

# Hosting A Crazy Profitable Garage Sale

**Why and How to Get the Most Out of it!**



**By Heather Behrends**  
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I want to hear from you! Please reach out and tell me what you think! Contact information is above.

# About Me

I am a wife and a mom to three amazing and energetic boys!

I studied Linguistics at the University of North Carolina with the intention of becoming a Speech Pathologist. After college, I moved to Colorado to join an AmeriCorps program and then began working with aggressive Autistic adults.

I later got married and became a stay at home mom after my first son was born. Two more babies quickly followed, along with a couple of moves.

Along the way, I trained to become an exercise instructor, combining my love of exercise and activity with a push to step out of my natural shyness.

I got the idea to start blogging as a way to connect with other moms, share what I've learned over the course of 10 years as a mom, and help other parents skip some of the pain, work and uncertainty that I've gone through.

Blogging has been an amazing outlet for me and a way for me to help others while being a stay-at-home-mom.

Thank you so much for your support!

## Heather

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# About This Book

I hear so many people hosting garage sales only to feel like it was more work than it was worth.

I don't want that to be the case for you!

In this book, I have compiled both my own experiences as well as that of my friends and readers who have kindly left comments or reached out through email and social media.

The result is this...the most comprehensive resource and guide for hosting a garage sale that I have ever seen! This book takes you through the how and the why of every aspect of having a yard sale and how to get the most out of it.

Please keep in mind that, while the tips in this book have worked for myself or other people, not every yard sale is exactly alike. To that end, I have provided general tips and guidelines, leaving the specifics of your sale up to you.

I make every effort to present current and reliable information at the time of publishing. However, sometimes information changes. I highly recommend confirming any pricing information with your own research.



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# Introduction

Do you have stuff you don't use...ever?

Or maybe you are getting ready to put your house on the market or you are getting ready to move and want to get things cleaned out so you aren't moving things you don't need to move.

Have you ever thought about throwing it all in the front yard and hosting a yard sale but wondered how to make said sale profitable and worth the work?

During the spring and summer, you'll see the signs every weekend—"Huge Garage Sale," "Yard Sale this way," "Moving Sale" or simply just "SALE" scrawled across neon-colored poster boards on many street corners.

With approximately 165,000 yard sales per week in the United States and more than \$4 Million in revenue each week, hosting a yard sale is an effective way to both clean out your home and make some money.

You **can** make money – even serious money - but without careful planning and preparation, you're likely to not make enough to feel like the work was worth the payout.

# Why Host a Garage Sale?

If you are moving, preparing your house to put on the market, or even simply cleaning out years of accumulated possessions, you have several options for finding new homes for your stuff.

Options for getting rid of your stuff:

- You can try to sell it somewhere else: Craigslist, Ebay, Facebook garage sale groups local to your area
- Donate to your local Goodwill, ARC, Habitat for Humanity Home Store, or thrift store.
- Give it to friends or family

Honestly, most people don't want to deal with the hassle of organizing and holding a garage sale. They would rather donate their stuff because it's easier.

Even though donating or giving away your stuff is easier, going through the work of holding a garage sale has several benefits:

- It helps you to purge unnecessary items from your home
- You get cash for your unused stuff—a real bonus if you're digging your way out of debt or saving for something
- Your kids earn money and learn that hard work pays off
- Your kids learn to eliminate unused things and live a simpler life.

# Where Many People Go Wrong

To give you some perspective, let's chat for a moment about yard sales in general and about the average garage sale customer.

Here are a few important stats about garage sales:

## Yard Sale Shoppers Poll

42% expect to negotiate the price.

97% leave within 2 minutes if they don't see anything they like.

78% prefer items to be clearly marked with a price.

83% bring children with them

94% report that they buy items for their kids during yard sale trips.

## Biggest Turnoff?

Overpriced Items 43%

Disorganization 22%

Dirty Items 19%

Hard to Find 14%

<http://www.statisticbrain.com/garage-sale-statistics/>

Take a look at the graphic on the next page, courtesy of signs.com for even more info.

