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How To Sell The Gorilla & other techniques for fantastic garage sales

The country's most concise and authoritative
work ever published on garage sales





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Introduction

Are you looking for a great way to get rid of all your household clutter and make some extra cash at the same time?

A garage sale may be exactly what you need. Garage sales are easy to plan and manage, and they can turn large, unwieldy old lamps and dishes into smaller, more manageable piles of cash. Depending on how much you have to sell, you could realistically make \$300.00 per hour, if you follow my directions.

Congratulations, you've just been received of the most concise, authoritative books on how to hold a profitable garage sale. This book is for all types of homes, urban or rural. Depending on where you are living the common garage sale may called by many names and could locally be referred to as a "barn, backyard, white elephant, or treasures from the attic sale.



Regardless of what it's called using the right set of circumstances, and with a little help from this book, you can start earning some pretty substantial cash.

You can turn your discards into hard cash and at the same time free up some valuable living space in what is considered to be the most valuable investment of a

lifetime, your home.

Statistics show that every square foot of space recovered could be worth up to \$450.00. Isn't that the price a willing buyer would pay for your home per square foot? Why would you want to tie up valuable space for idle storage? Let's de-clutter and turn that junk into hard cash!

If you're a hobbyist you can display your work and turn that talent into cash, and if you hold these sales on an intermittent basis, the money earned is tax free.

First read the book from cover to cover and get the basics. Then read each section more thoroughly and makes notes in the margin. Use a highlighter throughout to make sure you use the ideas that appeal to you. Don't be afraid to modify or try your own approach, be creative - you might just end up writing your own book on how to hold an even more successful garage sale! The more prepared you are, the

more you follow the instructions, the more profitable you will be. The three key words to a successful garage sale are PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE!

When you've followed the directions and made that garage sale profitable, indulge yourself. Go on a spending spree or take a holiday! You might want to be more sedate in your spending and pay down your mortgage or buy mutual funds. Whatever you do, you can make your new-found wealth start working for you. And it's all from the simple, easy to follow steps to successful garage sales.



I know one family that made enough money to buy a new laptop - it was one they had been hoping to be able to afford, one day. Another couple held several successful garage sales and were able to book their Mediterranean dream cruise of a lifetime, all compliments of the money they made. A third family used their money to help pay the residence costs for their son at college.

Enjoy the book, use what you learn and send me a note on your success!

Want to know more about how "Selling the Gorilla" became the title of this book? I'll tell you all about it later.

If you have any comments, ideas or suggestions, drop me a line at

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2.0 Are you ready for a garage sale?

If your home is packed to the rafters; you hardly move without walking into something - then the time is right to consider a garage sale or perhaps you've just sold your house and decided that you don't want to pay the high cost of moving discarded, unused items to your new home. These are just two reasons to say "I'm ready to hold a garage sale."

You could move your stuff into a self-storage facility. But this option doesn't solve the problem. It only shifts it and there is an on-going cost to store as well. Many people who move goods to self-storage often pay more out in rent than what the items are worth. When they finally decide to do something about it, they dispose of their "junk" at any price, realizing nothing or even losing money, after having paid years in storage fees.

We are all going through different stages in our lives and as a result our needs are continually changing. The best solution to the storage problem is to sell what you haven't used for at least a year. Chances are, you will have no use for it in the immediate future either. It's time to think "garage sale!" This is your chance to clean out the basement, the attic, and closets and earn some cash. Don't think this is an easy project - it's a lot of hard work.

Most people don't know how to properly orchestrate a garage sale. Although it is possible for one person to organize the day, you will need additional help at the sale. I often refer to a garage sale as an "event." I use the word, not in a facetious way but in a way to describe what your sale will be like if you follow my easy steps to success. You will be surprised, perhaps even overwhelmed with the response you will achieve when you stage the event following my instructions.

Before you commit, you have to be ready to follow through to the end. You need to solicit the help of others, be ready for droves of people, some of whom will be rude and abusive. There will be times when you wish you'd never considered holding the event. But it is worth it, when you see your junk being turned into hard cash.

For a start, get everyone in your immediate family to share in the responsibilities of the sale. Plan it as a project so that some of the proceeds can benefit the entire family. Perhaps it's a day trip, a family holiday a brand new computer toy or an electronic gizmo.

3.0 Where do I start?

Gather items for sale.

If you haven't used an item in more than a year, it's a good sign that this item is a good candidate for a garage sale. Go through items in the basement, garage, attic, any place you have got in the habit of storing stuff. Then walk from room to room in your home, identifying things you no longer need. The fact is that most of us have trouble parting with things, even if we never use them.

Inventory each item on a sheet of paper as you identify it for sale.

A lot of people skip this step, but it can make your sale go a lot smoother. Price tags have a strange way of getting lost at garage sales, and it's hard to come up with a fair price on the spot, especially if you've got other people asking you questions or if you're working a multi-family sale. An inventory list solves this problem. Keep in mind; you don't need to inventory everything: if you've got a box of books that are all 25 cents each, inventorying each of them is a waste of time.

Review your completed inventory sheet and assign a reasonable price to each item.

If you really just want to get rid of an old knick-knack, price it accordingly. For items that are more valuable, a general rule is to price at 1/4 of what you paid or less. Obviously, you may want to make exceptions for some things, such as those that are nearly new or valuable antiques. Remember, though, garage sale shoppers are looking for bargains, and if you don't want to have to pack everything back in your house at the end of the day, you've got to give people the type of pricing they're looking for. Some people won't pay over 10% of the retail price when they go to a garage sale.

Attach a clearly written price label to each item.

Using brightly colored labels will make it easier for your customers to find the price and will save you time on the day of the sale. You can purchase adhesive labels, or you can use a "sticker gun." If you have a lot of similar items that are all the same price (e.g. books), don't bother pricing them individually. Put them all in one box and label the box. If you don't have sticker labels, you can also use small pieces of masking tape.

Obtain a permit if one is required.

Many cities place restrictions details such as placement of signage, hours of operation, frequency, etc. It's better to take the time to do your research and pay the \$5-\$20 for a permit than risk losing more money than you made in fines. Query your City, condominium corporation or homeowners association for restrictions if any on *Garage Sales*.

Finalize place and date for your sale.

A two-day garage sale maximizes returns, especially Saturdays and Sundays. A quick check of the long range weather forecast on the internet is advised for avoiding wet weather. Avoid holding a sale over holiday weekends. If you're just having a single-family sale, your location is pretty much set, but if you're having a multi-family or charity sale, be sure to pick a spot that's large enough for everybody's wares, and choose a location that is easy to find and get to, preferably close to, but not necessarily on a major thoroughfare. Also, avoid holding a sale when there is road construction occurring on the main route to your sale location.

Where to advertise your sale.

