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Yard Sale Secrets Revealed...

A How-to Guide that will triple your yard sale income
and make your sale run as smooth as silk.

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Introduction

So, you're going to have a yard sale!

That is exactly what my wife and I decided to do. I like to call items that can be sold in a yard sale, "stuff". You may call it clutter. My wife and I had accumulated so much stuff that we could hardly get into the basement or put the cars into the garage.

I did not know anything about yard sales and asked other people for advice. The people I talked to had very little to say and some were very negative, saying it was too much work for the little money they received.

Determined to get rid of all this stuff, I searched the Internet. There was very little to be found on the Internet as how-to have a yard sale. I finally ran into my friend Sue, who owns a re-sale shop and goes to as many yard sales as she can every week to help stock her shop.

With the information I received from Sue, combined with the knowledge from the Internet, I came up with a plan. It took almost 2 months to prepare for this yard sale.

A successful yard sale takes substantial time and effort. But it was worth it!

Shortly after the yard sale, my wife and I went on a 2-week vacation to Mexico, Phoenix, the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas and Reno. We even went on a hot air balloon ride in the desert.

Guess what! It was completely paid for by the yard sale. It was absolutely the best vacation we ever had.

Because there was so little information about yard sales on the Internet and my yard sale plan worked to perfection, I decided to write this manual to share my success with you.

This manual is not about making pocket change. Like I said previously, a successful yard sale takes substantial time and effort. I would never go through all the trouble of planning a yard sale if I was only going to make a total of \$50.00 or \$100.00.

There are practical principles in this manual that will make the effort worth it all!

If you follow all the steps in this manual, you will be able to bring in a lot of extra money for your family this year, plus you will get rid of all your unwanted stuff.

Be Legal

Attention!... Attention!... Attention!...

Do I have your Attention?

The most important thing that you have to do before you start organizing your yard sale is to make sure you are legal. You need to do some research on your city, township and even your homeowner's association if you have one, concerning their laws and regulations they may have on yard sales.

Each of these organizations have governing authorities that make rules and pass laws that pertain to yard sales. Find out what the rules are and please follow them.

Not knowing the rules can cause a disastrous halt to your yard sale after you have gone through all the time and effort it takes to set up and organize your sale.

Unfortunately, I heard of a lady that made the mistake of having too many sales in one year. She was informed to shut down her yard sale immediately because of a township ordinance. The regulations on yard sales in her township allowed only two separate weeks of yard sales.

I guess she was able to plead with the authorities by saying she was ignorant of the rules. She got extremely lucky and they permitted her to finish out her yard sale. She didn't even get a fine, but she was warned not to do it again.

Just to let you know, some towns even require you to have a license before you are permitted to have a yard sale. Some people have many yard sales all through the summer.

Keep in mind that the more yard sales you have, the more money you will make. This is all up to you as long as you comply with your zoning laws or community ordinances.

In another chapter, I will tell you about signs that you can put up to advertise your yard sale. I want you to be aware that there are probably laws regarding the use of signs like yard sale signs. You will find that some areas do not enforce the laws unless there is a complaint while other areas are very strict.

The law may say something similar to this:

It is illegal to post, without a city or county permit, private signs on a Public Right of Way.

"Public Right of Way" is commonly defined as both sidewalks on either side of a street and everything in between (including the grassy medians between the sidewalks and gutters, medians, traffic signs and light poles, trees and foliage, fences, etc.).

Be sure to take this warning into consideration when it becomes time to set up your signs. Here is a list of some rules that you will have to research to see if they apply to where you live:

- ? Whether a yard sale permit is required.
- ? The number of sales permitted in a year.
- ? The size of signs you can put up.
- ? The number of signs you can put up.

- ? What you can put your sign on.
- ? When you can put your sign up.
- ? When you have to take your sign down.

After you have done all of this, you are ready to get started.

Well, are you ready to continue?

Let's get Started.

Getting Started

First, let me say that having a successful yard sale is HARD work! I'm not going to sugar-coat it and say that it's a piece of cake.

If you're in active de-clutter mode and the next project is your house, a yard sale can clear your clutter and score some huge cash, but it helps to have a road map or plan.

This yard sale manual contains tried and tested rules and pointers that will ensure a smooth, safe, and profitable sale.

The first thing you will need to do may be harder than it sounds. You have to find a location in your garage, basement, spare bedroom or some place in your home to put the stuff that you are going to sell in your yard sale.

This area needs to be divided into two sections:

- 1) One section will be for yard sale inventory that is priced and ready to sell.
- 2) The other section is for inventory that needs more work before it is ready to sell.

I will explain this in more detail in another chapter. Once inventory in the needs more work section becomes ready to sell, it is moved to the ready to sell section.

This will make the organization of your inventory much easier. It will make it easier to move the inventory out into the yard and or garage on the day the sale is scheduled to begin.

You may also want to pick up some cardboard boxes to put in the ready to sell area to put the folded and priced clothes in. All the boxes should be the same size and not too deep.