# YARD SALE

Yard sale season is in full swing. Whether you're planning your own sale, or getting ready to find some serious bargains, you might be interested to know just how popular, profitable and full of potential yard sales really are.

## the DEMAND

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO BUY AN ITEM AT A GARAGE SALE EACH WEEK: **690,000**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YARD SALES HELD EACH WEEK IN THE UNITED STATES: **165,000**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YARD SALES LISTED ON CRAIGSLIST EACH WEEK: **95,000**



## the MONEY

TOTAL WEEKLY REVENUE FROM YARD SALES: **\$4,222,375**



AVERAGE PRICE OF AN ITEM AT A YARD SALE: **85¢**

AVERAGE PROFIT MARGIN FOR ITEMS PURCHASED AT YARD SALES AND RESOLD ON EBAY: **462%**

## the PLANNING



BEST DAY OF THE WEEK TO HOLD YOUR YARD SALE: **SATURDAY**

BEST WAY TO FIND THE YARD SALE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR: **YARD SALE SIGNS**



BEST TIME OF DAY TO OPEN YOUR YARD SALE: **7:00 AM**

NUMBER OF DIRECTIONAL YARD SALE SIGNS TO INSTALL FOR BEST RESULTS: **6-8**

## the GOODS

TOP 3 LEAST-LOVED YARD SALE ITEMS:



TOP 3 BEST-LOVED YARD SALE ITEMS:



YARD SALE SHOPPERS POLL:

**42%** EXPECT TO NEGOTIATE THE PRICE.

**97%** LEAVE WITHIN 2 MINUTES IF THEY DON'T SEE ANYTHING THEY LIKE

**\$3.00**

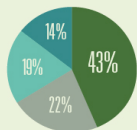


**78%** PREFER ITEMS TO BE CLEARLY MARKED WITH A PRICE.

**83%** BRING CHILDREN WITH THEM

**94%** REPORT THAT THEY BUY ITEMS FOR THEIR KIDS DURING YARD SALE TRIPS

BIGGEST TURNOFF?



OVERPRICED ITEMS  
DISORGANIZATION  
DIRTY ITEMS  
HARD TO FIND

YARD SALE

### SOURCES

<http://www.statisticbrain.com/garage-sale-statistics/>  
[Signs.com](http://Signs.com) Yard Sale Signs Poll

Courtesy of: [Signs.com](http://Signs.com)

# Plan Ahead

To be the most successful with your garage sale, it helps to plan ahead so that you cover all the details with minimal amount of stress.

## Think about:

Will you hold a single, neighborhood or multi-family sale?

When will you hold your sale?

What days and hours will you run your sale?

How will you design your signs (color poster board, handwritten or printed, etc)

How many signs will you make?

Where will you put your signs?

When will you hang up your signs?

How will you display your items?

Where will you get extra tables or shelves? How many do you need?

What forms of payment will you accept?

Will you price your items or have everything as a “name your price”?

Will you bundle items together?

Will you offer discounts on the last day of the sale?

**Think Ahead To Be Successful!**



# Invite Others to Help Make it Bigger

There really is no way to sugar coat it—hosting a garage sale takes a lot of work.

However, the work load can be minimized while at the same time maximizing the success of your sale by joining with neighbors or friends to create a multi-family sale.

Chat with your neighbors to see if they're also planning an upcoming garage sale. If they are, consider teaming up to host your sales on the same day. Many neighborhoods will "host" community garage sales.

Multi-family or neighborhood yard sales have many benefits, including:

- some people don't have enough stuff to fill their own sale, so combining with others can beef up a sale and make it worthwhile for customers to stop and look around.
- combining your networks and resources to get the word out to a wider audience
- everyone shares the cost of advertising
- everyone shares the work of making and putting up signs
- everyone shares the work of setting up tables and cleaning up afterward
- more customers tend to be drawn in by the promise of a multi-family sale.

In addition, having more people involved provides more options for a better sale location and possibly the option of expanding across neighboring yards. The easier the access to the sale and the bigger it looks, the more traffic you'll have and the more you'll sell.