Today there are so many options for advertising so the more spots an ad appears, the greater chance of a better turnout. Start with your local paper. For a weekend sale, you should start advertising on the Thursday and Friday immediately before the sale and don't overlook Saturday as well. There are many persons that only get the weekend paper or will buy the paper on Saturday just for the purpose of spotting garage sales. It's very important when advertising in a newspaper to plan and place your ads prior to the paper's deadline. If you are advertising in a large daily paper, this deadline could be the day before your ad appears, but in smaller local papers it could be a week or 10 days before. So start checking advertising deadlines at least 2 weeks for various papers. You may be able advertise in free weekly community shopping papers, on community bulletin boards in grocery stores and laundromats. Internet is quickly taking over is the best source for advertising and in most cases, its free. If you're in a metropolitan area list it on Craigslist, www.craigslist.com and www.kijiji.com for free ads and specialty garage sale websites like www.garagesalegateway.com.

For excellent tips on writing great virtual online ads click <http://www.ezinearticles.com/?The-Dos-and-Donts-of-Advertising-Your-Yard-Sale-on-Craigslist&id=2746614> by Adanan Masood. Be sure to include the basics — days and times of the sale and the address (and directions or landmarks if it's hard to find) — and list specific items you have for sale, particularly big-ticket items or antiques. If you choose to advertise your sale, one possible drawback is that occasionally people will show up before the sale (sometimes in the wee hours) to try to get the pick of the best items.

Garage Sale Business Cards.

Ever thought about business cards? After all the success of your garage sale (the business) depends on how well you promote the event. You should print low cost business cards with bargain catching phrases like: Huge Moving Sale, items priced cheap to jump off shelves; or Getting Ready for New Baby, everything goes, no matter what! Don't forget to include the day, date and location.

You'll want to pass your cards to people you network with such as at your church, people at work, friends, neighbors, at the gym, health club. Leave cards on bulletin boards, on your desk at work, just about anywhere cards can be left for others to pickup.

Ask your kids to spread the printed word at school, sports venues, anywhere your kids meet with other kids, to teachers, coaches, parents of team members. And don't forget to ask your contacts in your various networks to distribute cards for you to their friends. Before you know it, you have moved 500 cards throughout the neighborhood. Cost of 500 one color business cards is about 20 bucks.

Purchase your garage sale cards online at <http://jiffy.ecardbuilder.com> and choose Fast One Color Business Cards .

Tidy up your yard and/or garage.

You'd clean up your house if you were trying to sell it, right? Garage sale customers are more likely to buy (and to buy at higher prices) if it looks like the merchandise came from a good home with owners that care for their things. They're also more likely to feel comfortable stopping and browsing if your sale space is attractive and clean.

Start making signs at least a week before the sale.

You may be able to get free signs from your newspaper as a promotion for your ad purchase. A local real estate broker may help out as well. You can also buy signs or you can make your own out of poster board or cardboard. Children need a lot of guidance if they will be making the signs. Plain, bold colors, simple lettering, and sturdy posting hardware are essential. Remember that the sign should be perfectly legible to people driving by, and may have to stand up to wind, rain, or heat if you post it a few days early. As a minimum a garage sale sign posted on a lamp post should be minimum 1 ft. high by 2 ft wide. As a start for you sign posting campaign, give the date and time of the sale, the location and--if you have room--list some items for sale.

Hang your signs a few days before the sale in places where they will be noticed by many a passersby.

Make all your signage distinctive in some way, and make them all the same. This will be especially important if there are a lot of other sales that particular weekend. Don't forget to put a sign at the entrance to your neighborhood, or in front of your house! If you live near a major road, hang the signs on telephone poles or street signs at an intersection on that road (intersections with stop signs or traffic signals are particularly good). Draw arrows on the signs pointing the way to your sale. It's a good idea to first check your municipality's or homeowners association's rules regarding signs so you don't run afoul of the local authorities. If you live in an out-of-the-way area, be sure to construct a "path" with your signs that is easy to follow. Post one sign at each corner where a shopper should turn. People might not be able to read your sign, so one missing sign could lose your customers.



Make sure you have enough table space.

While customers do see and buy items that are on the ground, it's important to have enough tables to display small items to protect them and to ensure that people can easily inspect them. You can use tables and bookshelves from your house or you can rent folding tables if you don't have enough.

Get plenty of change and petty cash.

Unless you've got a lot of change at home, chances are you'll need to visit the bank the day before the sale to get some rolls of quarters and plenty of dollar bills.

You're going to be making change for a lot of customers, so be sure to have a fanny pack to organize your money.

Set up early in the morning of the sale.

Get up early so you'll have plenty of time to arrange your vending area. Seasoned garage sale customers often arrive before the posted times to get a first crack at the premium merchandise, and these customers come ready to buy. Make sure you have everything ready an hour or two before your advertised start time.

Keep your display visually attractive.

Many potential customers will drive by first before stopping. You want to make your sale look interesting and well-organized because you want passersby to stop. Instead of folding clothes on tables, hang them from a clothesline strung from trees or from your garage ceiling near the door. Hanging clothes are easier to look through, and you won't have to worry about refolding them on the table. Take things out of the boxes you gathered them in, so that people driving by will see your goods instead of a bunch of cardboard boxes. Place premium items (nearly-new merchandise, antiques, large tools, etc.) close to the street. Arrange your tables so items are neatly displayed with enough room between items to allow people to comfortably inspect them.

Be an active seller.

Running a garage sale is a lot like working at a retail establishment, so bring out the salesman (or saleswoman) in you. Greet your customers with a friendly smile as they arrive. You want people to feel comfortable at your sale, so be a pro and greet them just like a professional Walmart greeter welcomes you. Offer package deals (if a person buys a blender, for example, why shouldn't they buy those margarita glasses as well?), and reward big buyers with bulk discounts. Be an active seller. Things just don't sell off the shelves themselves. Besides, it's fun and a great opportunity to meet your neighbors.

Have extra help on hand.

You'll need more than one person at the sale. In fact, plan on several persons if you will follow through with this guide. It's important for personal security and convenience. This way when nature calls, you can take a bathroom break, and as organizer of the sale, you'll have time to keep things in order. As your day progresses, things will unavoidably become untidy and unkempt (possibly even broken). If you want to sell as much as possible, keep things neat and tidy. Make

sure all books are displayed with spines showing. Keep all clothes on hangers. You might need to refold clothes or linens frequently. Keep all the brightly colored, best looking stuff in the front of your yard, and on the top of all the piles.

Negotiate with hagglers.

You cannot stop people from haggling. Even though your prices are clearly marked, some people will try to bargain. If you play the same game, you'll likely make a lot more sales if you're willing to reward these bargain hunters. Don't be afraid to decline an offer, but consider all offers. After all, you're trying to get rid of this stuff. Be sure not to drop your price early in the day. A successful rebuttal to a haggler would be "I can't drop the price before 10 am, we just got started". If you've done the previous steps, you should have plenty of traffic that will pay full price.

Offer last-minute deals.

If you've still got things left over during the final scheduled hours of your sale, go ahead and slash prices. Offer "*buy-one-get-one-free*" deals or bulk discounts. Say "*How about both of these items for the price of one?*" Do everything you can to make the sale, especially if you plan on throwing away or giving away the items anyway.

Catch those latecomers.

If you wait until after closing time before you start to pack up, you may find that some stragglers will come by. I have even seen people offer a set dollar amount for the entire load!

