



Organize Your Life with a **MESSAGE CENTER**



How many times have you come home and dumped your keys, mail and cell phone on the nearest horizontal surface only to forget where you placed them or neglected to charge your electronics? In today's hectic modern age, not only do we have less time, but we possess a large amount of keys, bags and electronic devices with often no place to stow them.

Designing a specific space for these items is common today among new homeowners. An organized home runs more smoothly, and is easier to maintain. "Message centers," as they are commonly called, can be efficiently planned near garage entries or in kitchens.

First, think about what you own and use now, and what you anticipate your needs to be in the future. Cell phones, pagers, music players and laptops all need places to be stored and charged. Electrical placement is crucial here so plan ahead and always add a few more outlets than you think you need. Remember to spread them out and hide a few so you don't have a mass of unsightly outlets. You can conceal them in an upper cabinet, a drawer, or even into a roll top desk.

Add a place for all your keys; keep a drawer for your briefcase, purse and laptop; build in recipe or periodical drawers or shelves; plan for a mail slot for every occupant as well as junk, incoming and outgoing mail; conceal a paper shredder, trash and small recycle container; tuck a stool under a slide out tray for making grocery lists or addressing envelopes; wrap a pin-up cork board in rustic textured fabric, or criss-cross ribbons and never use a single pin - the sky is the limit here, be creative! Don't forget lighting - you should always have task, general and accent lighting. An overhead light, under cabinet light and a small accent lamp or wall sconce will do the trick.

So how can you make this space even more unique and personalized? Let your imagination run wild! If your home has a nostalgic flavor, recycle an old hutch or antique chest of drawers. Bring in cabinets, and use rustic, distressed woods (which also help with wear and tear). Add style and texture with aged finishes and painted looks, tile and tin wall appliqué, baskets, boxes, and other vessels. Use old railroad spikes for key holders, bin pulls on drawers, and you can even paint the faces of white cabinets with chalkboard paint and write on them.

Try to plan the most compact, functional space you can, and you will be sure this will be one of the most used and valued spaces in your home.

Please contact our in-house professional interior designer for more information.

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