

THE GARAGE SALE GUIDE

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**TURN YOUR OLD STUFF
INTO CASH!**

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**HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL, NO HASSLE
GARAGE, YARD, MOVING, TAG, OR ESTATE
SALE!**

This handbook is really focused on having a garage sale. Tag Sales and Estate sales are usually much larger and more complex.

GETTING STARTED

First of all, decide what you are going to sell. Check your basement, attic, garage, closets, storage shed, and every other place you can think of. As you sort through your “saleables” you may come across a few items that you might call “borderline garbage.” **DO NOT THROW THEM OUT.** Always remember one person’s garbage is another person’s treasure. It can’t hurt to lay these items out on the day of the sale just to see if you get any offers. If it doesn’t sell, then throw it away.

After you’ve searched your home, pull all your sale items together in one place. Make sure you do want to sell everything in that pile. On the day of the sale children are notorious for suddenly becoming attached to the toys they have not played with for months or years, so it’s a good idea to have every member of the family or household go through the pile just to make sure!

Now that you have your *for sale* pile together, you might want to consider asking friends, relatives or neighbors if they want to sell things at the sale. This spreads the cost of having the sale over more people and saves everyone money.

PERMITS AND RULES

Make sure you call your village, town, city or county for information on permits and regulations for your sale. Permits usually require a small fee. You may be subject to a fine if you do not get a permit. You may also be fined if you do not follow the rules and regulations for sales in your community. As an example, in Garden City, Long Island, you may have one sale a year. It must be held on a Friday or Saturday. You are allowed to put up one sign in front of your home and the sale itself must be held behind an ‘imaginary’ line which extends across the front of your house.

ADVERTISING

Once you work out the legalities, it’s time to advertise your sale. The two major ways to advertise are in your local paper(s) and with the signs you put up around your neighborhood. People who go to garage sales know to look at the classifieds, so it really is worth the cost to get the ‘regulars’ to come. It also helps if the paper you advertise in has a larger circulation. Smaller community papers usually have cheaper rates but only reach the people in your immediate community. Those free mini-news-papers that you get in your mail and on your doorstep also have fairly inexpensive rates, but large circulations.

Before you purchase the ad space, talk with the representative at each publication you are considering. Find out exactly what you are getting for your money. Ultimately you

have to balance the amount you are willing to pay for your ad with the number of people you will reach. Keeping the cost and circulation in mind, you might want to consider running your ad in more than one paper.

Now it's time to write your ad. Older items and collectibles seem to bring people out of the woodwork. Many ads will use catch phrases like "Grandma's Attic", "50 Years Accumulation," "Antiques and Collectibles," "Hidden Treasures." These are great ways to start your ad. The basic idea is to inspire a very desirable image that will catch the reader. With newer merchandise the idea is the same: "Gigantic Garage Sale," "Like New," "Used Once," "Priced to Sell!"

Spend some time looking at the classified ads to get more ideas for your own ad. Try to be brief; remember, you are paying by the length of your ad. List only the items that will give the "flavor" of your sale to the reader.

Be aware that if you are selling "antiques" or "collectibles" you are going to draw dealers to your sale. Dealers are people who buy and sell antique merchandise on a regular basis. They know the worth of the items you are selling. Antiques and collectibles are in limited supply so this is an incredibly competitive business. Persistent dealers will do just about anything to look at your merchandise before your sale. If you don't want them calling you at all hours and showing up at your door before your sale, try using these techniques.

1. Don't put your phone number in your ad. If you are selling desirable items people will call you continuously regardless of the time of day or date.
 - a. SMALLVILLE 10/26-27 10-5pm 50 years accumulation, old toys, antique furniture, books jewelry, records, much more. 123 State St.
2. Write at the bottom of your ad, NO PREVIEWS OR EARLY BIRDS. This will keep people away from your home until the day of the sale.
3. The day your ad runs in the paper, put a sign on your front door that reads:
 - a. PLEASE DO NOT BOTHER OCCUPANTS; SALE STARTS....TIME...DATE.... No Previews!
4. There are a few incredibly persistent people who will still manage to call you or show up at your door. (Some dealers will have access to reverse directories. With just your address they can get your phone number even if it is unlisted. They can also get your name, census data on your neighborhood and the number of years you have lived in your home. This also works in reverse – with just a phone number they can also get this data). To stop them, run your ad without a phone number and without an exact address. Instead of the address put down the street you live on and the nearest cross streets. Then, on the day of the sale, put up a sign in front of your home and at the nearest intersections. The ad draws people to your street and the signs get them to your home. The ad would look something like:

- a. SMALLVILLE 10/26-27 10-5pm 50 years accumulation, old toys, antique furniture, books jewelry, records, much more. State Street between Maple and Pine.
5. It has the town, date, time, a catch phrase contents, and location of the sale. The best days to have your sale are Friday, Saturday or Sunday. The length of your sale depends on the amount of merchandise you have and the amount of time you have. It should start running the day before your sale and end on the last day of your sale. If you can't afford to run a classified ad try the "piggy back" technique described at the end of the sign section.