Wouldn't that be nice? No packing up - the buyer takes all or nothing!

Hold a free garage sale after the sale.

Once you're done selling, place an ad on www.craigslist.org or www.freecycle.org and advertise the remaining stuff for free. You can leave it right out in the yard and stay inside counting your money while scavenging people come pick stuff up. Don't throw potentially useful items away, and don't take unwanted clutter back into your house just because it didn't sell, unless of course, you think you will want to hold another sale in a few months.

In that case, pack your items up and put them somewhere dry and out of the way, where you will be able to get them out easily for your next yard/garage sale.

Take down your signs after the sale, right at closing time.

Be a good neighbor and community member! Arrange to have someone remove all signs immediately after closing time. Nobody likes to show up at a garage sale after it's already closed, and nobody likes to see old, faded, sagging signs taped to poles, either. If you do a good job on clean looking signs with left and right directional arrows, you could easily sell the group for \$10 or \$20 to a neighbor planning their own sale. Just have a map or plan of all the sign post locations and they will remove all your signs for free.

Secure the area. *Keep an eye on your customers.

No one invites shoplifters or thieves but there is a chance that such persons could invite themselves. As long as people know you're watching, you probably won't run into much trouble, but if somebody does steal a small item, it's probably not worth confronting them. If you suspect somebody has stolen something valuable, confront them tactfully and call police if necessary. Whatever you do, don't do not restrain them yourself.

4.0 Is my location suitable?

Some locations are better than others. If you follow the methods and steps I've outlined, your sale will be well worth your effort. If you live in the country, you can't expect the kind of turnout you would get in the city. Don't fret. With proper planning, you will also benefit from holding a successful garage sale.

Sometimes, due to the rules of a condominium association or apartment management it may be impossible to hold a sale at the location of your home. Don't fret. You may know a friend or relative with a better spot than yours for holding a high traffic garage sale. Ask them if you can borrow their front yard for holding your sale. You can offer to allow them to participate for free and pay them out of the proceeds from the sale of their stuff. Everyone has junk that they can easily turn into cash.

Check for special bylaws governing the operation of garage sales. Are you permitted to erect direction signs on the street? Do you need a special permit for a sale? Are there regulations about hours for the sale? In some jurisdictions the number of garage sales permitted in a given year is restricted. Check with the authorities in your area for their regulations if you plan to have more than one sale.

When you understand that some neighborhoods are zoned residential, it is the municipality's way of prohibiting people from operating regular businesses of every nature. After all, would you want your neighbor next door, holding weekly garage sales or flea markets with all the traffic and litter that comes with the commotion?

5.0 What items sell best?

Generally smaller household items, clothing, toys, games and used furniture sell best. If you are planning on selling big ticket items like a boat, car or trailer, in most cases people who come to garage sales aren't in the market for these types of goods. I recommend that all items not generally sold at garage sales, be saved for another day. For items that have greater intrinsic value like antiques and collectables - cards, stamps etc., it's best to have these items sold separately to collectors at conventions or stores that specialize in items like these. There are even stores that specialize in used sports equipment which may generate more money for you than what you would get at a garage sale. The downside of dealing with specialty stores and professional sellers is that you may have to expend an even greater effort to achieve the maximum dollar.

6.0 When is the best time for a sale?

Although generally anytime from early spring through late fall is a good time for holding your garage sale, if you tie your sale to the current season, you stand a better chance of maximizing your return. For example, early spring is a good time for holding almost any type of sale. People have been cooped up for the entire winter and can't wait to get out and enjoy a fresh spring day. At the spur of the moment, a garage sale is an easy activity where people can start to immediately enjoy the outdoors.

Another good time is late spring before families are planning their holidays and are looking forward to camping and cottages. There is always a need for used items that could be used at cottages or in RVs.

Back to school is a great time for used clothing, books and small sporting goods. There is even the college crowd looking for used furniture, beds, coffee and night tables, anything that could be used to furnish an apartment or dormitory room at a cheap price.

Timing is important to the success of your sale. It's obvious that certain items will catch higher prices during seasons when there is a high demand. If your goods are seasonal in nature, plan your sale to compliment the items. A good example of what not to do is trying to sell snow shoes and rubber galoshes in the summer and water ski's and canoe paddles in the fall. Avoid all holidays for your holding your sale - people are generally thinking spending money on things other than garage sale items during these breaks.

Try and tie a theme to your sale. If you are selling in the fall, an appropriate theme would be "Christmas is coming". People look for gifts and other items that could save them money.

Give yourself at least three weeks to prepare for the sale. Otherwise you'll find yourself working overtime before the event and you will not have the adequate time to follow through on all the steps that I'm outlining in this book.

Another point for consideration is when people are getting paid. If your sale draws people with empty pockets, you'll get plenty of tire kickers, but few sales. Try and time your sale when most people in your area get paid. Some towns and cities have backbone industries that are the main employers for the area. Check on their pay days and hold your event when the majority of them are getting paid and have money in their pockets!

In urban settings, a two-day weekend sales event is best. A one-day sale can be almost as lucrative. Keep in mind that about 40% of all cash is collected from merchandise sold in the first 3 to 4 hours of the sale. When the crowd thins out there will be a downward pressure on prices. Perhaps 30% of all cash will pass hands after afterwards up to the closing on the first day. 20% - 30% of the remaining merchandise will be sold the following day. If you are not able to devote an entire weekend to the sale, you can expect to collect cash in approximately these ratios.

As you can see, many goods will be sold early in the sale and the sale prices will be higher early in the sale rather than later. However, the point of the garage sale is to get rid of your goods in order to free up space and minimize extra work cleaning up after the sale. During the second day of the sale, your efforts should be

focused on selling off as much as possible, even at fire sale prices. You don't want to sit with that same junk for another year!

7.0 Who are the buyers?

Generally there are three categories of buyers.

- Professional Buyers
- Tire Kicker
- Genuine Buyers

Professional Buyers are also known as dealers and may come as early as 6:00 a.m. or even the night before. They won't tell you they're pros, but will probably tell you that they don't have time to come during the day. They are arrogant in their manner, predators out to get your stuff for half of market or less. They are in the business of buying cheap and selling for a profit. If you decide to let them preview, that's all right. No rules say that you can't sell to them. They will work you over and put down the quality of your treasures to nothing, hoping you are lacking in confidence about the outcome of the sale. Don't be afraid of failure; be prepared for success. They will group many items together and offer you ridiculously low prices. Don't fret, if you are not able to deal with them. What they have done is identify the items that are worthwhile for resale and undoubtedly you will get more than what they offered. If you have any doubts about their motives, ask them straight out whether or not they are dealers. If you decide you don't want to show them your items, they will put on a big act and tell you how inconsiderate you are. Don't be taken in by them. They don't have much time to waste at your sale; they have to see 10 other sales in the area before some other pro gets to them!

Tire Kickers are people who do just that - they don't want to buy anything. Some may even be your neighbors just checking what you have. Others are like the Professional Buyer and will put you and your items down to nothing. Don't take their criticisms seriously. If they can get an item cheap enough, they may even buy it, but don't count on it!

