

# Moving? Think Boxes!

By Sheila R. Selby

Summer is almost upon us, which means moving vans and boxes are becoming a frequent sight in Brookline. According to Dave Wyant, a 30-year veteran of the moving industry, more than half of the moves in greater Boston take place from June through September.

When you think of the words “moving” and “boxes” together, you probably envision brown cardboard packing boxes. After reading this column, you’ll see there are other types of boxes to think about when preparing to move.

If you’re one of the hundreds of Brookline residents moving into a new home over the next few months, here are some design tips for arranging your new place. These tips can be useful in making your home more livable, even if you’re not moving.

### Think Outside the Box

Just because a room is called one thing by the previous owner, it doesn’t mean you need to use that room for the same purpose. Don’t be pigeon-holed into using a room labeled for a purpose you don’t need. Think outside the box!

Clients of mine found the “almost-perfect” home. It was in a great neighborhood; had the right number of bedrooms and bathrooms; and was in an architectural style they liked. It had a large eat-in kitchen, a formal dining room, and a living room. The only perceived problem was the lack of a family room.

They could have used the living room as their family room, but they really wanted a separate room where the kids could play and they

could watch TV as a family. By asking questions about their lifestyle, I discovered that the family preferred eating in the kitchen; and when they entertained, they had informal get-togethers, not sit-down dinners. “So, why do you need a formal dining room?” I asked. They answered, “We really don’t need one, but the house has one.” I suggested they convert the dining room into the family room. By thinking outside the box, they now have a family room, and the house has become their perfect home!

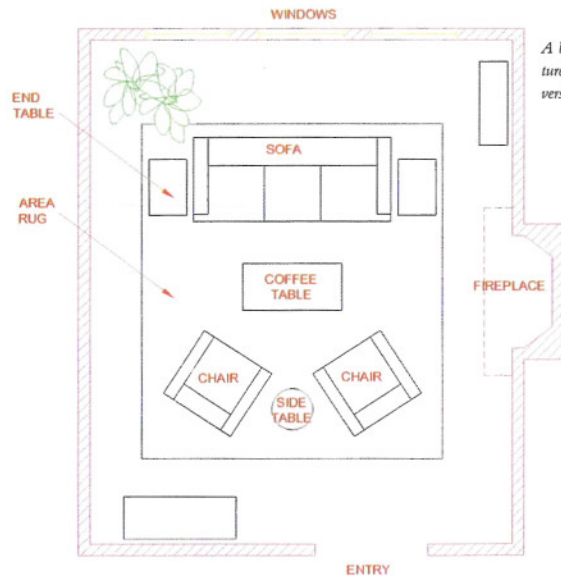
### Think Inside the Box

Once you’ve decided how you’ll use a room, think about how the room’s furniture arrangement will suit your lifestyle. Rooms are boxes; think inside them. For example, do you use your living room to spend time with your roommates and entertain small groups of friends? Or will your living room be used for frequent large gatherings?

*A living room furniture plan with conversation in mind.*

If you plan to use your living room for small gatherings, make sure your seating is close together so conversations can easily be heard by everyone. Have seating that allows guests to face each other. Furniture doesn’t have to be lined up along the walls. Move the furniture toward the center of the room to create a conversation pit.

On the other hand, if you regularly throw large parties, seating that is easy to move is a good idea. When expecting a large crowd, you can move the furniture so that seating is along the walls, allowing more room for circulation. And your guests can stand in groups without worrying about tripping over furniture.



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### Think About the Box

What do you do about furniture that you don’t want to part with, but you don’t think you can use in your new home because of lack of space, or in your existing home because of a lifestyle change? Here’s an example of how to adapt the box itself.

A recent work/lifestyle change required a client to set up a home office. Because of limited space, her only option was to combine her office with the guest bedroom. The room had a fabulous art deco bedroom set and a



*An armoire converted into office storage.*

daybed. When she added a desk, there wasn’t any room for a filing cabinet. And with all the bedroom furniture, the room looked and felt like a bedroom, not an office.

Since my client would be spending much of her working time in this room, she wanted it to have an office-like environment. To accomplish this, though, she knew she needed to part with the bedroom set. She was heartbroken. After looking at the pieces in the set, I realized that the armoire was the perfect size to be used for a filing cabinet and storage.

By installing some shelves in the closet section of the armoire and purchasing hanging file racks, the former armoire was transformed into an office storage system.

Although the client had to give up the other pieces of the bedroom set, she was able to keep one beautiful piece and make it functional for another much-needed purpose. Now when you walk into this room, you know it is an office.

### Wrapping Up

I hope these suggestions inspire you to think differently about how to create the perfect environment for your new home. Moving is an adventure, and by thinking about boxes with a broader perspective, your unlimited creativity can make your move more exciting!

*Sheila R. Selby, a 16-year Brookline resident, is a professional interior designer with extensive experience in both residential and commercial interior design projects. Sheila’s firm, On The Move Interiors, provides interior design services including room arranging, color consulting, staging for real estate sales, and styling. Sheila loves working with people who are moving, helping them decide what existing furniture to take to their new homes, and providing furniture planning for the new spaces to fit her clients’ lifestyles.*