These boxes should be marked with the gender, description and size of the clothes in the box.

For example: let's say that you have a lot of men's long-sleeve shirts that you want to sell. You would mark the box, Men's Shirts - Size 16/32. This would mean that there are men's long-sleeve shirts with a 16 inch neck size and a 32 inch sleeve length in the box.

These boxes will also be very handy in the yard sale. I will explain this in more detail in another chapter. One other item you will need for your ready to sell section is a clothes rack. You can get cheap clothes racks at Wal-Mart, Big Lots, K-Mart, and other department stores.

These come in handy when you need to hang up clothes that easily wrinkle to keep them nice and presentable at the yard sale. Now that you have the location for your yard sale inventory, it's time to start looking for inventory to put in it.

Storage Area

Let's talk some more about this storage area that is divided into two sections; one with inventory that's ready-to-sell and the other has inventory that still needs work. I would strongly suggest that, when you finish searching each room for inventory, you should work on the items in the section that still needs work.

Here is what you need to do to the items that still need more work:

- ✓ All the clothes should be laundered and ironed. (Yes I said ironed)

When you go shopping in the clothing store, which shirt would you purchase? A shirt that is neatly hung on a hanger with no wrinkles will be more apt to be purchased at a higher price than the same shirt that is balled up on a shelf with all kinds of wrinkles in it.

Naturally you would purchase the nice neat shirt. One of the most important things you can do is to have every item neat and clean and in good working order. These are the items that will sell fast and for the most money.

- ✓ Ok fellas, suppose you have found a full set of automobile wheel covers that you want to sell - they will sell a lot faster and for more money if the dirt and dust is cleaned off of them and they are all polished up. You can also place them toward the end of the driveway so the sun reflects off of them. This will be an attention-getter and many of the men will check them out.

But, if they were not clean and polished they would not even get a second glance. The main things that are going to set your yard sale apart from

everyone else's is that the items are clearly marked and priced, everything is neat and clean, and you appear to be very well organized.

So, you need to clean, iron, repair, polish or what ever is necessary to make each item as new looking as possible. After each item is as good-looking as possible, it is time to put the price and size (if applicable) on each item. Every item must be individually marked with a price and size.

The easier you can make it for your customers to shop, the longer they will shop, which means you will sell more. You will find that you get many compliments on how organized you are.

Again, this translates into more sales at higher prices.

After each item is prepared for the sale, they are transferred to the ready-for-sale section. This should be done to every item in the needs-more-work section until it is empty. When it is empty, you will be able to go to the next room to search for more stuff.

Now you will have plenty of room to put the new stuff you find.

This method also ensures that the cleanup is not as boring and tedious. Plus, when the day of the yard sale finally comes, it will be easy to transfer all the clean and individually priced items to their spot in the yard or garage.

Finding Inventory

It is now time to turn all of your stuff into inventory. Your yard sale inventory is living in the house with you, right under your nose. This is the stuff you have been moving from place to place just to get it out of the way.

You now will have the challenge of choosing which items will become inventory for the yard sale. You now have to start a “search and decide” mission through your entire house. You will need to set aside certain days of the week that you can spend searching.

Do not attempt to accomplish this in just one day. You should mark off certain days on a calendar that you will be able to search. Make sure that, when a search day comes, that is what you do. You can not put these days off until another time. If this is a habit that you have, it will not take a lot of control on your part to stick to a schedule.

This may be one of the reasons your house has become full of clutter; you ability to put things off. Just remember, after the clutter is removed, your life will become much easier because you do not have to deal with clutter.

You will need to search through your house one room a day. If your house is like my house, some rooms will take more than one day. My basement and garage were killers.

You will need some kind of system and rules to follow to help you decide what is “stuff” and what is not. My wife and I used two different criteria to determine when our clutter turned into stuff or inventory.

- ✓ The first rule was that any item that we had not used in over a year could be considered inventory. Have you cooked with it, used it, worn it, displayed it or read it within the last year.

- ✓ The second rule was that, if we had more than one of an item, the duplicates could be considered inventory. I will give you an example here. We had three blenders and four Mr. Coffees. We kept one of each and the others became inventory.

These two rules are not absolute. You will ultimately have to make a final decision on whether an item stays or goes. They are just guides to use. You may come up with your own.

Now that you have a couple of rules to help guide you in your inventory decisions, you need a system that will make it easier for you to sort through your stuff. The system that we used was a four-box method that requires you to make a decision item by item.

If you want to use the four-box method, you will need three boxes and one large garbage can. You will need to label the boxes, "Put Away", "Sell", and "Storage". The items that are trash or no good will go into the garbage can.

The items that go into the "Put Away" box are items that you do not want to sell or throw away. These are items you want to keep but are not where they belong or a more appropriate location needs to be found for the item. When the box becomes full or you are at the end of your search period, put these items away or find a better place to put these items.