Genuine Buyers are people that have made the effort via your *marketing initiatives* to attend your sale. They intend to buy and have real money weighing down their pockets. These people will pay your price provided it is valued at market. They will try and bargain with you to get a better price. However, if you can convince them

that prices asked are valued at market, they will part with their money. Their purpose is to go to the sale and come away with something for their efforts.

Caution:

Always be on the lookout for people walking off with your stuff without paying. There are some dishonest people lurking out and under cover of other customers waiting for the moment when you are distracted - it's easy for them to steal because customers are encouraged to pick up and examine merchandise.

They'll operate anywhere your sale items are most vulnerable. Most sale items can be easily concealed under a sweater or overcoat. Protect yourself from shoplifters. Most people attending the sale are honest, hardworking individuals looking for bargains.

8.0 Timely Tips

Watch your cashbox. Anybody can come up to it and steal the money you made, so make sure someone is attending it at all times. Try not to keep more than \$20 or so in it at a time. That way, if somebody does steal it, they're not getting too much. Better yet, don't use a cash box. Someone could steal all of your money, or even try to buy your cashbox! Use a fanny pack instead, and keep large bills (50's and 100's) in your home if possible. A good fanny pack has two pockets, and you can keep the bills in the large compartment, and the coins in the smaller compartment.

If someone really needs to go to the bathroom, direct them to the nearest public building, or make sure someone in your family (or you) takes the person there and waits until they get out so that you don't end up with problems inside. You are under no obligation to let anyone into your house, even to use the restroom, but you might consider making exceptions for small children or the elderly.

To avoid people coming before you are ready to open, wait to put your signs up until you have everything out and you are ready to sell. Put the signs closest to your sale venue first and work out from there. Make sure that your unpaid help is manning their posts. Early birds (usually resellers) can be distracting, if not pushy while you are busy setting up.

Add more interest to your sale by offering craft items, home baked goods, or beverages. These will attract lookers, but don't expect to sell much. Most people that attend garage sales are very serious about getting only bargains. Having

coffee or donuts available encourages some to stick around and buy more. People tend to attract people. People will often pass up a garage sale if no one is there.

Have an electrical outlet or extension cord available so that people can test electric products. You'll get a better price if people can verify that something actually works, and if something doesn't work, you shouldn't try to sell it as if it did. Sell it on an "as is whereas" basis.

Have empty boxes and cardboard trays available for shoppers to use as a "shopping basket" if their hands are full.

People will buy just about anything. While there are certain hot sellers (children's toys, old tools, books, antiques, and simple kitchen items, for example) don't be afraid to try to sell things you can't imagine anyone buying. Remember the quote: "One person's trash is another person's treasure."

Ask your neighbors to contribute their items or have a multi-family sale. Customers are more likely to stop at a bigger sale. If you mix items in a multi-family sale, color code your price tags or otherwise clearly mark the items so that your cashier will know who should get the money for each item.

Make sure merchandise is fairly clean and not broken so that it could injure someone. As mentioned, however, you might be surprised how many people will buy broken hardware items, old, kinked hoses, old doors, and other seemingly undesirable items. You can always leave this stuff out at the curb after the sale for next garbage day or just for the free taking.

Spread the word through your local neighborhood grapevine.

Use a sturdy material for your garage sale signs, like a couple of layers of poster board or corrugated cardboard, so that wind won't bend them. Use a light-colored background and large dark letters at least a few inches high, so that people casually driving by the sign can read it at a glance. Do not put writing smaller than about 2" high on a sign. If you are staking them into the ground, make sure they are placed firmly enough that a little wind won't knock them over. A fallen sign prevents buyers from finding your house and sale.

Helium balloons are an inexpensive way to draw attention to your sale. Hang them on your tables or at the end of your street.

Remember, you're out to get rid of your stuff, not make a huge profit. No one is going to buy an overpriced item—they don't care what you paid for it! Price your merchandise to sell and you'll make money.

When you are pricing, look at each item with critical eyes, and ask yourself what you would want to pay for it, if you wanted to buy it. Coming up with an amount you would like to get for each item isn't realistic. The item is only worth what someone would really pay for it. That is what the word "worth" means. If you want to sell it on eBay, then sell it on eBay, but don't expect to get eBay (or Craigslist) prices at a garage sale. It's not going to happen, unless the purchaser happens to be a close friend.

Consider a "back-yard" sale. Since folks can't see all your stuff, it will pull in a lot of the 'drive-buyers' who will only take a few moments to examine your wares from the street. It also prevents having to haul everything in and out when you are having a two-day sale.

Check with local charities and missions. Some will pick up items that you don't sell and put them (or proceeds from their sale) to good use. This is even easier than a post-sale "free sale." Get a receipt for what they picked up. You can claim these items as tax-deductible donations.

Some streets and vicinities will have "Annual Garage/Yard Sale" days. These are your opportune moments. On these days, everyone is out looking for yard sales in your area, so it makes advertising virtually obsolete. Often times, notices about these days will come in the mail. Look out for them!

During your sale lock all doors into the house that you can't see — it's best to lock all interior access doors including the garage. There may be a thief, or thieves working together, looking for your valuables indoors.

Since hagglers are common at garage sales, price everything a little higher than the lowest price you are willing to accept. For example, you could sell a toy you're willing to take \$.25 for at a price of \$.30 or \$.35. This works on higher priced items too, like a \$20 item for \$25. A good rule of thumb is an asking price 20% higher than your rock bottom price. As a bonus, you may earn a little bit more money!

Warning!

If your sale is out in the yard, be prepared to move your merchandise into a garage or sheltered area in case of rain. Items on tables may be covered with tarps if you don't want to cart them all in.

Remember that each customer that visits your sale is your guest, and you have certain legal and financial obligations to your guests if they get hurt on your property. Reduce your liability exposure by tidying up your yard and garage and taking precautions to prevent injuries, especially to children. Place sharp or potentially dangerous objects out of kids' reach.

Telephone poles and street signs are usually "no bills" zoned and you can get into trouble by posting signs on them. In general, posting signs on someone else's property without their permission is illegal and if discovered, will not be kindly viewed. Plus, they know where you live now.

Sometimes, shoppers try to get items for free with the following ploy: They bring you a small, one-dollar item, and hand you a \$100 bill to pay for it. What they expect is that this instant drain of all your change will make you throw up your hands in frustration, and exclaim, "Oh, just take it!" You can make the choice to give them the item, ask them to go get change, or have extra change ready for this possibility. Or, the \$100 bill could be counterfeit, unlike the \$99 in change you just handed to them. Gone could be some of the profit you worked so hard to make!

9.0 How do I prepare for selling?

Try and simplify the pricing of your goods. Have a pricing plan and stick to it. Categorize your goods into groups.

- i.e. clothing
- Price all pants at one price
- Skirts at another price

It's a simple and easy solution.

Attend other sales in the area to get an idea of what people are selling and how they are pricing. Many buyers tend to work entire neighborhoods and quickly develop a sense for value. If you want to turn people off right away, pricing above what others are selling will send your customers fleeing. What's the rule of thumb?