**The larger your sale, the more noticeable and attractive it is to potential customers**

I used to live in a neighborhood where the HOA promoted a neighborhood garage sale once a year in June. People from around the town flocked to our neighborhood on that weekend every year!

These types of events are magnets for crowds of buyers. I think multi-family sales are the only way to go!

Also, many hands make lighter work, right? With more participants, you can also do less work but have a greater return if everyone pitches in.

## Here are some guideline suggestions for organizing and participating in multi-family sales:

1. **Must Be Present** If you are selling it, you need to be there to haggle over prices. Money can cause too many misunderstandings and strained relationships between people.
2. **Colored Dots** If pricing items, each family or person gets a different-colored price tag. This helps with keeping track of whose stuff is whose, and makes dividing the money much easier after the sale.
3. **Use an app or record sheet to help keep track of sales** The [Tally Sheet App](http://www.tallysheetapp.com/) is an excellent resource for this! It allows you to: checkout customers and keep track of multi-family sales, have multiple cashiers, and track sales totals. <http://www.tallysheetapp.com/>
4. **Set Up / Take Down** Everyone must help with some part of the preparation and clean-up of the sale and contribute to the advertising costs (these are usually taken from the final proceeds of the sale).
5. **Bring Tables** We ask all participants to bring anything they have to help display more items. Things sell better when they are off the ground and organized.



Set ground rules  
so that everyone  
involved knows  
what the  
expectations are.

# Schedule it Right

Friday and Saturday mornings are the traditional time for garage sales, so consider a different day or time so that you have less competition.

Timing a sale during early morning or late afternoon commuting hours (think 7am or 5pm) could help grab the eye of commuters or those dropping their kids off at school.

Also, consider having your sale on a Thursday morning or evening instead of Friday and Saturday. Sunday afternoons could also be great times to host a yard sale to provide less competition.

I recommend avoiding holiday weekends when many people tend to travel.

# Advertise Effectively

Don't just throw some items outside and call it a yard sale — be sure to spread the word ahead of time!

**Put up fliers in your neighborhood and use online ads to let people know about your sale.** Use Craigslist and social media, including Twitter and Facebook!

Facebook also has garage sale groups where you can share your garage sale details and let people know when to come and what you have (just use the search bar on Facebook and type in your location + “garage sales” – you will likely then need to request to join the group).

In addition, specialty forums exist to help those looking for garage sales. Facebook flea market groups are another good place to advertise.

List your sale on [Craigslist.org](http://Craigslist.org), [OfferUp.com](http://OfferUp.com), [Gsalr.com](http://Gsalr.com), Facebook Swip Swap and any other free classified websites in your area.

Check out [GarageSaleHunter.com](http://GarageSaleHunter.com) and [Yard Sale Search](http://YardSaleSearch.com). You can also Google your area/town + “yard sale” or “garage sale” to find more websites to post your sale on. However, Craigslist and Facebook are probably going to be your best bets.

Yes, newspapers are a dying art form, but older folks still read them. And older folks still spend lots of money at yard sales, so think about placing an ad in your local newspaper.

**In your promotion, list the notable and interesting items that will help attract people.** Consider putting up pictures of furniture, antiques, kitchen items, large kids items and baby gear, and other interesting items. Also include:

- Include photos of your big sellers—put your big items up
- **Include your address/map**—if this concerns you, you can mention a cross street and say something like “follow the orange signs.”
- **If you take forms of payment other than cash, mention that!**
- **Post multiple times**—I recommend posting a few days before the sale and again on each sale day (you’ll have to delete your old ads before you can post new ones – be sure to follow the group rules).

- **Post early in the morning**—on your yard sale dates, pro yard salers will be checking the CL listings at 5am as they get moving, so get up and get your ads to the top of the listings.
- **On the last day, give it an extra push!** -list what goodies you have left, tell people you are offering huge discounts, and make it sound like they should still make the trek out.