The items that you put into the "Sell" box will now become the inventory you will sell in your yard sale. When this box becomes full, or you have reached the end of your search session, put the items in the area that you have set aside for yard sale stuff that needs more work.

The items you put into the storage box may be items of great sentimental value that you do not use or display. These are items that fall into the category that you have not used them within the last year but you still want to keep.

When this box becomes full, or you have reached the end of your search session, take an inventory of what is in the box and put a copy of this inventory on the box and put it into storage.

Since we are on the subject of sentimental items, do not sell your children's things if they are no longer living at home before giving them a call to see if it is OK to sell them. I have seen to many newspaper articles asking who ever purchased the sons baseball card collection to return them because it has get sentimental value to their son.

If they say it is OK to sell the item, put in the area set aside for inventory that needs more work. If they say it is not OK for you to sell the item, it is time to visit the children and take their stuff to them so they can keep their stuff in their own house.

If they live too far to visit at the drop of a hat, the United States Postal Service has a very good method for sending the item or items to your children so they can keep it in their own house.

Make sure you empty the garbage can as soon as it gets full so you do not have any second thoughts about some thing and change your mind. You will probably find that you are emptying the garbage can more often than the boxes.

There are some things that you should not sell in your yard sale such as any baby furniture like cribs or playpens that were made before 1986 because there may be some hidden safety issues that could be dangerous for new parents to use with their baby.

Other items that should not be sold in a yard sale are antiques and collectables. There are better forums to use if you want to get rid of these items. You will never get adequate compensation for antiques and collectables.

You hear all the time where someone finds a valuable painting or manuscript worth thousands of dollars in a yard sale where the purchaser only paid a dollar. If you have any doubt, do not sell it.

An example would be that original Barbie Doll your daughter used to play with. It could be worth a lot more than what you can get from the yard sale.

This four-box method should work for everyone because every item in the house will fall into one of the four categories. This method forces you to make a decision on every article that is fairly easy to deal with. You may be able to come up with a better method, but if you cannot, this is the method that worked really well for us.

Kitchen Inventory

Now that you have a schedule made up and recorded on a calendar, and a set of decision-making rules along with a sorting method, it is time to take your new plan for a test drive in the kitchen.

Remember, this is the room where I had three blenders and four Mr. Coffees. Maybe you have a George Forman Grill that you received three years ago, but have never used.

Here is something to think about. This is a great time to get rid of some of your old kitchen appliances so you can get new ones. When I talk about kitchen appliances, I mean items like can openers, toasters, pots and pans, toaster ovens, coffee makers, blenders, even dishes and silverware.

After all, you can put it back in the kitchen if it doesn't sell in the yard sale until it is time for your next yard sale. If it does sell, you can go shopping to pick out that new microwave or toaster.

Hey! doesn't that sound like fun?

Now that we are done with that thought, it is time to get down to business. The kitchen is, by its nature, designed to store as kinds of stuff. There are all kinds of places in a kitchen where you can look for stuff. The kitchen has wall cabinets, base cabinets, drawers, and even most ovens have a storage drawer.

You will need to go through each and every one of these hiding places. We must not forget the stuff that sits on counter-tops all the time. This is also a good time to clean all of these places.

Let's use a drawer for an example. You will take everything out of the drawer and place each item in the appropriate box. Clean the drawer and put a new drawer liner in, if you use them. Everything that was placed in the box that is labeled "Put Away" will be put back into the drawer.

Now, you are ready to tackle the next drawer or cabinet. After completing each drawer or cabinet, clean it and then put everything that was placed in the box that is labeled "Put Away" back into the drawer or cabinet. This box is emptied before continuing on to the next location.

Going through the kitchen like this allows you to stop working when you run out of time, and the kitchen will not be left in a disastrous mess. This could be kind of exciting; who know what lurks under the kitchen sink.

Bathroom Inventory

The next room to search for more yard sale stuff is the bathroom. Believe it or not, just about everything you find in the bathroom is potential yard sale inventory.

The only stuff that is not legal to sell is your prescription drugs. But, all the over the counter medicine that you did not like will sell at your sale. You just have to make sure that it is not past its expiration date.

Grab that old toilet tank set because you can put it back in the bathroom if it does not sell. Believe it or not, old make-up sells like hot-cakes. Just make sure it is cleaned up nice. I can not believe people are not worried about germs on this stuff.

Don't forget soaps, shampoos, conditioners, styling aids, hair brushes, perfume and cologne, old towels and anything else you do not use or want any more. If you are not getting on the bathroom scale any more because it always has bad news, maybe this is the time to teach it a lesson; good-bye, bathroom scale.

Master Bedroom Inventory

The next room to search for more yard sale stuff is the Master Bedroom. Believe it or not, just about everything you find in the Master Bedroom that you have not used in one year is potential yard sale inventory.

Do not leave any drawer, closet, nook or cranny unexplored for unexpected yard sale inventory. There are many items that you'd never think of that would sell in a yard sale.

