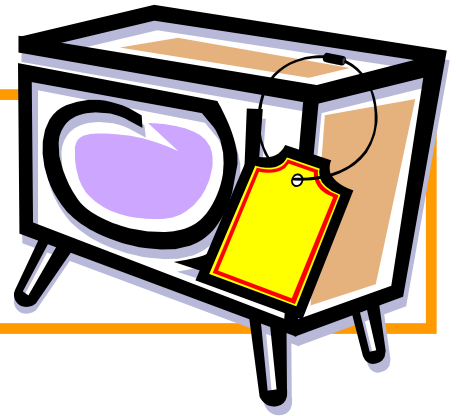


# Your Guide to.....

## Planning a Garage Sale!



A garage sale held prior to moving can help both lighten the load and bring in some extra cash. This guide is intended to help plan a successful garage sale, cashing in on your disposables and having some pre-move fun as well.

### **Pre-Plan: Allow at least three weeks for preparations.**

Pre-planning brings to mind details that otherwise might be overlooked in organizing a garage sale, highlighting the various steps necessary for its ultimate success.

- Check with local authorities for restrictions – For example, obtain permits, fees involved, signage restrictions.
- Consider a joint sale with one of more neighbors; share the work, fun and profits. Easy way to attract more customers.
- Decide where to hold the sale – The garage, patio, yard, basement, or if other families are involved, a centralized or community location.
- Set date and hours for the sale. Sales on weekends and in warmer weather generally fare better. Designate a rain date and also an extra day for special “markdowns” if there’s a lot of merchandise left.
- Let your insurance agent know you’ll be holding a sale, and make certain your homeowner’s policy will cover any liability for injuries.
- Start saving shopping bags and cardboard cartons for customers’ convenience.

## **What to Sell: Make a list!**

Go through your house with a record sheet or notebook, listing everything you want to sell. If you have fewer than 100 items to offer, consider having a joint sale with one or more neighbors. Some examples of garage-sale merchandise:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appliances, large and small,          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tables, chairs, couches       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baby equipment and children's clothes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Games, toys and bicycles      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Books                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lamps and mirrors             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> China, glassware                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports and exercise equipment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lawn and patio furniture              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooking utensils, Flatware    |

## **Sorting it all out**

After identifying items you want to sell, the next step is gathering them all together and making sure they are in tiptop shape-that could make the difference between a sale and a "leftover".

- Gather all of the items in one place for convenience in pricing and making minor repairs.
- Bundle various "go-togethers," such as cake pans and a cake rack, all of which could be sold as a unit. Or, wrap a few unrelated items together as "surprise" or "grab bag" specials.
- See that clothing and linens are clean, and that sizes are clearly marked. Preferably, iron them and put them on hangers or fold neatly.
- If you're having a sale with other people, be sure to mark each item with a code number and/or color so it can be identified easily when sold.
- As you identify items to be sold, put price tags on them right away and take to the garage sale holding area. Don't wait until just prior to the sale to start pricing. Price tags should be placed on the underside of dishes – never on top where a pattern could be damaged during tag removal.

## **Pricing: Price according to worth.**

Items should be priced according to their worth to consumers, **not** to the seller. For items in good working order, charge about 20%= percent of the original purchase price, or a little more if in excellent condition. Used clothing and books generally fetch lower prices. Reserve higher prices for antiques, handmade items or collectibles.

### **Some suggestions for pricing your items:**

- Keep prices in multiples of five -- \$ .5, \$ .10, \$1
- Mark "AS IS" on anything that doesn't work or is in some way defective and, price accordingly.
- Place a price tag on each article, and list the prices on a record sheet. For convenience and to avoid lost tags, use the press-on tags available at stationery and office supply stores. Small pieces of masking tape also will work.

Here are a few pricing suggestions:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>Sports Equipment:</b><br/>Tennis racquet-good condition,\$10<br/>Bowling b.....\$5 &amp; up<br/>Baseball glove-good condition.\$5</li><li>■ <b>Furniture:</b><br/>Couch, might need reupholstering but serviceable....\$15-\$25<br/>Office desk, depending on size and condition....\$10-\$50<br/>Dining Table, Solid hardwood in good condition.....\$100 &amp; up<br/>Solid hardwood needing refinishing...\$35</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>Pots and Pans:</b><br/>Stainless Steel.....\$2-\$5<br/>Aluminum.....\$ .50-\$2<br/>Cast iron .....\$2-\$10</li><li>■ <b>Garden Tools:</b><br/>Lawn mower<br/>Power, good condition...\$50+<br/>Riding, good condition...\$100+<br/>Hand tools, good condition \$ .25-\$5</li><li>■ <b>Appliances:</b><br/>Refrigerator, depending on age and condition....\$50 &amp; up</li></ul> |
|--|--|

## **Advertise: Attract customers.**

The key to a profitable garage sale is to operate it like any successful retail business in a competitive market. One way to do this is to advertise cleverly and aggressively. Consider coming up with a slogan to use on large signs, as well as using balloons. Be sure to play up any offbeat merchandise that might intrigue and attract shoppers.

Let people know about your garage sale by:

- Running an ad in your neighborhood newspaper during the week before your sale.
- Putting up signs in your neighborhood 2-3 days before your sale.
- Calling friends who might be interested.
- Announcing the sale to members of clubs in your community.
- Putting signs in windows or on bulletin boards of neighborhood stores.
- Inserting a notice in your church newsletter or school newspaper
- Distributing announcements throughout the neighborhood.