## Signs

**Put up at least 15 signs!**

**Put up a lot of large, brightly colored signs, with a simple font that easy to read.**

**Signs are your #1 marketing tool!** Make them as simple as possible so people can read them as they are driving – for example, simply writing “sale” or “yard sale” with an arrow pointing the way are perfect. Plus, simple signs are reusable, because they don’t have specific dates or details.

Start at 7 A.M. and specify, “No Early Birds.” Otherwise, If you don’t set a specific start time, people show up as early as 5:30 A.M. knocking on your door. Do you really want that??

**BRANDING** - same color signs and same fonts - helps make them stand out in the crowd of signs

While some people will find you from your various listings, signs should be your top priority! If you just jot down the details on a piece of paper and staple it to a pole the morning of your sale, your sale will fail. **Seriously, put in the time to make signs – it’s worth it.**

One idea for signs: print them out on super bright paper then tape the signs to pieces of foam core—you can often get big sheets for \$1 each at the Dollar Tree—and then “laminare” the whole thing with wide packing tape to the keep the rain out. (Check the weather - if the forecast doesn’t call for rain, you can consider skipping this step)

**Pro Tip:** place at least 2 signs in every intersection (big and small) within a 2-3 block radius of the sale. If you are holding your sale for multiple days, drive around each morning to check the signs and fix any that need it.

**\*\*Remember to take down your signs after the sale is finished! \*\***

### 3 Keys to good signs:

1. **Very Visible** (they need to stand out from the crowd in some way – pencil written on cardboard won't cut it)
2. **Simple** ("Yard Sale with an arrow is really all you need – make sure they are readable!)
3. **Frequent** (cover the area – signs should be located on every intersection within a selected radius of the sale)





# Think Like a Customer

## **Make it organized!**

Not only do you want to organize like items together, but you also want to organize the whole sale well.

Make sure to leave lots of open space around areas where people will linger (looking through books, flipping through clothes, testing appliances, etc.).

Put a wide variety of hot ticket items up front to draw all kinds of people in.

Group like items together in a logical way: kitchen items in one area, women's clothes in one place, kids' clothes in another, books in yet a different area, etc. That will help make the sale look better and more appealing while also allowing people to quickly evaluate what you have.

**Grouping ideas** (this is just a guide – make your own groupings according to what makes sense for your sale): linens, clothing, kids toys, furniture, kitchen stuff, books, electronics, etc. Think in terms of a store and how you see things grouped and displayed in a store.

## **Display items to their advantage.**

- People will be more inclined to stop if you set up shop in your yard or driveway – some people are reluctant to enter a dark garage
- Make your sale inviting and easy to browse.
- Put sought-after, interesting, bright and colorful items closest to the street to draw people in.
- Hang Clothes! Clothing stays neater and sells much better when hung up. Constantly refolding clothes that have been thrown back down on the table is a giant pain and a waste of time! You can simply tie a rope or chain in an area where you can attach both ends and hang clothes on that. Another idea: place rods between two ladders for easy DIY clothing racks.

**Make everything look nice and tidy.** Borrow or rent tables so shoppers don't have to bend over or crouch down to inspect items on the ground.

Throughout the day, tidy up to keep things neat and orderly.

Remember to keep filling spaces on your tables when things sell. Move items up from the ground. Group items that will appeal to same people. Items from another country, etc. Mix some of your books in if they “fit” the grouping.

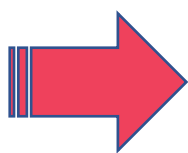
**Walk through your sale with the eyes of a shopper.** Are things grouped in a way that makes sense and helps the shopper find what they are looking for (ex: books with books, toys with toys, clothing with clothing, etc)?

Are things scattered around on the ground, or are they placed neatly on tables or on shelves or even hung up?

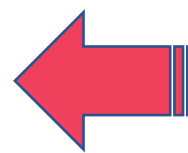


**Pro Tip:** Draw people in with Mystery bags! Have a table set up with bags separated into Kids, Womens, and Mens groups and see what happens. Make it affordable and people tend to go crazy for these!