Some of these unexpected items are...

- ✓ Makeup that has only been half used
- ✓ perfume that you do not like any more (even if the bottles are half full)
- ✓ Old shoes
- ✓ All clothes (especially suits)
- ✓ hats
- ✓ gloves
- ✓ scarves
- ✓ trinkets
- ✓ pillows
- ✓ baskets

All of these things can end up being a gold-mine for you because someone else has a good use for them.

Here is an important note...

Don't sell any real diamond or precious stone jewelry in your yard sale. You will never come close to getting what you should from this kind of jewelry. There are other places to sell this kind of merchandise but costume jewelry sells really well at yard sales.

Living Room Inventory

Just about every thing you have in the living room will sell in a yard sale. You will need to look inside your end tables, coffee tables and every cubbyhole you can find.

You may find: magazines, records, radios, tapes, CDs, books, pictures, VCRs, CD players, lamps, fireplace tools and even TV's.

You can even sell the sofa, arm chairs, as well as the end tables and coffee table.

Remember, if they sell, you can get new ones. If they do not sell, they will fit nicely back into the living room. So, if you are tired of the old stuff, see what you can do to get new stuff.

Basement and Garage Inventory

These two areas can be killers, but they can also be the most productive in supplying inventory for your garage sale. If you will recall, I mentioned in the beginning how hard it was to get around in the basement and that we could not get the cars into the garage.

It took us over three weeks to search through all of the stuff in these two places. You will find anything including old tools you forgot you had and you just bought new ones because you could not find them. We even had a tanning bed in the garage! These two places are the black holes of yard sale stuff.

Here is a hint that will get you more yard sale traffic. Women know how hard it is to get their husbands to stop at garage sales. To help solve this problem, you will need to put items that the men will be interested in close to the end of the driveway or by the edge of the road.

For example, we had tools, car parts, riding lawnmower, computer stuff and an old TV sitting out on the edge of our driveway. We also had a washing machine and drier along with beauty salon equipment from a salon we had just closed.

We also had several bicycles that had not been ridden for years.

When the men see stuff that they are interested in, they will stop and take a look allowing their wife to do the real shopping.

Fix and Clean Your Stuff

A big part of the success of your yard sale is making certain your items look their best and ready for use. This means you are going to have to put some effort into your yard sale by really trying to clean the stuff up and make it as attractive as possible.

If some-one picks up their very first item at your yard sale and it is nasty and dirty, they may not be interested in looking at other things you have for sale.

If you are selling an old football or volleyball, make sure it is full of air.

If you are selling electrical appliances, TV's or radios, make sure you have an electrical outlet available for the customer to test the item to see how well it works. If a toy or other item requires batteries to work, have batteries available so the customer can test the item.

You can even put the batteries in the item, just don't use brand new batteries. Save half used batteries for this occasion. When it comes to cleaning your stuff up, don't go overboard on the cleaning by spending several hours on an item that will only sell for \$1.00.

Here are tips on different cleaners and what they clean best.

- *Dusting spray*- removes marker ink from glassware and tins.
- *Rubbing alcohol*- removes glue residue from high gloss ceramics.
- *Household bleach*- disinfects most surfaces, not recommended for wood.

- *Furniture polish*- restores the look of old objects and dull finishes; great for ceramics, plastics and wood. Not recommended for glass because it will leave a greasy film.
- *Damp cloth dipped in baking soda*- sometimes removes ink or crayon marks from surfaces.
- *Brass or copper cleaner*- Dip a cut lemon in salt and rub on brass surface; rinse completely.
- *Hair spray*- removes marking ink from glass. Works well for removing glue residue left by tape and for removing ink from fabrics.
- *Peanut Butter*- will remove tape residue. Rub a small amount on a surface and wipe away with a paper towel; repeat as necessary.
- *Cider vinegar*- works well for removing rust from pots and pans.
- *Corn starch*- works well for dry-cleaning stuffed animals. Rub into pile and let stand overnight. Take animal outside and shake loose the cornstarch; brush with stiff brush.

Labeling Your Stuff

There are just a few rules you should remember when putting prices on your inventory. People really like yard sales that have price tags on everything. I know it is a lot of work but it is worth it. This will prevent people from constantly asking how much an item is.

It will also increase your sales at least 300%. The majority of people will ask how much something is two or three times and then get tired of asking and leave the yard sale. You will also have people attend your yard sale that will not ask for the price at all and will just leave the yard sale because they do not know any prices.

Another rule of thumb is that the bigger the item is in size, the bigger the price-tag should be. You would not make people look for a small dot with the price on a large piece of furniture like a desk or sofa. Make the price tag obvious.

Make sure that you put the price-tag on the top of all your items and not on the bottom. For example, if you have a pair of candlestick holders for sale, do not put the price tag on the bottom. Do not make the customer have to turn each item over to see what the price is.