SIGNS

Your signs can draw almost as many people as your classified ad(s). *Remember, there are probably rules regarding where you can put up your signs in your community.* If you are going to make your own signs I would highly recommend using brightly colored fluorescent paper or cardboard. The writing should be simple and preferably in **BLOCK** letters.

GARAGE SALE

1234 STATE STREET

These signs are designated to catch the attention of people who are driving by. Put the type of sale and an arrow pointing in the right direction and the address. It's easier to draw the arrow after you put up the sign. The larger the sign, the better the crowds. Don't bother to list all the items you are selling since non one is going to be able to read it as they drive by at 30 MPH.

Most people who see your sign will just follow the arrow. When you write your signs, first trace it out in pencil then use black waterproof marker. This is very important. If your sign gets wet it will still be readable.

If you don't want to be bothered with people showing up at your door prior to your sale, don't put up your signs until the day of your sale.

Another good place for your signs are community bulletin boards. Grocery stores, drug stores, community centers and other locations often have bulletin boards. You can put up flyers with detailed descriptions of your merchandise a week or more before your sale. If you don't want to be bothered with "early birds," use the same techniques in the flyer that you used in your classified ad. Put your signs up at major intersections near your home, at each end of your block, and around your neighborhood. The sign farthest from your sale should be followed by a trail of one or two signs on each block that lead customers back to your sale. People often remove garage sale signs because they find them unsightly. To try and get around this, right on the bottom of your sign in small letters "this sign will be removed...put down the evening

on the last day of your sale”. This just lets people know that **you** will take down the signs when your sale is over. If you leave your signs up after your sale, it’s really no different than littering. Please remove your signs after your sale.

PIGGY BACK

If you can’t afford to run a classified ad or you want some good locations to put up your signs, try this the day before your sale:

Check your local classified ads for garage sales in your area. On the day of your sale go to these other sales and put up your signs on each end of their block and next to their signs. When people respond to their classified ad, they will see your signs. This lets you use their advertising at no cost to you.

LOCATION

Decide on where you want to have your sale. If you’re having a yard sale try to keep it away from fragile plants or new lawns. You might want to consider putting up string or some sort of barrier to protect areas you don’t want people walking over. The ideal location is usually a driveway. I’ve been to several sales where people have rented party canopies to have their sale under. You might want to consider this if you are expecting rain or it is extremely hot. If you’re expecting warm weather try to set up in a shady spot. If the weather is cold try to set up in a sunny spot. If you are going to have a *garage sale*, make sure that items not for sale in your garage are out of reach or clearly marked **NOT FOR SALE**.

You should only have your sale inside your home if you are selling a large portion of the contents, or you have no other place to have your sale. If you are going to have your sale inside, make sure that valuables not being sold have been removed from the area and are out of site. Items that cannot be removed mark **NOT FOR SALE**. Close doors and put up barricades and signs to rooms and areas that are not to be entered. Make sure you have plenty of people around to watch your customers: At least one person per room. In larger rooms with more merchandise you might want two or three people to watch. Allow only five or ten people at a time to enter your home. As each person leaves, let another person in. Some of the problems with having your sale inside your home are insurance liability (check with your insurer), damage to your property, damage to your home, and possible theft.

PRICING MERCHANDISE

If it’s possible, pre-price your merchandise before your sale. The start of your sale is usually much too hectic a time to decide prices. The biggest mistake made at large garage sales is pricing the merchandise too low. Some people argue “well, I just want

to get rid of it.” If that’s the case, either donate it to your favorite charity or throw it out. This will save you the time and trouble of having a sale. But, if you want to get rid of it and make some money, take the time to price your merchandise properly. Keep in mind that people will buy just about anything!