My theory is that it is the psychology about it. If the items were displays on the table I might not pay for it, but since it is a mystery and cheap (\$1 or \$1.50) I might buy it JUST to see what it is. Don't even get me started on kids – they LOVE this idea. I like using paper grocery bags for these



**Keep in mind that if it looks cluttered and difficult to browse, people will leave your sale quickly.**



# Accept Multiple Forms of Payment

If you have a smartphone or a tablet, you can accept credit and debit cards! And you *should* because it is

- so much easier than dealing with cash and making change
- a really great way to entice people to spend more money since it's easier for them too

**Do not accept checks.** They're just not smart. They can bounce and then you have no recourse. If someone is out of cash or doesn't want to pay with a card, refer him to the nearest ATM or grocer where he can buy something small and get cash back.

**Do not use a cash box.** Carry your money with you at all times. Casual thieves and professional swindlers can both make off with cash boxes in an instant. Some people use a fanny pack or a zippered bank deposit pouch (you can find these at office stores, and they are inexpensive).

**Pro Tip:** When the amount in the cash box is over \$100 (or anytime you have a large sale), take most of it inside and stash it in a hidden location that you decide ahead of time. This minimizes your exposure.

**Count It Back** Be careful when you receive money. As you count out change, leave the bills the customer gives you on the table where they can be seen. Say something like, "Here's the change from your twenty (or ten, etc.)." Some people will attempt quick-change tricks so show an abundance of caution in this area.

# Guide to non-cash payment options:

## PayPal Friends and Family

Honestly, my favorite payment method for simple transactions is PayPal Friends and Family. I have used this with yard sales as well as selling things through Craigslist, etc.

You set up a PayPal account and can link your bank account so that you can receive funds directly into your bank account. Then when a buyer wants to make a payment, you just give them the email address you use for PayPal...they need an account, then they enter the email address and select the "Friends and Family" option of payment. Voila – once sent, you have your money, you didn't have to deal with cash, and you're done!

For taking credit and debit cards, you have several options. It is worth it to research yourself so you can understand the costs involved and what is the best option for you.

## Square Reader

You download the app to your phone and then swipe their card—they sign, and done! SO much easier than counting out change. I love yard sales, but almost never have cash on me, so I almost never stop at a sale.

Be sure to market the fact that you take credit and debit cards (on all signs and in all ads).

Square is a breeze. Once you sign up, they mail you a free reader (it's a little square box that you plug into the headphone jack of your smart phone). You create an account, connect your bank account, and then you can swipe cards. At the end of each day of business, Square deposits the sales (minus their 2.75% fee) into your bank account. In the app, it keeps track of all the sales for you

## Other Alternatives

There are many alternatives to the Square Reader. Check out my chart below to find a basic comparison between a few of the alternatives. The information in this chart can change at any time. Just in case the information changes (specifically, costs related to the reader and the transactions), please research on your own before making a final decision.

<b>Card Reader Options</b>					
	<b>PayPal Here</b>	<b>Square</b>	<b>SumUp</b>	<b>Intuit Go Payment</b>	<b>Clover Go</b>
<b>Chip Reader Available</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Swipe Available</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Cost for Readers</b>	Standard (swipe): FREE Chip Reader: \$24.99	Standard (swipe): FREE Chip Reader: \$29	\$69	Standard swipe and chip reader: \$19	\$29.99
<b>Cost (swiped)</b>	2.7%	2.75%	2.65%	Pay as you go: 2.4% + \$0.25; Monthly membership: 1.6% + \$0.25	2.69% + \$0.05
<b>Cost (keyed)</b>	3.5% + \$0.15	3.5% + \$0.15	Not available	3.4% + \$0.25	3.69% + \$0.05
<b>Monthly Fees</b>	0	0	0	Optional Monthly fee for lower transaction fees: \$20	0
<b>Apple Compatible</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Android Compatible</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Additional Notes:</b>	Prices higher for foreign funds	Takes 1-2 days to get funds; prices higher for foreign cards	1-2 days to receive funds. Same cost for all cards, accepts Apple Pay and Google Pay	Optional all-in-one reader to accept contactless cards (Apple Pay, etc): \$49	Mastercards are charged transaction fees