Make sure all the price tags are placed on the item so they are easy to see. Remember to make each price tag easy to read also. It does not do any good to have a well-placed price-tag that a customer cannot read. If you have a computer, print larger price tags from your computer. You can even get a heavier paper from your office supply to put in your printer for the larger price tags.

On the larger price tags, you can also list the good points as well as the flaws of the item. For example: "Sofa - \$250 Firm - only 2 years old - comes with two pillows". Or you

might have a junky lawnmower you want to get rid off that does not run; the price tag could say: "Lawnmower \$19.95 - As is - Needs carburetor overhaul".

Do not use masking tape to make your price tags. The adhesive from the tape has a tendency to stick to the clothes and other items when the tape is removed. Go to your office supply where you can purchase various sized stickers for price tags. These tags will not hurt the clothes.

When making the price tags for clothes, always state the size and the price. Again, put the price-tag so it can be clearly seen. Do not make the customer search inside of each item to check the size.

Do not use a color code for your prices, by having different colored labels for different prices. For example: all items with a blue label would be 50¢ and all items with a red label would be \$1.00.

Do not do that! This is a warning because people can be dishonest and switch the labels. Because you will have so many items, it will be next to impossible for you to remember the price of every item.

Prices

There are no absolute set rules for pricing. Remember to think about one of the most important reasons you are having a yard sale.

That reason is to make money and not to just give your stuff away.

Most people that have yard sales, price their stuff way too low. Some of the reasons are:

- × They are not organized
- × Their stuff is not neatly displayed.
- × Their stuff is not clearly marked - people have to dig through it until they get tired of looking.

They make so many mistakes that it is a miracle that they are able to sell anything. I do have some guidelines that you can use to price your inventory for your yard sale.

Whatever you do, don't go to some website that tells you what to charge for your stuff. How do they know what condition or style your stuff is? If you have 30 pairs of pants or 20 shirts, the pants will not all have the same price. The same goes with the shirts. When you go hopping in stores, do their pants and shirts all have the same price?

Rule #1 - Try to remember how much you paid for the item when you purchased it. If this item is in practically new condition and it is still in style, try to get 75% of what you paid for it.

Rule #2 - If the item is in good to excellent condition, you should set the price at half the price you paid for it.

Rule #3 - You can get more than the 10¢ to 25¢ for books that are sold at other yard sales. I was able to get 35¢ to 50¢ for each paperback.

Rule #4 - As the condition goes down from those stated in Rules #1 and #2, lower your prices accordingly.

Rule #5 - Make sure you keep your prices on the high side so you can come down if someone wants to haggle (negotiate) over the price.

It is very important to have room to come down on your price because some people just seem to be professional hagglers. That is part of the fun of going to yard sales for this type of yard sale shopper. If they get to haggle you down on your price, you have just made their day.

Another reason to start a little high on your prices is so you will be able to discount your yard sale inventory as the yard sale starts to near its closing time. You do not have to change all of your price tags on your stuff to show the discount.

To let customers know you are discounting the items in your yard sale, put a sign that says "10% off all items" in the yard close to the street. If you want to give a 20% discount, make your sign let your customers know the amount of the discount.

You should also put a sign in the area where you have your cash box. This sign should say "all prices firm at 10% off". This sign lets the yard sale customers know that you will no longer haggle on price.

These 2 signs will save you a lot of time by not having to change all the prices on each price tag. If you decide to have a second yard sale, all your price tags will remain unaltered and save you a lot of work.

To have this option of discounting your inventory toward the end of the yard sale, you must make these signs made well in advance before the yard sale. This is not something you should have to worry about doing while the yard sale is in progress.

Do not let people intimidate you by saying you are charging too much. You will find that people are willing to pay good prices for quality stuff. After all, it is your stuff that you are selling and not theirs. If they were selling instead of buying, they would be whistling another tune.

One very important thing to remember is that getting rid of all your unwanted stuff is not your only goal. You are trying to make money. Do not give your stuff away. Remember that the more money you make in the yard sale, the more new stuff you will be able go out and buy.

Maybe, instead of buying new stuff that will cause you to have another yard sale next year, you can use the money on a nice vacation like I did.

I know a lot of yard sale people set their prices right on the dollar and don't want to deal with change. For example; there may be a couple pair of pants - one that sells for \$4.00 and the other for \$5.00.

I believe the department stores and other stores set their prices below the dollar for a very good reason. They are able to sell more stuff that way.

I always price my inventory like the stores do. The only difference is that I don't price anything so that I have to use pennies. That means these same pairs of pants would sell for \$3.95 and the other for \$4.95. Don't mess with pennies by pricing your stuff for \$3.97 or \$4.99.

If pricing under the dollar is good enough for the big guys, it's good enough for me. Just make sure that you round everything to the nickel so you do not have to have pennies in your cash box.