Used items are worth about 10% - 20% of new. Some items could be worth 30%-40% if they are exceptionally clean and in original packaging.

Besides checking for pricing, listen to how others deal with customers and their needs. How do they handle objections and how do they respond to bargaining? When you spot the methods of a good seller/operator try and follow in their footsteps.

Don't think because you just recently bought something retail that someone else will also be willing to pay a high price. For example, if you are ready to sell computer software, by this time the software is probably an older version and really not worth much. Most people want the latest version. Garage sales are to get rid of what you don't want or use! Sell it for whatever you can get. Same goes for CDs and DVDs.

The trick to your success is volume selling. Price your stuff to sell fast so that you don't have to handle it again. Don't let emotion dictate the sticker price. People going to these sales aren't looking to pay retail or sale prices for used items. If you have something with a high resale value - don't sell it at a garage sale - use eBay or other online lists. You don't want to waste your valuable time trying to sell unsalable items.

Start saving plastic grocery bags and boxes; although in today's world many people are traveling with recycle bags. The worst thing that can happen is for someone to buy a number of items and have no bags or boxes to carry their items.

Always volunteer to demonstrate items that are in good working order prior to a customer taking possession. This will eliminate any misunderstanding about the condition once the sale is completed.

Make sure that every item is clean and sparkling bright. Washed and neatly placed items always bring top dollar. A few old rags, all purpose detergent and some elbow grease will do wonders for shop tools, garden equipment and bicycles. After they're dry, wipe down with rags sprayed with light oil. Old shovels and other used steel items will almost look like new and rust will virtually disappear! (To protect the environment, don't use commercial oil products - use cooking oil instead). Polish old furniture with liquid furniture polish or lemon oil.

Don't scatter items on a table, try and arrange them so that they can easily be seen without having to search through the entire display. Group items by size - this eliminates excess rummaging and wasted questions.

Have a tape measure available in case someone asks. If a prospective purchaser is admiring a piece of furniture, offer them the use of the measure for whatever piece they are looking at. If they will say yes, you know that you have someone that is genuinely interested in the piece.

Be candid about the operating condition of appliances and other electrical items. Note on the price tag, whether the item is in working condition and price the item to reflect the defect. Many handy people are looking for these types of items and will gladly purchase these distressed goods just for the chance to tinker with them. Get rid of these items. In your case, they are just taking up space!

Again, a long extension cord and an electrical outlet should be handy, accessible to test tools and other electrical appliances.

You can't be too careful. Check to see that your home insurance policy covers you for liability resulting from accidents of personal injury by people attending the sale.

10.0 Can more than one family participate?

The more families participating, the greater the variety of goods and the better chance your sale will be an even better success. Have discussions before hand and set out conditions of the sale and the responsibilities and duties of each participant. A thorough understanding of each person's duties is key to a successful and smooth running event.

Larger color stickers are useful when multiple groups are participating in a sale. Have a notebook handy and peel off the colored sticker which denotes ownership when the goods are sold. Stick them on the notebook under the participating family name. If the selling price was less than the labeled price, indicate this along with the actual selling price (This is a must!). If entries are generally accurate, then each family should get their fair share of the money they earned from the sale. This is not an accounting statement and should not be relied on as such. People should be apprised in advance of the system that will be used and that they should

expect some inaccuracies, but in the end everyone will receive their approximate share of what was sold.

11.0 What are the best ways to display?

Since sale items won't organize themselves, you can expect to spend several days preparing for the sale. Enlist the help of your family. It's not necessary to have a designer's degree to set up displays. Everything movable is a candidate for display. The key word is INNOVATE. Use wood board on cinder blocks, wheel barrows, wooden barrels (put signs on anything that is not for sale) Set up items on cans, pails, card tables, kitchen tables, along fences. Cover raw, rough surfaces with tablecloths, old sheets or light-weight bedspreads. Spread jewelry displays on remnants of black velvet cloth. Small items can go in barrels or boxes with a sign that says bargain - "no item more than \$1.00" or "any item in this box is 50 cents." If you have a lot of clothes, rent clothing racks and party tables for the day. Some rental companies may deliver and pick up for a nominal fee. Hanging clothes keeps them neat and from being thrown in a pile. Provide a mirror for people trying on clothes. Do not allow customers into your home.

It's useful for shoppers if items are grouped. Place children's clothes and toys together. Kitchenware should be in another area. Boxes keep small items from getting lost among other things.

Be certain that your jewelry items shine and sparkle. Display them in and on jewelry boxes, jewelry displays and other holders. Try wrapping a box in black velvet to display jewelry pieces. Wrap a pillow in black velvet and pin pieces of jewelry to the cloth. Velvet can be purchased at any fabric shop by the yard and it is relatively inexpensive. While buyers are browsing pick up a piece of jewelry from the display and put it down in a different spot. This action often attracts lookers - many will focus in on the piece that was just put down.

If you have toys for sale, put the least expensive and durable items in a box on the ground for children to play with. This keeps them busy and also helps sell the toys. Some people pick up cheap toys at other sales just to have on hand to keep children occupied while visiting their sale. They're cheap to buy - be sure you price these toys well.

Mark items in your garage or yard that are not for sale. If necessary, cover these items with sheets or drop cloths. Move items that you are planning on keeping to the back of the garage, in the house or the backyard. Expect big crowds and allow for plenty of space for people to move around and browse.

12.0 How do I set the pricing?

There are two schools of thought for pricing. If you think a certain item is worth \$3.00 price the item at \$2.95. The theory behind this pricing is that the lower price sounds consistently cheaper than the rounded number. Unfortunately that means you'll have to deal with lots of change.

The other way to price is to make it easy for people to part with their money. Always round up or round down to the nearest whole or part number. An item that is priced at \$2.50 or \$3.00 it's easy and convenient to sell and buy because it's not necessary to make a lot of change. The method you choose is up to you.

Price goods with stickers and peel off labels. These items are available at office supply and dollar stores. They are excellent tools for pricing. Another inexpensive way to price goods is with masking tape, but this does not look as neat as labels.

13.0 What is value pricing?

Selling groups of items rather than selling each item individually is known as value pricing. Groups appear to be better values when compared to single items. This concept works for both similar and different items as well.

Variations of this theme are numerous. Items may be small in size and may be worth 25 cents each but can only be bought in a group for \$1.00. Try selling books where each is priced at .50 cents. In order to encourage quick turn over and increase consumer value, price the same books at "3 for a \$1.00" or "6 for \$1.75". You can even try, "buy one, get one of equal value free." "Buy 2 books and get the third one of equal value free."

Offer 10% - 15% discounts to seniors and students. Seniors and students are less likely to bargain with their discount. However don't insult people by asking for

identification to verify their ages. Always take people at the word. Don't get hung up on details. The purpose of the exercise is to move more stuff out and not to be policing the sale. Besides 15% off asking is reasonable.

A large half price or 40% off sign can be put up when sales start to lag or when you are ready to clear out the last items. Have signs of different discounts prepared in advance.