If you are selling older, pre-1950s collectibles or antiques, price these items carefully. To get some idea of their value you can:

1. Check the prices on similar items to yours online
2. Check local antiques stores
3. Contact a reputable dealer in your area for an appraisal. *If you’d like, you can call me at 516-489-6004. My ad is on the back page of this booklet. I can also give you a rough appraisal from a photograph of the item(s). (Email: info@vintagerarestuff.com)*

With newer merchandise try to base the price on what it would cost you to buy the item today, then discount for condition, wear and age. If someone is seriously interested in an item they may make you counter offer. In the bargaining process if you feel that you have priced the item fairly, stick with it. Don’t be intimidated. During the start of your sale people may be very aggressive. This is when most of your prime desirable merchandise will sell. It usually pays to stick to your original selling prices for the first two to three hours of your sale; then you can start cutting prices and making deals.

SETTING UP AND RUNNING

It’s nice to have tables to put your merchandise on but it isn’t necessary. The ground will work fine. You can spread an old blanket or a piece of cloth over the ground to protect your sale items.

If you have the room, lay everything out. Customers can’t see things that are buried in the bottom of the box. If your space is limited, replace the items you have sold with items that have not been displayed well.

Spend a few minutes dusting things off and polishing up your merchandise. If something is broken and only needs a little glue, glue it. Old clothes that are put up on hangers sell better than they would in a pile. In general try to make things look nice.

Smaller items should be displayed together in some sort of case or a shallow box. Always keep an eye on smaller, valuable items. During a crowded, busy sale they have a tendency to ‘walk away.’

For the start of your sale make sure you have enough cash and coins to make change. Dealers often arrive early with large denomination bills.

Don't be intimidated by people who say your merchandise isn't worth your asking price. If a customer makes a counter offer and you are not ready to lower your price, just get their name and phone number, and call them if it doesn't sell. Or, just say "it's early, I think I'll wait a while." You will be surprised how many people will suddenly pay the asking price.

As your sale progresses you may end up carrying large quantities of cash. Try not to keep more than \$100 on your person. Flashing huge wads of cash around can cause problems. Put the money inside your home or somewhere safe and out of sight.

You should have a minimum of two people to run an average size one family sale. Once the sale is going, only one person should deal with pricing and taking cash. This will keep customers from getting conflicting prices from too many people.

Use stick on price tags to price your merchandise. If there is more than one person selling merchandise at your sale, use different colored stickers to tell who owns what. With fragile merchandise you might want to use a price tag attached by a string. Sometimes stick on tags can damage merchandise – especially older antiques and collectibles.

AFTER THE SALE

After the sale you may still have merchandise. If what you have left is in decent condition, you might want to donate it to a local charity or thrift shop, like The Salvation Army or the American Cancer Society. Look under thrift shops in your yellow pages for other charities in your area. This should clear out the remainder of your stuff and also give you a tax deduction for your donation to charity!

SPECIAL OFFER!

On the last page is an ad for merchandise that I am looking for. If you have anything you think I might be interested in, call me before your sale. I buy collections for good money and I also take certain collections in on consignment.

516-489-6004

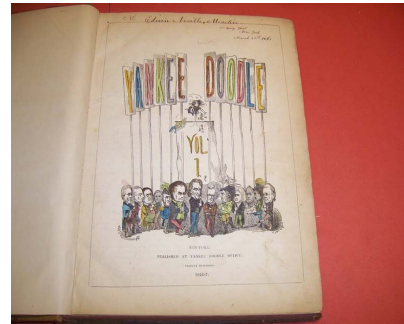
My web site is www.VintageRareStuff.com

We'd like to hear from you if you are looking for antiques or collectibles. We'd be happy to put your on our mailing list, just sign up at www.CollectiblesCornerTV.com.

Hopefully this booklet has been of some help. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to drop us a line (info@vintagerarestuff.com).

Sincerely,

Lou Kahn, Tammy Kahn Fennell, and Matthew Fennell ☺



Collectibles Corner TV!



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Hummels, Lladros, Royal Doultons, Pre-1970 Comic Books, Pre-1960 magazines, Toy Soldiers, Pre-1960 toys, Old paper items, Civil Ware related items, Disney items, Lalique, Meissen, Clocks, Cameras, Autographs, Circus Items, Posters, Banks, Figurines, Animation Art, Post Cards, Roseville, Pottery, Models, Trains, Lamps. Rugs, Advertising, Musical Instruments and more! We also do "Clean outs." Even if you are not sure about an item, give us a call. **That old "knick knack" in your basement or attic may be worth more than you think!**

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info@vintagerarestuff.com / 516-489-6004

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