Best Time For a Yard Sale

My wife and I ended up having 3 yard sales last year. We had a yard sale in the Spring, Summer and in the Fall. Each one had a new set of shoppers except for the ones that signed our guest book. We tried to get as many shoppers as possible sign their name and email address in our guest book.

If they did not have an email address, we tried to get their telephone number. We used this guest book information to notify each of the shoppers that attended our first yard sale of the time and date of our second and third yard sales. By the time we got to the third yard sale, our crowd was much larger than for the first two yard sales.

You can also put a guest-book on the cash-box table and get customers to sign the book after they pay for their new treasures. We just asked them if they would be interested in being notified of another yard sale that we were planning. It was very easy to email satisfied customers to notify them of another yard sale.

When we email them with the times and dates of the yard sale, we ask them to tell all of their friends. This kind of advertising seemed to work very well for us. Give the guest-book a try.

We also planned our yard sales after the first of the month because we live in a steel mill city and that was their pay-day when people will have money for yard sales.

Four to six-day sales are the best. This gives you enough time to generate a good amount of income to make it worth the time and effort you have put into the organization of your yard sale. Everything that I have read and heard says that Sunday is never a good day for a yard sale.

Our first yard sale lasted from Tuesday through Saturday but even though Saturday was our busiest day, over half the money was made in the first three days. I want you to realize that most of the money from a yard sale comes from the sale of little ticket items that add up. It doesn't just come from big or expensive items.

Don't pick a holiday weekend (Memorial Day, 4th of July or Labor Day) to have your sale. You'll generally have a better turnout if it's a non-holiday weekend. Exception to this rule would be if you live on a road where a lot of tourists drive by in order to get to the beach or some other holiday attraction.

The first yard sale will be the most work because, with the following yard sales, you will have the inventory that did not sell in the first yard sale already prepared and priced. That work is already done.

Cash Box

Let's talk about your cash box. I was a little fortunate in this area because we had a cash register left over from when we computerized our business. This worked great for our sale but you will probably not have a cash register available for you to use.

The cash box that you use can be metal or cardboard. Good examples would be an old metal lunch box or a shoe box and, if you can still find them, a cigar box. The most important thing that all of these containers have in common is a lid. Make sure that whatever you decide to use as a cash box has a lid.

You do not want your customers seeing how much money you have in your cash box. Never ever leave your cash box unattended. Always have someone sitting at the table guarding the cash box. If you are working the yard sale by yourself, it would a good idea to keep the cash in a fanny pack that is strapped to you at all times.

Be sure to have a paper-weight or a good size smooth rock on your check-out table where your cash box is located. When the customer hands you the money to pay for the purchase, after re-counting their money, put the customer's money under the paper weight.

Then make change out of the cash box. This will safe-guard you against someone being dishonest or maybe just making a mistake by saying they gave you a 20 dollar bill instead of the 10 dollar bill they really gave you. If this happens to you, look under the paper weight to see and show the customer what you really received. This will stop any problems when making change for a payment.

Watch out for the customer that wants to help you by totaling up their purchases ahead of time and giving you the total. They may be trying to sneak a high-priced item into the pile so they do not have to pay full price. If this happens, just say you have to check all the items because some of the items belong to your sister and you want to make sure she gets credit for all her items.

How much money should you have in you money box to start the day with? What should the money mix be? Because we lived in a city which is largely composed of steel mill workers, we scheduled our yard sale right after payday. Because of this we had to be prepared for the occasional \$50.00 or \$100.00 bill.

This means we started our cash box out with about double the money you might need. Take this into consideration when planning your yard sale. Here is the cash mix we started our yard sale with

- ✓ Two - \$10.00 bills,
- ✓ Four - \$5.00 bills,
- ✓ Twenty - \$1.00 bills,
- ✓ \$10.00 in quarters,
- ✓ \$5.00 in dimes, and
- ✓ \$2.00 in nickels.

(**Note:** do not use pennies; they are not worth the extra effort. Just set your prices so they are not necessary.)

Our cash box started out with \$77.00. You can start out with less if you want to. It is very important that you have your cash box ready before the first day of your yard sale. Do not wait until the day of the yard sale to discover that you have to go to the bank to get the right money mix.

Advertising Your Yard Sale

This is the most important part of ensuring you have a successful yard sale. Without this step, people will not know you are having a yard sale. Yard sale success is directly related to the number of customers that come to your yard sale. That means the more people that come to your yard sale, the more you will sell.

Even if you do everything else perfectly, without the proper advertising, you will not have a yard sale that generates any large profits. You need a winning ad to insure a winning yard sale.

The first step is to call your local newspaper to find out the rules and the cost for placing a yard sale ad. When you learn the guidelines and the cost of the ad, make sure you place your ad a few days before the deadline. We started our ad two days before the start of the yard sale. Make sure the ad runs all the way up to and including the last day of the sale.

When placing your ad, do not try to save money by skimping on the address and directions to your home. Listing major streets and land marks will help customers find their way. Make it as easy as possible for customers to find their way to your home.