14.0 Are there different selling techniques?

An effective way to price (and a real time saver) is to use color coded dots. These dots come in a variety of sizes and colors and are available at office supply stores. For example, red dots may denote items that sell between \$2.00 and \$2.99. Green dots will be priced between \$3.00 and \$3.99 and so on. Set up a schedule on your pricing on a card board using the color sample dots in the legend and next to each dot print the dollar value range. This simplifies pricing for both the purchaser and the seller. If you want to make quick changes, simply cover the dot on the item for sale with a different colored dot value and voila, you've change the price!

If you follow through with the scenario outlined below, you will see how this will work in your favor. When someone asks you the price of a green dot item, you may verbally price it at \$3.75. The person may haggle with you on this price and may offer \$3.25 which you may or may not accept. However, since you set the floor at \$3.00 for green dot items, people will often accept this price as the final price and usually the bargaining stops there. This is an effective way to sell and keep the price levels artificially higher. Buyers will often pick up items of different color dots add all items at the low end of the range thinking that if you accept their offer they will have put one over on you. But really, who is really putting one over whom?

Whichever method of selling you decide, tagging is important. Some people are impatient and won't wait for an answer if you are preoccupied with someone else. Others may be shy, and would rather put the item down than ask what the price is. Shy people typically pay the asking price just to save them from getting into a dialogue with the owner.

15.0 How can I market my sale?

Naturally your sale will be the world's best! But what good is a sale that is perfect in every sense, and not even a single person shows up. Don't worry, this won't happen to you. However, the difference between a mediocre and great sale is the number of people that attend. The more people you attract, the greater the success of your sale.

Have you ever gone to a fair and at a booth you saw people lined up 10 deep? You probably wondered what the big deal was and why there were so many people standing there. The barker was selling knives. Everyone owns kitchen knives. Yet all were intrigued with his pitch and for a limited time only, each purchaser of knives got this indispensable kitchen widget for free. But they had to act immediately. At the end of his pitch, he could hardly take in the money fast enough. There were only a few sets of knives in view, yet everyone was waving their money hoping that by the time the vendor got around to them, there would be enough knives to go around

If you would do an analogy of this vendor and your sale, you will see that his goals and the means to his goals are very similar to your goals and the means to your end. He attracts a crowd and sells them on the convenience and value of the knife promotion. With the electricity of the demonstration, he sets in motion the desire to own one of these fabulous knife sets and valuable gadgets. Each onlooker is caught up in the excitement, and the larger the crowd, the more each desires to own a knife. Once the first person buys (probably his girlfriend), many others follow suit.

It is this excitement and the crowds that you are striving for at your sale. The more people out in front, the more you will sell. The more you will sell, the higher the prices that you will attain. That is why you have to be 100% ready for the first person, because after the first comes by, there will be a second person and a third one and so on.

How you are going to attract this crowd is not difficult, but I would say that this aspect of the sale is more important than the actual items for sale. Remember, everything sells at the right price. You just have to find a willing buyer and the

more buyers out there, the more chances you have of selling. Don't lose sight of this aspect of the sale and concentrate equally hard here as you would preparing the merchandise for the sale. Now you need to market your sale.

Advertising in local newspaper classified ads are excellent advertising values and sources of locations for garage sales. Local neighborhood and ethnic newspapers are also good venues, cheaper, but don't have the huge circulations of the dailies. They are usually read from cover to cover and also have a longer home life than the daily paper. Make sure to check the closing dates and times for placing ads in all these publications. Daily newspapers are usually around 3:00 p.m. the day before publication and ethnic and neighborhood papers may be a week, 10 days or more, before the publication date.

For style of ad, compare ads in the daily paper under the *Garage Sale* classification. See which ads have more appeal to you than others. Use this as a guide for preparing your ad. Make sure that you mention the days and times of the sale plus directions. If you follow recommendations for placing of signs below, you will not have to be specific with your directions. Just tell readers to follow signs to your specific address.

Things like power tools, computers and accessories, complete servings of dishes and cutlery have broad appeal. Old records and tapes appeal to collectors and vintage clothing appeals to teenagers (believe me, you would be surprised how much money teenagers seem to have and how easy they will part with it for something that they like). In your ad, don't use the word "annual." This implies that there is only one year's worth of items for sale. Be vague about descriptions to attract all people interested in a specific item, and not just people interested in only "purple" of this specific item.

Words like "moving" and "estate" sales imply that there is a lot to buy. If your house is hard to find, include directions in the ad but don't include your phone number because you will be swamped with questions from callers. Besides, if you tell callers what they need to know, they may not come out to your sale at all. Remember, curiosity is what killed the cat.

If you live in a community which has no local papers, you will need to post flyers in supermarkets, coffee shops, churches, commercial and apartment complex Laundromats. Most of these locales provide bulletin boards for public

announcements and the like. Other good locations for posting are busy medical clinics, sports arenas, bowling allies, any place that many people frequent on a regular basis.

If it rains, list an alternate date on flyers. Some dailies offer rain guarantees as well and will rerun the sale ad for nothing. Even on a rainy days there will still be a certain element out there looking for adventure. Keep in mind that these troopers are the real shoppers. Although you probably won't be operating a fully fledged sale, consider keeping some items under cover for these brave souls.

Radio stations in smaller communities will sometimes run a public service announcement the day of your sale. Word of mouth helps, too. Announce your sale to friends and at meetings of organizations to which you belong.

For budgeting purposes, your principal expenses will be newspaper advertising, flyer duplication, tags, stickers, fabric and signs.

16.0 How do I advertise online?

Place your ads on the internet. Advertising on the Internet likely will give you more exposure to your sale than traditional media sources, such as the penny saver and the local newspaper. It is easier for buyers to find what they are looking for allowing them to filter sales with items that they are trying to find. By using the Internet you are allowing millions of users to access information and find that hidden gem.

Provide a link to maps for your sale. It is easier to receive driving directions and potential customers will no longer need to spend valuable time calling for directions. Using links to maps means that the Internet takes care of these details for you.

Display pictures and descriptions of your items. Unlike newspapers, you're not limited to three to five lines and the pictures can be in color with virtually no limit to the number of images that can be uploaded for free.

Find a website that is user friendly for both buyers and sellers. The website must have all of the aforementioned features.

Don't neglect other means for advertising. Internet should only be one prong to your promotional activities; still use the paper and local advertising methods as not everyone uses the Internet on a regular basis and some people don't use the Internet at all!

Things you'll need

- Internet access
- Relevant websites
- Camera for photos to upload

17.0 Why do I need directional signs?

So you think you are ready for the crowds now that you have announced your sale to the entire world? Wrong! If the crowds are drawn to the area but are not familiar with the neighborhood, there is a good chance that they may end up spending their money elsewhere. The following aspect of preparing for the sale is *extremely* critical in order that everyone wanting to attend will find their way there, namely the posting of signs to your residence.



