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Soothing Seamless Transition...

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Making a move can be challenging at the best of times – moving across the country from a farm to a house while running a business and with two toddlers – well that is something else.

I knew I was going to rely on a moving company – however stumbling upon Home Suite Home Transitions was more than a blessing – it was life changing.

I knew that Home Suite Home Transitions specialized in downsizing – particularly with the Elderly population. I was interested in whether they could assist me – a busy middle aged business woman. I was not sure what services to expect – I was not even sure if I was considered a downsize – all I knew was that I needed help if I was to make the move without negatively impacting my business or my mental well-being.

In the initial meeting, Patti was professional and prepared. She walked me through the steps of the move and potential services she could offer. There were two key areas that I responded to – the ethics she brought to her business and the transparency regarding her fee structure. Her presentation binder was clear and concise including pictures of successful moves. I appreciated that her company was prepared to do many things “outside the box” to bring comfort to client leaving their home. The picture of them cleaning the evestrough of a home because it upset the couple to turn it over dirty was outstanding. Little did I know that I would experience similar moments in my move.

Patti provided an estimate based on the information I was able to provide her at the time and we had time to plan the move. Patti immediately booked appointments with me to start the sorting process. I travel extensively with work and was concerned about my ability to give her time. By scheduling appointments and treating them as business meetings – we were able to undertake the sorting quite easily. Patti was able to work in my home when I was away on packing and sorting when I was away. I owned a 2500 square foot century home and then two large outbuildings. I had raised three children in this home. Although I pride myself on running a tight efficient ship there were still many decisions to make. I was moving from a horse farm to a house. I would not need all my belongings. In addition I was moving from Ontario to Alberta – the costs of moving a library of books and all my baby furnishings that I might never use again would be exorbitant.

I do not know how I would have made the decisions I did without the quiet confidence of Patti. She sat me in a chair, with a cup of tea and simply did her thing – going through every shelf pulling belongings asking whether it was to go or not. I felt no pressure. I found myself able to make decisions and where I hesitated I would ask for her opinion. She never gave one – she just pointed out options. I valued her guidance when deciding whether to donate or try to sell. It gave me a good feeling that some of my belongings were going to places that had experienced natural disasters.

I found Patti was a wonderful buffer to respond to pressure from family and friends. Frankly I would have given a lot of things away because of my desire not to upset people. It's amazing how often people came up to me and said, “Oh you are moving – can I have such and such?” I had a lot of money invested in belongings that could be

sold. Retaining some value in those belongings (by reselling) went a long way to offsetting the costs of the move. I was able to respond to requests from family and friends by directing them to Patti. I did learn it was very important to respect and communicate with your moving manager. It is very easy to inadvertently agree to give something away that Patti had already sold. You can be flexible with family and close friends – maybe sell at a reduced rate – but make sure your moving manager is involved.

A move is emotional. I am tough and deal with change management in my work. I felt I would be fine. I knew to surround myself with the necessary supports. Leaving behind your home and family is difficult. Patti quietly provided emotional support throughout. I would never have been able to cope as well as I did without the efficient and quality moving support I received. Patti arranged for the moving companies to come in and give quotes. She assisted me in checking their references and setting dates for the move.

And then Home Suite Home Transitions packed. Boy did they pack well. We had to move a household of four people, dogs, an office that had to keep functioning throughout the transition as well as accommodate a nanny and two babies. In hindsight I do not know how they did it. We moved across the country and our office was only closed one day. Not one day did I have to look for dishes to cook for the children.

I cannot speak to the actual moving day in Ontario. I left with the nanny and two babies two days before. I knew it was best for me to be out of the way on the final day. I know I did not want for anything – that I had clothes and the work I needed to get through the transition. My adult son stayed for the move. Patti had most everything packed well in advance and then supervised the moving company. She also packed the vehicle my son was driving with our computers and property required for the office to function – as well as two dogs. I know I was the largest move she had ever organized to date. Hopefully she will post pictures on her website.

We drove to Alberta, settled into accommodation until the transport (yes transport) of my belongings arrived. Patti and I had reviewed all cupboard space and where to unpack belongings. This is one of the few occasions that she would not be personally unpacking on the other end.

Moving day in Alberta was December 9, 2013 and the temperature was -38 degrees Celsius (without the wind chill). Five moving men arrived and the only way to cope with the temperature was to turn off the heat in the house and unload as quickly as possible – not quite the calm steady process we had planned. We were wearing snowsuits in the house and still felt the cold.

Thank goodness for Home Suite Home Transitions packing system. Everything was so clearly labelled – which room which cupboard which shelf. Box after box after box came in that house and was directed to the correct room. At 3 p.m. the transport was unloaded, beds set up and boxes in the correct room.

Then came the unpacking...I think we must have brought at least 60 big pictures and paintings. My fine china and stemware, china from Prince William and Catherine's wedding, keepsakes with my babies hair in them. Box by box we unloaded into the labelled shelf or cupboard. By 5 p.m. the next day my 5-bedroom 3-bathroom house was completely unpacked, with pictures on the wall and offices operational. We had a home. And all those boxes of fine china, belongings and pictures that travelled 3,500 kilometres across the country and not one scratch or broken item. Not one misplaced item. I was home – a new home with new beginnings but I was home. I had the familiar, I had my family and I had a seamless soothing transition to an exciting next chapter of my life. This would not have been possible without the professional and caring services of Home Suite Home Transitions embodied by Patti Priestman and her team.

Andrea J. Williams