Here is a list of all the elements you should have in your ad.

- ✓ State your address and directions to your home.
- ✓ State the days of the yard sale. (Tues. - Sat.)
- ✓ State the exact times of the yard sale. (8 - 5)
- ✓ List all of the major items in the yard sale.

- ✓ State all the items you have in quantity. (loads of toys, software, etc)
- ✓ Use capital letters or bold print to emphasize key descriptive words like **LOADS**, **GIGANTIC**, **HUGE**, and **MOTHER LOAD**.

Make it a point to check out your newspaper's yard sale ads to see which ad jumps out at you. If you notice the ad and it seems to grab your attention, try to design your yard sale ad similar to this ad. Here is a sample ad...

105 Cresthill Street. (Just off of Sager Rd. by the Radio Station)
HUGE YARD SALE! Over 1,000 items! Tons of designer clothes, like new jeans, tops, skirts, dresses, winter coats, shoes, furniture, 2 TVs, VCR, computer, kitchen items, dishes, tools, old vinyl records, toys, and a massive amount of other items.
Take City View Rd to Sager Rd and turn at the radio station onto Cresthill Street. Tuesday - Saturday 8:30am to 5:00 pm

Newspaper ads are only the first step in your advertising campaign. You also need to get on your computer, make some fliers and hang them in every grocery store, laundromat, K-Mart and Wal-Mart. If you can think of other places to put your fliers, be sure to take advantage of these locations. Believe it or not, these fliers can bring a lot of customers to your yard sale.

Another very important part of your yard sale advertising will be your signs. You must make the construction and placement of your yard sale signs one of your top priorities if you want a successful yard sale.

The best material to make your sign out of is corrugated plastic.

Your yard sale signs will be subjected to all the outdoor elements. They have to stand up to wind and rain. If your sign is no longer readable because they are folded back in the wind or turned into mush because it has gotten wet, your yard sale could lose potential sales. This is what can happen when paper, poster board and corrugated cardboard is used for the sign material.

Corrugated plastic can be obtained from your local office supply like Staples and Office Max. Signs made from this material can be used over and over again.

The size of your sign is an important factor to take into consideration. Your signs should be at least 11" x 17" and the larger the better. It is a good idea to contact your local authorities to find out if there are any restrictions on the maximum size that your yard sale sign can be. There may also be restrictions on the number of yard sale signs you can put up.

Just remember that the more yard sale signs you can put up, the more customers you will have at your yard sale. If you are not limited in the amount of signs you can put up, you can make enough signs to cover all the local intersections leading to your sale. It would also be a good idea to put your signs in a few key high-traffic intersections a little farther away from your yard sale location.

For your information, each four-way intersection will require at least three signs to effectively direct traffic to your yard sale. One will have an arrow pointing to the left,

another with a right pointing arrow and the third will require an arrow pointing straight or an up pointing arrow.

Keep in mind that when someone is driving by in their car, you only have a few seconds to communicate with them through your sign. This means that you should limit the information on your sign to the necessary information required to get people to your yard sale.

The most important thing to communicate is that you are having a yard sale. Yard Sale should be placed at the top of your sign in the largest letters possible. Make sure you make the letters at least 1/2" thick and that they are colored in. The letters need to be as thick as possible because thin letters are very hard to read from a passing car.

The next thing to put on your sign is the days of your sale. Do not put the dates of the sale. By using the days of the week, like TUE - SAT, you can reuse your signs for the next yard sale. If you were to put the date, like 6/8/03, your sign would only be good for the dates used on the sign.

After the days of the yard sale, you should list the beginning and ending time for the yard sale. Because the driver of the car has to be able to read the time of the yard sale as he or she passes by, keep the beginning and ending times for the yard sale the same for all the days of the sale.

For example, you would put 8:30AM - 5:00PM. An even shorter and easier to read time would be 9AM - 5PM. Finally, you need to put the location of your yard sale on the sign. This will be as simple as putting your street name in this spot. Don't forget to put your directional arrow on your sign so it is easy to see.

It is of the utmost importance to mount your signs to something sturdy that won't bend over in the wind. It is very hard to read a sign flapping about or bent over as you drive by it. Even if it is not windy that day, the cars driving by your signs can create a significant amount of wind force on your sign.

To mount my signs, I used screws to attach the signs to sturdy wooden stakes and then pounded the stacks into the ground. To increase the strength of the sign, I placed several strips of duct tape across the back of the sign and over the stake.

Now you have to sit down and make a map of your immediate local area. Especially note nearby high-traffic intersections. Put a dot on the map at each spot you plan to place a sign. Place dots at all the significant local intersections leading to your yard sale as well as a few key high traffic intersections a little farther out.

Don't forget to plan for periodic signs with arrows pointing up to keep drivers going straight for long stretches of road where the driver may be tempted to think that they have missed a turn. somewhere. Think about which direction the arrows on each sign will need to point and write down "left", "right", or "straight" next to each dot on your map.

