can be applied like paint, adheres to both porous and non-porous surfaces and provides "... permanent protection against moisture and intrusion."

According to a recent press release, the new substance is registered with the EPA and can protect against mold, mildew, algae and odor-causing bacteria. It was developed for use in high moisture areas, won't peel, blister or chip, yet can be painted over.

It can be sprayed on with a can or brushed on and depending on humidity and temperature, it can dry in as little as 30 minutes (the longest recorded dry time was 2 hours).

The contents pros have already thought up a dozen ways to use this new "super-sealant," and we expect to be hearing a lot more about it soon.



## How to Spot a Contents Pro

Contents professionals use all manner of techniques and technology. But it isn't always the high tech items that separate the real professionals from those who have professional equipment. To spot the real pros, have a look at how they use their materials. Are they using quality packing materials and procedures that protect the belongings through the entire process?

Are they wrapping each piece of furniture or just using a moving blanket, which can slip off and expose the furniture to damage? Are they using appliance dollies? Are they using anti-static bubble wrap on electronics?

The little things can make a big difference.



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