[Read more about the PayPal Here reader](#)

[Read more about the Square Reader](#)

[Read more about the SumUp](#)

[Read more about the Intuit GoPayment Reader](#)

[Read more about the Clover Go Reader](#)

# Pricing

**Be willing to bargain, but be a little less flexible on the first day.** On the first day, your goal is to get as much as you can for each item before your sale gets picked over. Honestly, most people who try to bargain with you want the item and are likely to still buy it even if you don't agree to a lower price or agree to only a slightly lower price.

Don't be completely rigid; however, at the same time don't just give away your stuff from the beginning of your sale. It can be a fine line, so feel it out as you go.

A good garage sale rule of thumb is to sell items at 10 to 25% of their original value.

Most people aren't looking to spend a lot, so try not to price anything over \$100.

Towards the end of your sale, consider posting a "half off" sign and offering even better deals to move items.

Another useful technique is bundling like items, such as books or DVDs. "Five books for \$3" will catch the attention of shoppers.

If you **really** want to move items by the end of the sale, have a few grocery store bags on hand. Tell people to fill the bags with whatever they'd like for \$5 or \$10 per bag. You may be amazed at how much will disappear with this approach!

Expect negotiations throughout your sale and decide how you want to handle them ahead of time!

**Another possible strategy:** DON'T price anything! Let people make an offer. Most people don't want to offend you, so 90% of the time you'll be offered more than you wanted. Most people like to treasure hunt.



# Garage sale pricing guide

Pricing can really make or break a sale. Most of the things sold during a moving sale are used, so remember that people want a great deal. While name brand pieces or items with tags can be priced higher, here is a general guideline for how much to charge (keep in mind that this might vary slightly from region to region within the country):

**Pro tip:** To get rid of multiple pieces at once, offering bundle pricing!

**Baby clothing:** \$1-3 for gently used items, \$.25-.50 for well-worn items. Or sell for \$5 per bag.

**Kids clothing:** \$3-5 for gently used items. \$1-3 for well-worn items. Sell bundles of 5 items for \$10.

**Adult clothing:** \$3-5 for gently used items. \$5-10 for nicer, work clothing. \$20 per bag.

**Pro Tip:** If you want to save time and hassle, post a sign rather than pricing each individual clothing item: Pants \$X, Shirts \$X, Jackets \$X. It minimizes confusion, hassle, and lost tags!

**Shoes:** \$3-6 per pair depending on size and condition.

**Coats:** \$5-15 depending on condition and warmth.

**Books:** \$1 each, or bundle them 8-10 for \$5 if you have a lot to get rid of.

**Jewelry:** \$1-3 each for costume jewelry, more for nicer pieces.

**DVDs:** \$2-5 each, bundle them 3 for \$5 if you have an abundance.

**CDs and records:** \$1-3 each, bundle 5 for \$3.

**Electronics:** No more than 1/3 of the retail value (make sure they are in good, working condition).

**Décor, toys, games:** \$1-10 depending on the size and condition of the item.

**Furniture:** \$10-30 for well-worn or lower quality pieces, or no more than 1/3 of the original price.

## Garage sale pricing strategies:

**Visit other sales for comparison.** Before pricing, make the rounds to nearby sales to get a feel for their prices and see what customers are drawn to.

You can also check out listings on Craigslist, Ebay and go to used clothing or antique stores.

**Set aside emotions.** Remember that customers don't have an attachment to your belongings and want a good deal, so price items subjectively.

**Price in \$.25 increments.** Most people come with quarters, so keeping things at this price means no need for dimes, nickels and pennies for change, reducing your work and prep time.

**Have a free box.** For things you want gone that may not sell, place them in a free box. Someone may want them!

**Be prepared to negotiate.** People shop moving sales to find a good deal. They may want to discuss changes in the price, so be flexible. At the end of the day, would you rather have \$3 (instead of the \$5 you were asking) instead of the unwanted item? Think in those terms.



