

YARD SALE TIPS

1. If you are setting up your yard sale in your yard (rather than driveway or garage), make sure grass has been cut recently (but not too recently - you don't want big wet clumps of grass sticking to people's shoes). Fill in any ruts in the ground. You don't want people to trip. Also if you are having a yard sale - as opposed to a garage sale - and have a dog that routinely poops in your yard where you expect people to be walking around, do some pooper scooping before the sale.
2. Although you may have the friendliest dog in the world, it's best to keep them away from your yard sale. Some people are afraid of dogs or are allergic. The day of your yard sale may be the day that your friendly dog, unaccustomed to the excitement of all the people, may decide to take a chunk out of the toddler that pulls on his tail. (Or jump up on customer and get mud on a customer's pants) It's also for the dog's safety as well, since cars will be coming and going from your driveway.
3. At good yard sales people have put prices on everything. The price should be on top of an item, not on the bottom. It's a lot of work, but worth it because you won't have people asking every two minutes, "How much do you want for this?" As a general rule of thumb, price items about a quarter or third of what they would cost new. There are exceptions (see next item). Clothes are generally very poor sellers, unless it's baby/kids clothes. If you price adult-sized clothes cheap enough, it will sell regardless. People are reluctant to pay a lot of money for clothes they can't try on, but will gamble if it's only \$1 or so. Take some of your "nicer" clothes to consignment stores, rather than trying to sell them at a yard sale. A rule on price: you can always go down on a price, but you can never go back up. If you don't have time to price everything individually, signs are helpful, such as "all books .25 each" or "any piece of clothes \$1.00", or "anything on this table .50". You also can offer the customers a deal, example: paperbacks .25 each or 5 for \$1.
4. When pricing items, keep in mind that "a third of what it costs new" is only a guideline. No one cares that you paid \$75 for your advanced quantum physics book 10 years ago. You'll be lucky to sell it at all. Try to look at your stuff objectively. Do you really think people will be knocking down your door to get at your old t-shirts with stains on them? That's why they make good rags. If you have a bunch of items that are missing pieces or broken, put it in your FREE box with a note "broken - good for parts" or something similar.
5. Another thing about pricing - The bigger the item, the bigger the price tag should be. Make it obvious. If you're selling a sofa - you can't expect the buyer to be looking all over for some tiny dot sticker. Take a full sheet of paper and put the price and list any good selling points or flaws: "Sofa - \$200 Firm - only 3 years old - comes with 2 coordinating pillows".
6. Before your sale, look thru the boxes of everything you sell. You may be surprised at what you might find that is of personal value to you such as: credit card receipts etc.
7. Use commonsense and don't prop up a nice framed picture against a rocking chair on a very windy day.
8. When selling clothes (and coats) take a minute and go thru the pockets.

9. If you are displaying clothes on a clothes rack, always use the cheaply metal hangers. That way if the buyer wants to keep the hanger, they can.
10. When selling books and CDs - arrange in a box so the titles can be easily read by the customers. You don't want to give off the impression that the sellers don't care about their stuff and probably didn't take good care of it when they had it in the first place.
11. Put some effort into your sale and really try to sell stuff by making it the most attractive it can be. If the first thing that someone picks up is nasty and dirty, it may turn them off to looking at other things you have to sell. If you are selling an old basketball, make sure it is full of air. If you are selling a TV, have it turned on. If something needs batteries to run, put batteries in it so it works - it will help it sell. (But don't put in brand new batteries; use some half-used batteries. However, don't go overboard in cleaning and spend 3 hours working on an item that you only plan to price at \$1. If all people see from the road is a tarp with a mountain of clothes heaped on it, they'll likely drive by. Ask friends/neighbors to loan you portable tables if necessary. Nothing worse than going to a yard sale and just seeing boxes of dirty, unorganized cobwebbed junk on the ground expecting people to fish through it. Meanwhile the seller is just sitting there having their coffee chatting with neighbors and ignoring the potential customers. These people probably wonder why they never have successful yard sales.
12. Yard sales are more relaxing if there is some background music on. Have easy-listening middle-of-the-road type music on, not Mega Death Slaughterhouse. That allows customers to discuss potential purchases privately with their shopping partners, without feeling like they have to whisper.
13. Display some of your more interesting items at the end of your driveway to act as a magnet to lure people in (see next tip). Some people will just drive by slowly and take a quick look to determine if it looks worthwhile to stop. Some sellers prefer to be stationed at the end of their merchandise, closest to the street. It prevents people from "forgetting" to pay for an item and they can also easily answer someone who drives by and asks "do you have any LP's?"
14. Ever noticed how hard a woman has to work to convince a man to stop at a yard sale? To solve this, set out an old lawn mower or power tools out front in plain view of the road, and you'll get more business. It's also smart to set up a small table with nothing but "man-things" (jars full of screws and nails, electronic parts, tools and parts of tools, etc.). This gives the men something to immerse themselves in while the women find all the real treasures.
15. If you are planning your yard sale on the hot day, consider selling sodas or having the kids run a lemonade stand. (Generally though, it's just easier to ice-down a bunch of sodas - bought on sale of course - in a big cooler. And just sell the kind of soda you like, so you don't mind if you have leftovers.) Selling lemonade can be tricky for a 5 year old who doesn't understand a lot about hygiene - and will want to just grab ice cubes with their hands. The longer people stay at your yard sale the more likely they will buy something. And even if they just stay and browse, that's good too since it may lure others to the sale. Nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd. Some people like to set up a coffee pot and sell donuts - but it's too much work and could be a potential safety problem - especially with the hot coffee, electrical cord etc.
16. Some sellers color code their items with a little sticker and create a chart, example: all items with blue stickers are .50, items with red stickers \$1 and so on. THIS IS NOT

RECOMMENDED. Also, a buyer could easily "swap" stickers and you'd probably not even notice it.

