

# Bankrate.com

By Clark Palmer

## 6 Tips for a Successful Yard Sale

Having a yard sale is a fun way to declutter your home while making a few bucks. But without proper planning, a lot can go wrong.

Maybe you'll fail to attract enough shoppers. Or, you may run out of change just as sales get hopping.

"If you have a well-organized yard sale, you'll probably have a better chance of selling your stuff," says Laura Leist, president of the National Association of Professional Organizers and founder of Eliminate Chaos, a professional organizing company based in Bellevue, Wash.

Leist and two other yard sale experts offer the following tips for making your yard sale a success.

### **Pick the right day of the week, month**

Know which days of the week, month and year are most likely to attract shoppers.

"Saturdays are best here in North Carolina. In other regions of the country, it's Thursday," says Geralin Thomas, a professional organizer and founder of Metropolitan Organizing in Cary, N.C. She's also been featured on the A&E reality show "Hoarders."

A lot of people get paid on the 1st and 15th of the month and may have more money in their pockets on those days. If you live in a resort town, holiday weekends may attract tourists with spending money looking for bargains, Thomas says.

### **Use advertising and be specific**

Lack of advertising is one of the biggest yard sale mistakes, Leist says.

Thomas agrees. "Give people a reason to attend," she says, and suggests posting ads in the newspaper or on Craigslist or making fliers to pass out at church or the grocery store.

Describe your items well -- tell people if you're selling a flat-screen TV or maternity clothes, Thomas says. Give detailed directions that describe that you're close to the pizza place or behind the church, she says.

Leist says it's important not to skimp on signage. She recommends decorating big cardboard boxes with bright-colored paper and writing "Yard Sale," the date and the time in big block letters with arrows pointing toward your house.

"Some people think you can just take a Sharpie and make a sign," Leist says.

### **Keep items at eye level**

Arrange items in a way that maximizes sales potential, says Tisha Tolar, who helps set up an annual town-wide yard sale in Frackville, Pa.

"If you have a big-ticket item, put it out closer to the street," says Tolar, a blogger for Wise Bread. "Kids are always looking for stuff like that."

People need to see things at eye level, so you put most things on tables, says Leist. Divide items up into categories, like tools, kitchen appliances, books, etc. Then, put signs in front of the tables telling people what category it is, Leist says.

High-value items that someone could hide in a purse or backpack should be kept at the checkout table, where you can keep an eye on them, Leist says.

Thomas and Tolar recommend putting clothes on racks, because customers mess up clothes on a table or clothes in boxes. Thomas suggests grouping clothes according to sizes and who they're for: men's, women's, kid's clothes, etc.

"I don't think anyone should ever put out unlaundered, dirty, wrinkled clothes," says Thomas.

Also, a full-length mirror helps people see how clothes look on them and should boost sales, Thomas says.

### **Have enough change on hand**

Have enough money to make proper change throughout the day. Thomas recommends having \$75 in singles on hand.

Tolar says [having too little cash](#) in the till can sabotage yard sale success.

"If you don't have change, then the first person shows up with \$50 and you're screwed for the rest of the day," Tolar says.

Put the money in a cash box you hide or in an apron you wear, Tolar says.

Offering snacks to customers -- donuts and coffee, bottled water and snacks for kids -- could help you make a little extra money, Thomas says.

### **Price items to sell**

Leist and Thomas agree the main goal is to get rid of stuff.

"You're not doing this to make a ton of money," says Leist.

So if you're looking to get half of what you originally paid for something, go on eBay or Craigslist, according to Leist.

Charging admission to the sale can generate more cash, Thomas says. For instance, each person pays \$10 to get in and gets everything they can fit into two grocery bags. Or, if you have a lot of kid's stuff, charge \$1 for everything a kid can fit in a Ziploc bag.

Thomas also recommends pricing items in sections -- a \$1 section, \$5 section, \$10 section and so on.

At the end of the day, put whatever's left on the curb with a sign telling people to take what they want, Thomas says. Or, conduct a leftover raffle and charge \$1 per ticket. Then, allow each winner to take five or 10 items of his or her choice.