

Consumer Tip Sheet – How to have a Successful Garage Sale

Are you ready to move someplace new but worried about money? Hosting a garage sale or yard sale can help you 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 potential buyer.

Ready to get started? Follow these tips and you'll be one step closer to a successful moving sale and some extra cash in your pocket!

Involve others from the start.

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 This is their golden chance to get rid of outdated fashions or clothes that don't fit—and anything else they no longer need.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

Pick a Friday or Saturday.

Excluding holidays, weekends are usually best for garage sales. When you announce the date, include the sale hours, such as 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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.

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 that your event violates codes. Make sure you have enough parking and try to allow plenty of space for people to move around easily as they come and go.

Get the word out.

Advertising your sale is an important part of any garage sale. When creating your advertisement, remember to include the following information:

- The date, time and street address
- A specified rain date
- A description of popular items such as furniture, appliances, tools and electronics
- And 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. Also, be aware of submission deadlines, which can be several days in advance of publication.

And don't overlook the power of popular social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, especially during your event. When Tweeting, use your city name as a hashtag, for example: #MovingSale going on in #Charlotte today! Message me for details.

Consider Tweeting 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.

Price items ahead of time.

Try to price things before you sell. Visit eBay or search online to determine how much you can reasonably expect to sell your items. Once you have a price, put a tag or sticker on each item before placing them where the customers will notice them. Don't forget, if two or more families take part in the sale, assign each a unique ID code or different color sticker to avoid confusion.

Make shopping easy.

Start saving shopping bags and cartons to use for customers to take their purchases with them. Have tissue or newspaper on hand to wrap glass, knickknacks and other fragile items. Also, 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.

When displaying items, try to keep similar items together such as kitchen utensils, sporting goods and tools. This makes it much easier for shoppers to find what they want. Hanging clothing on a clothesline or rack makes it much easier to view.

Plan for the weather.

If the forecast is showing showers, make sure to have sheets of plastic on hand to quickly cover everything. On warmer days, ice down some sodas and bottled water the night before. Many shoppers welcome a cold drink.

Keep these tips in mind as you prepare for the sale, and good luck!

Thank you to the American Moving & Storage Association