

Tips to Make Your Garage Sale a Success

You are getting ready to go someplace new. Did you know a moving sale can help you save money and make money at the same time? A garage sale or yard sale can turn your unwanted items into cash. It can also lower your moving cost by reducing the weight of your load. And, if you're trying to sell your home, a moving sale might even attract a buyer.

Follow these garage sale tips to organize a successful moving sale and put cash in your pocket.

Tip 1. Know what to sell and what to keep.

The first, crucial step is to determine what you will part with. Here is a good rule of thumb: you no longer use nor need it, and someone else might want it; or you can easily replace it at your new home.

Tip 2. Get others involved from the start.

Ask your family members to join in the effort. This is their golden chance to get rid of outdated fashions or clothes that don't fit—and anything else they no longer need. Consider sharing your plans with neighbors—they may like to "jump on the bandwagon." You might even organize a block-wide sale; a bigger event draws more people, all potential buyers.

Tip 3. Pick a Friday or Saturday.

Except for holidays, weekends are usually best for garage sales. When you announce the date, include the sale hours, such as 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Expect people to stop by at any time. No matter what time you start, some will show up a half-hour early. So be prepared.

Tip 4. Choose a location with good access and ample parking.

Before you decide on a garage, yard, or basement moving sale, check with local authorities. You don't want to find out on sale day your event violates codes. Make sure you have enough parking. Try to allow plenty of space for people to move around easily as they come and go.

Tip 5. Get the word out.

When you advertise your sale, make clear the date, time, and street address. If the weather forecast looks iffy, specify a rain date. Describe popular items such as furniture, appliances, tools and electronics. You might include a phone number so people can call for more information or to get directions.

Consider running your ad in the local newspaper and online classifieds. Generally, the more words in an ad, the more it costs to run. Ask about the cost to run Friday and Saturday vs Saturday only. Be aware of submission deadlines, which can be several days in advance of publication.

You might take advantage of free online classifieds, such as Craigslist. However, the volume of messages on such websites can make it harder for any one ad to get noticed.

Put flyers around the neighborhood. Print Moving Sale in large letters with the date, time, and address. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce about requirements for signs and posters. If allowed, place them in high-traffic areas with arrows and directions on sale day.

Use social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, especially during your event. When Tweeting, use your city name as a hash tag, for example: #MovingSale going on in #Charlotte today! Message me for details. Tweet about a big item that just sold, those frosty drinks in the cooler, or the

beautiful weather. Put your friends and followers "in the moment" electronically—they'll want to be part of the fun.

Tip 6. Be ready to do business.

On the day of the moving sale, set up a cashier's desk (a card table will do fine). Have a calculator, scissors, tape, string, markers, a cash box, and plenty of change. When you accept bills, be aware of counterfeit currency and how to spot it. [The U.S. Secret Service provides a web page with the basics; go to http://www.secretservice.gov/money_detect.shtml for more information.]

10 Quick Moving Sale Pointers for Fun & Profit

1. Price things to sell. Visit eBay or search online to determine how much you can reasonably expect to sell your items.
2. Put a price tag or sticker on each item. Place items where shoppers will notice them. If two or more families take part in the sale, assign each a unique ID code or different color sticker.
3. Start saving shopping bags and cartons. Make it easy for customers to take their purchases with them. Have tissue or newspaper on hand to wrap glass, knickknacks, and other fragile items.
4. Keep loose pieces together. Bundle or package sets, groups, or units so customers can easily see what they are getting. Put loose game pieces in a sealable plastic bag and place it inside the box.
5. Keep "for sale" items and "not for sale" items separate.
6. Display like items together. Keeping kitchen utensils, sporting goods, and tools together makes it easy for customers to find what they want.
7. Hang clothing on a clothesline or rack for easy viewing.
8. Be prepared for a change in the weather. Have sheets of plastic on hand to quickly cover everything.
9. Offer refreshments for sale. Many shoppers welcome a cold drink, especially on warmer days. Ice down some sodas and bottled water the night before. Tell the kids the money they earn selling drinks is their reward for helping.
10. Assign everyone in the family a job. Many hands make light work. Give everyone something to do for the day—cashier, clerk, or organizer. And have fun!