

PROFILE: THE ORGANISERS

Rebuilding lifestyles

Steve Jordan talks to Katie Shapley about a five-star service that could help reduce the anxiety of moving, for those who can afford it.

Sometimes we just need a little order in our lives. Moving is one of those times. Your entire life has been turned upside down, your family has been disrupted, you've moved half way across the world to a strange country, and your mind is in a spin. There's so much to do you end up doing none of it.

That's the situation Katie Shapley is aiming to remedy with her company The Organisers. It's a highly efficient team of personal assistants who can really make a difference to some of your clients. What will The Organisers do? "We'll do anything that's legal and morally sound," said Katie.

It was a very short hop from there to working with people who were relocating. At no other time were their lives in such turmoil and were they in so much need of help. So, what exactly does The Organisers do to help?

Katie said that moving companies take a home apart, she puts it back together again. The process starts by working with the client to establish exactly what they want their home to look like.

"We define our default HomeMaker service as leaving the home with no cardboard boxes in sight, the clothes in the wardrobe colour coordinated, the books alphabetised on the book shelves,

even checking out the flat mates and landlord to make sure that it's what the parents would want for their children. "We call it the 'Mummy' service," said Katie. "Sometimes everything looks OK on paper, but it just doesn't feel right. That's where we can help."

The Organisers take over where the moving companies, or even the relocation companies, stop. This even stretches as far as clients' working lives too. Katie's event management experience means that she can organise meetings and provide a wide range of PA services either for the client themselves or the companies they work for. "We have been working for some of our clients for years," she said.

Over the last 20 years most of Katie's work has come through her directly. She has good working relationships with some moving companies but is looking to expand by servicing the needs of moving companies' clients on their behalf providing a valuable value-added service to those who can afford it. "Although we are based in the UK we have a network of partners around the world who work to our strict instructions, so we can help anyone wherever they might be."

This is a specialist service. As such it is not appropriate for most people: many would find it unnecessary and most would not have the resources. But for some, the people with the money who want everything to be 'just so', it might be irresistible.

The Organisers has recently won the award for the Best Bespoke Homemaker Service Provider at the *BUILD 2017* facilities management awards. Other accolades include: Best Residential & Commercial Property Management Company 2016 - *BUILD* magazine; Excellence in Concierge Services 2017 - *Innovation and Excellence* magazine; and UK Concierge Service Provider of the Year (Corporate) 2017 - ACQ5 Global Awards.

If you run a moving company and would like to find out more about a value-added service that could help your customers and provide you with an additional revenue stream, contact Katie at The Organisers on katie.shapley@theorganisers.com.



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Katie started The Organisers in 1998 having spent her career working first in five-star hospitality, then working with clothes designer Jeff Banks and broadcaster Selina Scott on the BBC live event, *The Clothes Show*. "When I worked in hospitality my approach to service was that we have to build a memory for our guests," she said. "They were spending a lot of money to attend an event and it was our job to give them something extraordinary to remember. I believe, that for some customers, movers need to do the same."

After working with the *Cosmopolitan* magazine brand setting up events in emerging markets, Katie returned to the UK with a clean canvass to set up her own company. Her first job came almost by chance. It was to sort out a client's tax affairs that were in disorder. Job done, and prosecution for the client averted, the stage was set for a business that would work through people's 'to do' lists for them and help get their lives back on track.

the ornaments displayed, pictures hung on walls, curtains up, beds made, IT fully functioning, utilities set up and even a fully stocked fridge. The house is cleaned and dinner can even be on the table if wanted." Katie said that they even go as far as rebuilding the children's Lego models for them and displaying them in their bedrooms. Not a job they particularly enjoy!

It doesn't stop there. If required Katie will provide housekeepers and nannies, schools for the children, medical services, pet relocation and even interior design and project management. Whatever their lifestyle was like, Katie aims to recreate it in the new location. "Anything is possible," she said.

The company has a dedicated Schools and Education Division. This helps families with applications to boarding schools, day schools, universities and colleges and makes sure that the kids are settled and happy. This goes as far as finding accommodation for them and