17. When asking a seller how much they want for a particular item, many times they respond, "I don't know, how about .50 or .25?" No buyer in their right mind will say, "Yeah, I want to pay the higher price." The better way would be for the seller to answer, "How about .50?" Then if the customer puts the item back, or hesitates then you could say "or how about .25?"
18. You may get a customer who wants to "help" you by totaling up their purchases ahead of time and giving you the total. It may be a ploy to sneak some high-dollar items into the pile or not paying the true full amount. If this happens just say that you need to go through it because some of the things are your sister's and you need to check what they are buying so you can divide the money fairly with them.
19. Here's a tip if you are trying to sell something that is fairly high dollar and it's a popular item that appears in catalogs or sale ads. Cut out the ad with the item in it (with the price showing of course) and tape it to your item. This has been done mostly with gently used children's toys and such. It shows the buyer that spending \$10 for an item that normally sells for \$40 new is a good deal. Be selective if you use this tactic, people will get turned off if you do it for every item you're trying to sell.
20. If you are trying to sell a bunch of old kitchen utensils, rubber-band the knives up so people don't get cut.
21. Make sure any items you don't want to sell are put away. If you don't, that will be the one item the buyer wants. Sometimes you just can't win though!
22. During your sale, keep your sale tables attractive by filling in the empty spots on your tables as things get sold. It's a good idea to keep your eyes on your customers, but don't stare at them or hover inches away. Many people get annoyed at yard sale sellers who are a little *too* overbearing and has to tell a story about every item touched and what a good deal it is.
23. **GUARD YOUR MONEY!** Have lots of coins and small bills available to make change. If you don't, your first customer will be a little old lady trying to buy .50 worth of stuff with a \$20 bill. Do not leave your money lying around in a box. A fanny pack or carpenter's apron is recommended because you'll always have your money with you. However, when making change, keep the wad of bills in your fanny pack (rather than pulling a big wad of bills out). That wouldn't be smart. If your fanny packs have several zippered compartments, as the sale continues you may want to divert some of the larger bills to either a separate compartment or to a secret location in your home. If you are running out of change, and someone is trying to haggle a price down, be willing to negotiate if the buyer has the exact change. Also for safety reasons, have a cell phone or cordless phone also in my fanny pack or attached to your hip.
24. Don't accept checks unless you are willing to take the risk of getting a bad check. A check that looks perfectly fine may be from a closed bank account.
25. One question that people ask is "how much money should I start off with?" Well that depends. If you have a lot of small, low priced items, around \$80 or \$100 is a good number. (two \$10

bill, four \$5 bills, 25 \$1 bills, 1 roll of quarters (\$10), and \$5 in nickel and dimes (assuming you have stuff priced at less than a quarter). BUT, if you have a lot of furniture or higher priced stuff, definitely start with more money. For instance, if you have a lot of \$10 items, most people will probably give you a \$20 bill and expect change. Of course, as the yard sale continues, some people will give you the exact amount, so it's mostly in the beginning when you need to be concerned about how much change to have.

26. Here's a tip about making change: if someone hands you a large bill, leave the bill out in view until after you have given them their change. Sometimes put the bill partly under something like a paperweight until after giving the person their change. Otherwise, a dishonest person could say afterwards "I gave you a \$20, not a \$10". And it would be your word against theirs. And make sure you really take a second and look at the bill.
27. Have plastic grocery bags available to put sold items in. If selling breakables, have newspaper available to wrap fragile items. Having a calculator handy is helpful in totaling up purchases. Make it easy for yourself to total items - price things evenly: .25, .50 and \$1, NOT .40, .75, \$1.20. Even doing that, it's easy to mess things up.
28. If you have kids, involve them by having them set up their own table selling their old toys. Explain to them if they get rid of their old outgrown toys, they'll make space to put the new toys that they buy themselves with the money they earn. If they agree to parting with their old toys, help them with the prices. Plan with them afterwards to donate their good, unsold toys to charity so that needy children will benefit.
29. If you are selling electrical appliances, have an electrical outlet handy or a long extension cord. (Put the cord away when not in use - you don't want to create a tripping hazard). Don't allow strangers in your house, either to try out appliances or try on clothes, etc. If they need to use a restroom, give them directions to the nearest fast-food restaurant.
30. To avoid any hassles later on, post a sign that says "All Sales Final".
31. If you have a ton of kid's clothes or small toys you are dying to get rid of, consider having a "fill a bag for a set price" kind of deal. Yard sailors love getting a good deal. If you do something like this, just make sure you have enough bags available.
32. Another option is to sort the small toys and put them in sealed clear plastic baggies according to type of toy or whether it's for a boy or girl. Then STAPLE the bags closed so customers can't open them. Then have a set price for the entire bag. That way, hopefully you won't get stuck with leftover "less desirable" toys when the sale is over.

33. Expect that some buyers will expect you to bargain with them. If it's early in the morning and you don't want to bargain, just say "I think it's worth that price. I may lower the price later in the day if it doesn't sell."

34. Don't assume everyone going to yard sales is fun and happy people. Just like in the real world, shop-lifters and shady characters go to yard sales too.

And don't forget, **TAKE YOUR SIGNS DOWN AFTER THE YARD SALE!**

Thank you!