Draw the arrows on your signs accordingly. Save this map so you will know where all the signs are when you have to pick them up after the yard sale comes to an end. Remember that these signs are reusable.

Additional Hints for Success

Make sure the grass is mowed a couple of days before the yard sale.

To add an additional service that will really impress your customers, save every grocery and department store-bag you can get your hands on. I do not think a bag can be too small. Your customers will recognize this as a nice touch when they need something to put all of their new treasures into.

Save that old newspaper also, to wrap breakable items in. The customers will see that you really care. If you want to catch regular yard sale shoppers fresh with their pockets full of money, start your yard sale a half-hour earlier than all the other yard sales in your area.

We used 4 tables that were 2 ft wide by 8 ft long. We did not know anyone that we could borrow tables from so I made 8 saw-horses from the cheap little saw horse kits you can get at a building supply. Then, I cut two 4 ft by 8 ft 3/4 inch sheets of plywood in half length wise. This gave me 4 table tops, and I used the saw-horses for legs.

We also used a roll of paper table cloth - the kind you find on tables at a wedding reception. Cover the tables so that they look nice. I used a staple gun to staple the table cloth to the table so that the wind did not blow it away. This made our table look very neat and we could put a new clean cover on the tables each day.

Neatness and an orderly display of your merchandise will go a long way impressing the customer and making it much easier for them to find the stuff that they want. This means that you will make more money. If a pile of clothes gets messed up, do your best to get them straightened up as soon as you can.

Make sure your items are well organized and not scattered around on the tables. For example, put toys on one table, kitchen items on another, books on shelves, children's clothes arranged in small piles according to size and neatly folded.

All of the adult clothes should be hung on racks with the sizes and prices clearly marked. Put the men's clothes on one rack and women's clothes on another. These clothes should be arranged according to size. If you have any children's clothes that should also be hung up, like nice dresses and coats, they should be on a separate clothes rack.

Make sure all of your clothes are clean and wrinkle-free because you will get a much better price for these items if they are not wrinkled. I have said this many other times because it is so important. Even torn or stained clothes will sell if they are not wrinkled and are priced accordingly.

Remember to put plenty of space between your tables because all of your customers will not be the same size. In other words, make all of your inventory easy to get to. Whatever you do, don't put your stuff on the ground and expect your customers to look through your stuff there.

Use a card table for your check-out area. This table should be placed in an area that makes it easy for you to see what is going on with all the items in your yard sale. Ice down a couple of cases of soda pop in a big cooler. These are purchased when they were on sale so you can sell them for 50¢ each. Just sell the kind you like so you won't mind the leftovers for yourself if they do not all sell.

You may find that there are people who show up early for your sale. They are called early birds. Don't let these early birds intimidate you. If you're not ready to do business, just tell them that every item is doubled in price before the opening time of the yard sale.

These people may show up 30 to 60 minutes early, ringing your door bell inquiring when the yard sale is going to start.

It has been my experience that these early birds rarely purchase anything. To help eliminate you can even put, "All prices doubled to early birds" right in your advertisement.

Make sure that anything you do not want to sell is put away. If you don't, that will be the item some buyer is insistent on purchasing. This is especially true if you have your yard sale in the garage. If you use your garage as an area for your yard sale, make sure it is cleaned out and everything you do not want to sell is hidden or covered up.

Having part of your inventory in the garage can make it much easier to manage your yard sale. You can set your inventory up ahead of time and it makes it easier to shut the sale down at night by just moving all the items outside into the garage and closing the garage door.

The garage is also handy if it is very windy or it starts to rain. If you decide to use your garage, be sure the floor is cleaned and there are no strange smells. A couple of air fresheners can go a long way to prevent these odors. It is proven that people seem to buy more when the air and environment is clean and fresh.

You can even use sale pennants (little colored flags strung together) to rope off the sale area so the customers do not wander into areas that you do not want them to go.

When placing your clothes racks outside, put them in a place where the wind will not blow them over and they cannot be knocked over by your customers.

During your yard sale, keep your tables attractive by filling in the empty spots on your tables as things get sold. It is a good idea to keep your eyes on your customers but do not hover over them. They will ask if they need more information about and item.

Try to have someone else helping you if possible because the yard sale could get very busy. If you have to be working the yard sale by yourself, it would be a good idea to leave either loud music or the television on inside of your house. This will give the impression that you are not there by yourself.

One final thing you can do to make your yard sale more relaxing is to have some background music playing. Easy-listening music would be a good choice, not hip hop heavy metal. Easy-listening music will allow your customers to discuss potential purchases privately with their shopping partners, without feeling like they have to whisper.

As you have more and more yard sales, you will become better and better at them. The first one will seem like a lot of work, but they will get easier and easier as you have them. By putting a lot of effort into your yard sale, you will reap a large reward in the form of sales. We took one of the best vacations we ever had because of our yard sale efforts. Good luck and happy yard selling.

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