

Moving Tips Garage Sales

We find that many families use a change of residence as an opportunity to dispose of many outgrown and no-longer-wanted items. It beats taking the items with you and can even put several hundred dollars in your pocket toward buying furnishings for your new home.

As Realtors®, we are expected to be wise in all matters relating to a change of residence. Even though garage sales are far from our primary field of expertise, allow us to pass on the best advice we have picked up over the years.

Planning

Allow plenty of time – three to four weeks – to prepare. Choose a date that will not conflict with holidays or other events that might lure prospective customers away. More people are likely to show up on weekends than weekdays. Your sale is likely to attract more customers if you join together with neighbors in a larger effort with more merchandise – some homeowner groups sponsor neighborhood sales that are proving popular.

What to Sell

Practical household goods, bicycles, children's toys and clothes, sports equipment and garden tools are popular. Adult clothing has less appeal – price accordingly. All items should be clean, polished and in good repair.

Display

Merchandise your items attractively in neat, clean surroundings. Paper tablecloths offer a pretty setting for glass and ornamental items. Cluster things in categories. Place more desirable items toward the back so browsers can notice other merchandise on their way to the most popular items. Have a 25-cent miscellaneous table for young shoppers. Clothes should be sized accurately and hung on a temporary rack.

Logistics

Locate your appliance table near an outlet so customers may try before they buy. Set aside adequate parking and a place to load large items. Have plenty of bags and boxes on hand for packing and newspapers for wrapping glass items. Ideally, a place for trying on clothing should be provided.

Promotion

Place a classified ad in the local papers – include three or four of the more tantalizing items for sale, directions and other pertinent details (you may or may not want to include your phone number). Take advantage of free publicity provided by bulletin boards in grocery stores and other public places. Provide directional signs to your property using an indelible pen. If your house is listed for sale, have your Realtor® hold an open house on the same day, thus increasing traffic for both the house and the sale.

Pricing

Visit other sales to get an idea on how to price things. Remember that garage sale shoppers are looking for deals, so be prepared to bargain and lower your prices. Really valuable items such as antiques should not be sold at a garage sale; they are not likely to bring the desired price from bargain hunters. Nothing is too worthless to be valuable to someone, so have a giveaway box for old magazines and other assorted odds and ends.

Staging

Post a notice that all sales are final and payment must be in cash. Keep ample change in a cash box in a protected spot. Keep a record of sales, especially when there are several sellers. One recording method that is simple and efficient is to use small adhesive stickers to price items, then transfer the sticker to the name of the seller when the item is sold.

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