First, take a piece of paper and draw a map with the location of your house at the centre and all streets leading to your home. Note the main arterial roads, as well each secondary street on the plan. On each corner of each street, mark directional arrows facing both directions of traffic, leading all area traffic to your home. On main arterial roads, for each left or right turn, two signs are needed, one on the closest pole to the corner and the other on the pole immediately preceding the sign closest to the corner. This is to give adequate advance warning of impending left or right turns. From this plan, you will determine how many left and right hand signs that you will need. If you will place signs in all the locations that you have predetermined on your plan, it will create urgency and impact for your sale. This is the mood that you are trying to create. The result of your efforts will be that people driving through your neighborhood will be intrigued by the critical mass of directional signs. If your signage is done correctly, not only will you bring in buyers from your advertising, but you will catch crowds from other sellers' advertising, as well as drive-by traffic and just plain curiosity seekers. The larger the crowds, the more people will stop, the more you will sell.

The cheapest way to make signs is by flattening cardboard boxes and making signs of one size. You'll find boxes of every nature at drug, food and liqueur stores, just to name a few. For example, an adequate sized sign for a 30 MPH - 50 KPH zone is 1 foot high by 2 feet wide. Use a wide tipped jumbo felt marker and make each sign a left or right hand directional sign.

If it is a left sign, the large arrow should be on the left side pointing left and the words *GARAGE SALE* should be on the right side with *GARAGE* on top of *SALE*. Conversely, use the same technique for right arrows, except the big arrow appears on the right side with the words *GARAGE* on top of *SALE*, appearing on the left side of the sign. You don't have to be an artist, but your signs should be clear, concise and all should all have a similar look for maintaining the critical mass as referred to above.



My preference for sign stock is a light plastic material that looks like corrugated cardboard called Coroplast™ (short for corrugated plastic board). The reason that I like this weatherproof material is that it is reusable, rigid and comes in a variety of colors. Choose white or a light color that will contrast with your felt marker color. You can reuse these signs for years and they will look virtually new. This material is available at hobby stores. Try to buy a 4 foot by 8 foot sheet. It is cheaper to purchase this way. You are likely to find this large size at a local sign shop or screening shop. A single full sheet is enough stock to produce 16 signs of 1 foot by 2 feet each. It is well worth the money and very professional looking. An A-frame sign with the words *GARAGE SALE* at the foot of your property at the street should announce the location of your sale as the destination. You could also mount these signs on stakes which are first banged into the ground. Then the *GARAGE SALE* signs can be mounted on the same stakes. Use the same materials and colors as your directional signs.

A good way to mount the directional signs on utility poles without damaging the signs or poles is by utilizing the following technique: Obtain clear packaging tape and run tape twice over the centre of the sign in an up/down direction creating two "tails" of about six inches above and below the sign. Position the sign on the pole and wind tape around the pole as well as over both the top and bottom "tails." This wrapping of the "tails" should be tight and close to the top and bottom edge of the sign. Do this wrapping around the pole about 3 times and you will have a posted sign

that will be generally weatherproof and easy to remove after the event without damaging the pole. Never attempt to block, cover or remove competing garage sale signs. Firstly, it is not ethical or neighborly. Secondly, no matter what signs your neighbors have, unless they, too, read my book, your signs throughout the vicinity of the sale will have the greatest impact. Additional neighbor's signs will add excitement to the entire area of your sale.

Also consider that someone may vandalize or remove your signs. Give one of your helpers the map you prepared earlier, and have several sign checks of your posted signs over the course of the sale. Have on hand extra signs for replacement.

18.0 What will I do on the day of the sale?

Make sure that you will be ready yourself at the start of the sale. I do not consider 5:00 a.m., the morning of the sale, too early to start preparing for the extravaganza. Even though you advertised a start time of 9:00 a.m., people will start showing up on your door step at 7:30 a.m. or earlier.

Therefore, it will be necessary for you to complete everything by the night before to have it ready for taking outside the morning of the sale. If you aren't ready, you stand the chance of not completing many sales because you are not able to give the buyer your full attention, since you will still be preparing for the sale.

Compare your sale to a retail store. You know that the shelves are cleaned and stocked when the store is closed. When the store opens and the first customer enters the store, all items are on display, ready for sale. The salesperson is there, ready to take care of clients and accommodate them in their every need.

This is exactly how you should be prepared at the beginning of the sale. Don't lose even a single sale due to tardiness. Don't try to handle a garage sale alone. You will be overwhelmed by the crowds, very busy answering questions and taking other people's money, especially if you follow through with my tips. During the early hours of the sale, there should be at least 3 people or more ready to serve and take cash. If you are not sure whether or not you will need that many people, have a contingency plan whereby you can call on help in case of an emergency. As the day wears on, your helpers can take time off and work in shifts. Be sure each of your helpers knows their role.

Have food and drinks available for yourself and the helpers as well. It should be accessible within a short distance from the sale. If you find that things have cooled down to the point that there is nothing to do, start sprucing up the merchandise and straightening the shelves and tables. There is nothing worse than merchandise strewn all over the place that looks more like rubbish. Neatly displayed merchandise always will turn more cash than messy displays. Nobody wants to take home another person's slop.

Under no circumstance should sellers consume alcohol during the sale. It is very unprofessional and secondly, alcohol will impair yours and their judgments. It's better to be sober - absolutely no liquor, beer or wine.

If you have small children arrange for babysitting of your kids by a friend or a neighbor. I have seen sales where half the time was spent looking after whiny, little kids and the other half was ruined because people left on account that they were not being attended to. A babysitting fee is a small price to pay if you are taking this sale seriously.

Hardly any one expects garage sale items to be wrapped, but if a person buys glasses or other fragile items, set aside a wrapping table with newspapers, paper, poly bags and cardboard cartons, string, elastics, tape and other packing supplies handy for wrapping and packaging of fragile items. A good strategy is to hand wrap each item yourself, then hand each wrapped item to the purchaser, letting them insert the items into a box or bag. This will remove from anyone's mind who is responsible for breakage if an item is broken once the purchaser gets home. Better yet, let the purchaser do their own wrapping. The downside is that you lose sight of what is going into the bag.

Consider giving things away for nothing when time is about to run out. You can arrange to carry out this plan by telling some of the neighborhood kids, that if by such and such a time, something has not been sold, that they can have it for free.

If it will ever become necessary to hold an item for someone, do so for major items, not small items. Only accept from the purchaser payment in full. Provide duplicate receipts indicating full names, addresses, phone numbers of both buyer and seller, terms of purchase as well as a disclaimer that under no circumstance will there be refunds or exchanges. As well, a termination date and time at some

future date should be agreed upon whereby ownership of the subject item(s) automatically reverts back to the vendor, unless other arrangements are agreed upon prior to the termination date. The effect is that the onus for picking up the held item(s) lies entirely with the purchaser, and the seller is not at any risk, except the vendor may have to find another buyer for the merchandise.

If you own a portable phone or cell phone, bring it outside for the sale. It could come in handy if one of your customers needs to call to verify certain measurement, or requires other information before finalizing their purchase. If you do not have one, do not permit anyone to enter your house to make calls.

Never leave your home or garage unlocked. When you are busy, you may not be aware of all that is taking place. Wouldn't it be a shame that after working hard the whole day, that items that had a value more than the entire day's receipts went missing inside? Always be on guard. Leave a radio or TV operating on high volume to give the appearance that someone is home. Unless it is an emergency, don't let anyone use your facilities and then only if they are accompanied by an adult person you know and trust.