# Be Prepared

When preparing for your sale, think about what people might need or want.

- If you have a lot of accessories for sale, **have a mirror available** so people can see how they look.
- Selling electronics or small appliances? **Have batteries or an extension cord handy** so they can see it works.
- **Have change!** Have plenty of small bills and coins on hand so you can quickly make change for customers. **Bring more** than you think you'll need, and secure your money during the sale.
- **Bring more bags.** People will often want bags for their purchases. If you use reusable shopping bags, consider not using my grocery bags for a few months before the sale and stock up on plastic bags to use during the sale.
- **Have a wrap area** where customers can wrap their own fragile items. A table with newspaper is all you need
- **Have a hold area** and as customers are shopping, ask them if you can put it in their pile (empty hands will pick up more stuff). But that does not mean leave it there and come back hours later. If the customer drives away, the stuff goes right back out on display to sell.
- Let customers know there is **help to carry items to their car** – it will make those large items more attractive
- **Move your cars** out of the way (or down the street or in a neighbor's driveway). This makes room for customers, protects your car(s), and allows you the ability to see the entire sale clearly because cars aren't in the way.
- If you have multiple helpers, **coordinate so everyone is wearing the same color – make** it easy for customers to spot you to ask questions or for help. Great ideas include colors associated with an upcoming holiday or even something like Hawaiian leis – anything to help you stand out from the customers.
- **Keep your pets inside!** Some customers are scared of or allergic to dogs, so allow them to focus on what you are selling by keeping those furry family members safely inside the house.
- **Sell rain or shine** – put up tarps, EZ Shade canopies, etc – anything to keep the rain out, heat down, and make you and the customers more comfortable. Colored tarps also help create a festive atmosphere (which helps generate more sales!)

# Get Comfortable and Have Fun!

## Get Comfortable

You'll be out in the sun for hours preparing, hosting and then picking everything up, so be sure to make yourself comfortable. Wear comfortable clothing, shoes, a hat and sunscreen.

Keep in mind how the sun moves throughout the day and at which times you may be in the sun. Have water or other beverages handy.

Consider setting up tarps and quick set up canopies to reduce your sun time – this helps keep the temperature more comfortable and protects from any surprise rain showers.

## Make It a Party

There is a reason that stores play music: it entices people to stay longer and spend more. So play some tunes, put out some cookies and lemonade, and make people feel welcome.

Also, consider keeping a cooler full of ice-cold water, soda and teas for sale — or encourage kids to be entrepreneurs and have a lemonade stand within the garage sale.

# Have a Plan for After the Sale

**Everyone** has stuff left over after a yard sale.

Develop a plan before the sale regarding what you want to do with the stuff that doesn't sell.

Options include:

- Donate to your local Goodwill, Salvation Army, ARC, Habitat for Humanity Home Store, or thrift store. Depending on your area, some will even come pick it up!
- You can try to sell it somewhere else: Craigslist, Ebay, Facebook garage sale groups local to your area
- Give it to friends or family
- Keep it

Running a yard sale isn't rocket science, but it does take work to make it effective.

If you put a little effort into creating an environment where it's easy for customers to find what they want, you can make a lot of money!



# Watch out for garage sale scams

**Anytime** you're dealing with strangers and money, it's a good idea to watch out for people who may try to take advantage. Keep your garage sale safe by following these guidelines:

