



Downsizing and selling a home can be very liberating, but can also present many emotional, physical and financial challenges. Attendees at a recent "Upside of Downsizing" conference learn about overcoming the potential obstacles, along with the six key steps of the downsizing process.

Downsizing doesn't have to create hardship

Major conference educates boomers, seniors and their adult children

By Shari L. Berg
for *The Oregonian/OregonLive*

A move is something that rarely is looked forward to, regardless of the stage of life you are in when it occurs. For seniors and boomers, packing up a lifetime of memories and belongings can seem like an especially daunting task - emotionally, physically and financially.

Yet downsizing doesn't have to be a difficult or unpleasant experience. Seeking the assistance of qualified downsizing professionals can make all the difference between achieving a smooth transition and muddling through the entire process. But it can be just as challenging to find qualified professionals for those who have not previously experienced the downsizing process. Searching blindly on the Internet can lead to options for downsizing professionals, but there is no guarantee of selecting a reputable provider.

Assisting seniors and boomers and their adult children through the downsizing process - while providing reliable information and access to reputable downsizing professionals - is what Mary Spann had in mind when she launched the Upside of Downsizing®. The company specializes in downsizing conferences, which feature top-industry speakers and exhibitors who can walk seniors and boomers through the downsizing process from start to finish, and addressing obstacles and providing solutions to unhealthy situations. Among the professionals available at the conferences are estate-planning attorneys, counselors and home stages.

The next Upside of Downsizing conference is being held on Saturday, Nov. 19 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Portland.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Exhibitors at the Upside of Downsizing conference present valuable products and services specifically tailored to meet the needs of seniors and boomers (and in many cases, their adult children) as they consider downsizing as an important step on the journey toward simplifying their lives.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE UPSIDE OF DOWNSIZING

Who Should Attend the Conference?

Upside of Downsizing primarily assists boomers and seniors in gaining the freedom that comes with downsizing their homes. The process also may be beneficial to newly-single individuals who are looking for a fresh start.

Another demographic that is playing a more pronounced role

in the downsizing process is that of adult children of seniors and boomers, who often are tasked with helping their parents to make the decision to downsize and getting through the process. Dubbed the "sandwich generation," adult children are sandwiched between providing care for their own children as well as their aging parents.

"One of the real challenges of downsizing can be if someone

can't make the decision for themselves, and the decision eventually falls to the adult children, who may be close to retirement age themselves," said Nikki Phillips, sales director for Hillside Retirement Community in McMinnville.

Phillips has attended Upside of Downsizing conferences in the past and said they are well presented and helpful for seniors and boomers, as well as their adult children who may be serving in a caregiver role. She said she was impressed with the caliber of the presenters featured, and the variety of exhibitors available to conference attendees. "There are presenters and exhibitors there who help with all stages of retirement, not just the physical downsizing."

What to Expect at a Conference

At these downsizing conferences, helpful ideas and insight about making a smooth and successful transition to a healthier and more manageable living environment are the primary focus.

"We're helping our attendees through every step of the downsizing process," said Mary Spann, President of Upside of Downsizing. "All the way from getting started with the process to finding new housing and making the final move."

Spann said one of the most common questions heard from conference attendees is how to get rid of all of their unnecessary stuff when downsizing.

"They've held on to it all of these years thinking the children might want it and they don't, so they need advice on what to do with it," said Jerry Spann, Vice President of Upside of Downsizing.

Phillips agreed. "The biggest obstacle to downsizing is the deci-

UPSIDE OF DOWNSIZING® EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

WHAT: Upside of Downsizing® Conference

WHEN: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016

WHERE: Holiday Inn Conference Center, 8439 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland, OR 97220

TICKETS: \$25 per person through Nov. 5; \$35 per person beginning Nov. 6

Cost includes lunch and event materials

RESERVATIONS: Visit www.UpsideofDownsizing.com or call 503-208-9421

EVENT SPONSOR:
The Oregonian | OREGONLIVE

sion that your possessions do not define your life," she says. "Items are memories of a life well lived, but they do not define you. Once you come to this conclusion, then the actual downsizing process is much easier."

Conference attendees will get tips on how to sort belongings, as well as learn about the powerful benefits of downsizing, when and where to begin their new adventure in life and the Six-Step Checklist to downsizing successfully.

"We took the big step to downsize," said Jerrie Hosford, who attended a conference with her husband, Ed. "Ed and I are more at ease and content than we had been for years. The Upside of Downsizing has been a marvelous inspiration and encouragement to us and gave us the passion, knowledge and support to step into a new and better lifestyle."