Suggestions for signs:

- Display a BIG sign at the sale site
- Make smaller directional signs in your neighborhood or at the beginning of main streets leading to your sale site.
- Make sure the colors, lettering and information remains consistent so that shoppers don't get confused and attend another sale.
- Black lettering on white or yellow poster board is very effective.
- **Include:**

**Date**

**Times** (ie., 8am-12pm)

**Address** (ie., 123 Main Street)

**DON'T FORGET TO TAKE DOWN SIGNS  
AFTER THE GARAGE SALE!**

## **Setting Up Your Displays**

Before arranging your wares, remove everything you don't want to sell from the sale area. Cover with a sheet or drop cloth heavy items that can't be moved and attach big "NOT FOR SALE" signs to them.

- ☑ Organize clothing by size and set up a rack on which to hang apparel. Use a clothesline stretched across the garage.
- ☑ Boards set across trestles will serve as temporary display counters. Leave aisles wide enough for customers' convenience.
- ☑ Group similar items together. Use corrugated cartons to hold small articles, compact discs, records and books. Stand compact discs, records and books on edge for easy flipping.
- ☑ If possible, provide a convenient electrical outlet or extension cord for testing appliances.
- ☑ Have a tape measure on hand so shoppers can measure furniture to see if it will fit in a particular spot in their home.
- ☑ Think about allowing your children a table on which to place their items for sale and letting them keep the proceeds.
- ☑ If you have a lot of clothes for sale, consider providing a mirror and a makeshift dressing room. Designate a family member or friend to be in charge of your dressing room to count the number of items and out, to prevent shoplifting.

### **Set up signs for each area of your sale:**

Books, Magazines and Music; Housewares and Kitchen; Odds and Ends; Everything on This Table 3 for \$1; Surprise Grab Bags \$.10 and \$.25

## **Sales Personnel: Make it a family affair.**

The more help you have on hand, the better. It's difficult for one person to manage a sale of any size alone. The majority of garage sales are family affairs but if needed, ask trustworthy close friends to assist.

### **Involve the whole family:**

- ☑ **Mom** – Manager and in charge of cash.
- ☑ **Kids** – Wrap merchandise; help tote purchases to cars; police sales area and keep displays straightened.
- ☑ **Dad** – General handyman.

### **If your sale is multi-family:**

- ☑ Choose a general manager to have final authority in settling disputes.
- ☑ Designate clearly each person's duties during the sale; consider rotating jobs so each has a turn at everything.
- ☑ Be sure all participants understand the record system.

## Security: BEWARE!

**There's always the possibility that your sale might be visited by people hoping to pick up something for literally nothing. To guard against this:**

- ☑ Try to always have at least two people present so the sales area is never left unattended.
- ☑ A person alone in the selling area might be subject to physical intimidation by the unscrupulous.
- ☑ Shoplifters often work in pairs, so one can distract the seller's attention while the other takes wanted items. **Be alert to these tactics.**
- ☑ Instead of keeping your cash in a small box, wear a money belt to make change, and keep large bills in your pocket.
- ☑ Allow customers in the sales area only. Strangers might visit your sale solely for the purpose of learning whether you have anything worth burglarizing later.
- ☑ Display small sale items near the register or you.
- ☑ Keep an eye on people who loiter or seem suspicious.
- ☑ Keep the doors of your residence locked while you are conducting the sale at your home. If you have a cordless telephone, take it with you, but keep it away from shoppers.
- ☑ The most effective way of frustrating suspected pilferers is to follow them around and ask what they are interested in and whether you can help. Such close supervision soon will cause them to leave.

## Ready, Set, Go! Be Prepared!

Have everything ready to go the day before the sale so you will be ready to go at your advertised starting time. You'll need:

- ☑ Plenty of change, including dollar bills. Pick up coin rolls at the bank before a sale. Be sure you know how much change you have on hand to start with.
- ☑ An old fishing tackle box or plastic container that has divided sections to use for change.
- ☑ Calculator for computing costs (especially if you have to charge sales tax)
- ☑ A record sheet. Mark off without delay items sold and final sell price.
- ☑ A trash container, which you should keep close by as items are sold so your sales area remains neat.
- ☑ Wrapping supplies – newspapers, shopping bags, cardboard cartons, twine, a stapler and scissors or a sharp knife.
- ☑ Keep all pets secured during garage sale to protect both your pets and the shoppers.
- ☑ Have a strict **CASH ONLY POLICY**. Only accept checks if you know the buyer well.
- ☑ Ask for a deposit if a customer wants an item “held”. Set a holding time limit.

## **Bargaining**

Bargaining is expected. On your record sheet, keep track of what the original price is and what price it sells.

- ☑ Discounts, especially on major items, often will close a sale. Ten percent is a good beginning discount offer.
- ☑ Some shoppers might want to bargain with you at the beginning of your sale. Tell them you'll discount everything after lunch if they come back then.
- ☑ Reduce prices near the end of the sale. A cash profit, however small, is better than winding up with many leftovers.

## **After the Sale....**

- ☑ Divide up the profits if the sale was a cooperative effort, remembering to deduct the amount with which you began.
- ☑ Keep the money in a safe place until it can be deposited in a bank.
- ☑ Remove all sale signs you put up.
- ☑ Consider donating any leftover items to charitable organizations such as Goodwill, the Salvation Army and children's homes.

## **Congratulations!**

You've made a profit by disposing of all those things you didn't want to take to your new home...and wasn't it fun, too?