- **Keep money on you.** Instead of placing money in a bag or a lock box (which could be easily picked up), keep money on your person using a fanny pack or apron. If you do use a money box or bag, be sure to have someone guard it throughout the sale.
- **Keep money in sight until you give change.** Some people may claim they gave you \$20 instead of \$10 — keeping the money out until you've given them their change will help avoid any confusion.
- **Use a counterfeit pen.** Counterfeit bills probably won't be a big problem at a yard sale, but it doesn't hurt to keep a detection pen on hand. They're really easy to use and will give you peace of mind.
- **Lock the home.** Keep doors and windows locked, and don't let anyone inside your home during the sale. Don't let anyone into your home to use the bathroom, and lock your doors while you're running the sale. Sometimes people will act in groups to cause a distraction and snatch cash or goods. Make sure you have back-up help so you can go to the bathroom or step out for a minute if you need to.
- **Take cash inside when possible.** If you get anything larger than \$20, or start to have too much cash on your person (I would say anything over \$50 or \$75), take it inside and put it away somewhere safe.
- **Keep valuable items near the cashier.** You can watch jewelry, electronics, video games or other high-priced items more closely if it's close by.
- **Don't take checks.** It can be difficult to track down anyone who wrote a bad check.
- **Check inside items.** Before a customer leaves, make sure they haven't stuffed anything inside the items they bought.
- **Have people around to help.** Don't ever have a moving sale alone! Get friends or family to pitch in.



# Extra Notes & Tips

**Letting the kids run a lemonade (or other beverage) stand is a great idea.** It provides a great service for your customers (especially on hot days) and allows the kids make change and practice their math skills. It also allows kids to see how work leads to making money and that everyone is expected to pitch in in some way.

About an hour before the end of the sale consider asking your helpers if there was anything that they saw that they were interested in. Give it to them or give them a screaming good discount from your yard sale price.

**Do not point out all the flaws about your stuff.** “Oh, that book is awful. That’s a terrible movie. That skillet doesn’t heat very well. That game is boring.” Those kinds of statements will kill your sale.

**Greeters** Do it like Wal-Mart and greet everyone. It makes for a friendlier sale and minimizes shop-lifting. Also wander around the sale straightening things up and making yourself available for questions.

**Concessions** Concessions have the ability to bring in an additional \$50 to \$100 or so by selling home-baked goodies. Keep your prices modest. Ideas: cookies, brownies, Rice Krispies© treats, juice, soda, coffee, hot chocolate (if it’s chilly). If you are feeling really ambitious, you can grill hot dogs and/or brats. There’s a reason that the smell of cookies helps sell houses and people grill hot dogs and brats outside Home Depot. The aroma helps sell, so cook it up!

**Limit the entrance/exit** There should only be one way in and out of your sale. Make it so that your customers always walk past the cashier on the way out. Everyone is greeted upon arrival and is seen departing. It greatly discourages shoplifting.

**Hangers** If you need more, ask a local dry cleaner for free hangers (ones they cannot reuse).

# Work through this garage sale checklist

Whether it's your first time hosting a moving sale or you've done it many times, there are several tasks to complete for the big event. Follow these steps to ensure everything is taken care of:

## Before the sale

- Let neighbors know about the upcoming event, so they know when visitors will be in the neighborhood. Also see if they want to join in and make it a multi-family sale.
- Decide the date of your sale.
- Start going through and separating items 3-6 weeks in advance. Also, start saving bags and newspapers so you can wrap things as they sell.
- Check community regulations and apply for any necessary permits (don't forget to ask where you can put signs).
- Gather tables to display items and racks to hang clothing.
- Get lots of change. At minimum, get \$100 in change (2 \$10s, 6 \$5s, 40 \$1s, and a roll of quarters).
- Gather things for the big day: chairs, drinks and snacks, and a fanny pack or lockable cash box for money.
- Make signs to hang around a 2-3 block radius of your sale.
- Promote your sale online starting about 3 days before your sale day.

## On sale day

- Post on Craigslist and Facebook EARLY on the mornings of your sale.
- Set up early since eager shoppers may arrive before you're officially open (but don't feel like you need to sell before the sale opens – feel free to hold off the shoppers until you open your sale).

- Display items to sell: group coordinating décor pieces, separate clothing and shoes by size, keep similar things together, and make sure everything is easy to grab. Set children's items far away from breakables so it's easy for younger shoppers to find treasures. MAKE IT AS EASY FOR THE SHOPPERS AS POSSIBLE
- Place large pieces by the road to draw in customers
- Keep track of sales in a notebook or in an app, especially if it's a multi-family sale.

### **After the sale**

- Gather any items to be donated.
- Take down signs.
- Divvy up and deposit earnings.