19.0 How do I deal with cash?

The day of the sale can be a very hectic time, especially in the morning. If you have never dealt with cash before, you have to be prepared. Don't be one of those people that are not prepared for the first person that gives you a \$20 bill for a single \$1.00 item. If you make change for that person, but in the course of doing business with them, your change reserve is wiped out, you will lose much more in sales than the \$1.00 sale. Make sure that you have a float of \$75 or \$100 in coin and small bills and ensure that when you calculate your earnings for the day, that you deduct the day's change float from the day's earnings.

If you are familiar with a carpenter's apron or a wallet or pouch that ties up behind your back, then already know about the types of money holders that will work well for the sale. Do not use cardboard boxes with lids or a fishing tackle boxes. If you become distracted, an unscrupulous customer may be tempted to scoop your sale proceeds. Never count money or flash wads of bills in view of customers. Do not permit children to carry or collect cash. They may be unfamiliar with making change and could be swindled by dishonest customers. Keep all cash

hidden from view. Don't carry more than \$25 or \$30 on your person and never leave cash holders unattended. Always store the majority of cash receipts inside, out of sight from anyone entering your home.

If possible, locate yourself and the carpenter "cash" apron at the front of the property close to the street so that people will have to walk past you when they leave. Place small, valuable items such as jewelry, coins and Barbie dolls near the cashier or on the cashier's table. Indicate boundaries that are off limits to your customers. Use ropes or signs indicating the boundaries of your sale to prevent people from accessing areas that are off limits. This will also help in preventing thefts. When receiving cash for a purchase, affirm out loud the amount of money for the purchase and the size of the denomination tendered, so that when you give change, there will be no dispute over the size of bill tendered. Practice saying over and over again something like, "That's \$2.00 out of \$10.00," or "\$6.50 from \$20."

Pencils, calculators and writing materials are also valuable items to have on hand for working out quick calculations. All people who are helping with sales should wear similar stickers to identify themselves as sellers. For example, stickers could say "Ask me," or "Make us an offer," or "Seller." Place stickers on fronts of uniform baseball caps, all of the same color. Use plenty of sun screen for sunny days.

In a prominent position place an easy to read sign outlining conditions of the purchase and sale: "Cash only - no refunds or exchanges, no lay-a-ways. All goods sold on an "as is whereas" basis only. Absolutely no warranties or guarantees." You may modify or add other terms if you like, but the purpose of this public statement is to prevent misunderstandings from the onset of the sale.

20.0 What do I do after the sale?

Hopefully, relax after a hard day's work, but not just yet! You are sure to have some left-over items. Do not expect to sell everything. You can give them to a charity or to friends, keep them, or throw them away. Some charitable organizations may pick up your leftover items and even give you a charitable receipt.

You will also have to clean up the area of the sale. This is not as easy as it sounds because the day will have been extremely hectic and you will be literally drained of all your strength. Try and arrange to have help for this aspect of the sale. Also be sure to remove all signs on public property. Some municipalities fine their citizens for failing to remove signs.

If you decide to donate some of the leftovers, the plan should be to box or bag these items immediately and plan to dispose of them on the first business day. Otherwise, you will find yourself storing them again - not a good idea.

If you are planning to have another garage sale, neatly fold and bag leftover items with the pricing labels intact. Then, store them away, ready for your next garage sale. Some items may not be worth storing and should be tossed. Just put them out at the curb and overnight most will disappear like magic.

When you are finally done and are at peace with yourself, count the new found money that you earned. I am sure then that you will agree that all your efforts for this day will have been well worth your while.

By the way, remember I promised to tell you about the huge hairy 6 foot gorilla? I had kept it in my basement for many years gathering dust for allergies. Finally, it was decided that it was time to part from this memento that was won at a huge fair more than 20 years ago. Its final place of resting with me was at a garage sale, standing at the foot of the drive, amicably welcoming buyers and attracting passersby.

The Gorilla fetched many offers, but the highest bidder bought it for \$150. Terms of the sale, at my insistence, were cash in advance and it was to be picked up after closing. Gorilla's new home? It was purchased to be used as a prop for a major film shoot. Hopefully, the Gorilla's image will live on into perpetuity.

21.0 A quick overview -

Things You Will Need:

Ledger Books, Calculators, Boxes, Tables, Newspapers, Classified Ads, Pencils Cash Boxes, Price Tags, Flyers Newspapers, Volunteers, Bags, Signs, Clothing racks

- ✓ Schedule your garage sale far enough in advance so that you can place a classified ad. Hold your sale on a non holiday weekend unless you live in a resort town with lots of vacationers. Check the long-range forecast for good weather.
- ✓ Dig through your garage, attic, basement and house for stuff to sell. Include everything you want to get rid of- one person's junk is another's treasure.
- ✓ Spread the word among friends and family. The more you have to sell, the larger the crowd you can draw. Offer to sell their stuff for a 20 percent commission.
- ✓ Scrub, wash, polish, dust and launder anything you plan to sell. If an item needs a simple repair that could greatly improve the price, fix it.
- ✓ Round up volunteers if you expect large crowds. Friends and family may be willing to help for a free meal, the chance to sell their own junk, or just the fun of it.
- ✓ Print up one-page fliers advertising your sale and put them up at local coffee shops, laundries, grocery stores or community centers.
- ✓ Place large, neatly printed signs in your neighborhood the night before or the morning of the sale. Put signs in front of your house as well.
- ✓ Use masking tape and a permanent marker to mark everything with a price. "\$1 or less" tables or boxes save time and attract shoppers. Leave room to bargain down when pricing items. Remember that you're trying to get rid of your stuff when you price it. You may have spent a fortune on that Betamax VTR, but you'll be lucky to get a quarter for it now.
- ✓ Hang clothes on makeshift racks. Borrow portable tables to display items. Put crowd-pleasers (furniture, tools) up front to entice people. Have a "10 cents" box to encourage further browsing.
- ✓ Set up your cash table near the entrance. Have plenty of small change, a cash box, a calculator, pencil and pen, a ledger book (to inventory commissions), bags and boxes, newspaper to wrap valuables, and a tape measure.
- ✓ Make sure there's plenty of parking; relocate your car if necessary.
- ✓ Be cheerful, get people talking and encourage haggling. Many people are reluctant to haggle but find its fun once they start.

22.0 Videos that might be helpful

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280016_display-items-garage-sale.html

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280017_organize-money-garage-sales.html

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWoSyl5j5f0>

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280019_tips-scheduling-garage-sale.html

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GTsl4mXH8g

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280020_negotiate-prices-garage-sale.html

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGJEH1IXnQI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHhLkqCmlcU>

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280015_price-items-garage-sale.html

http://www.ehow.com/video_2280018_garage-sale-tips.html

Remember if you have any comments, ideas or suggestions, drop me a line at

Allan Barkin

Garage Sale Guru

Jiffy Self Storage

Neighborhood Self Storage

www.JiffyStorage.com



Or send me an email at TheManager@JiffyStorage.com

Notes:

