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You can be a garage sale guru too!



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Writer

Your basement is filled with treasures. Well, you call them treasures, and your family calls them junk. The die is cast. You chose a date, and you start planning a garage sale. I must admit, my wife and I are genuine garage sale junkies. Garage sailing has taken us to areas of Calgary we had never visited that yielded terrific treasures!

Start Early
We've also held our own sales. The key is to start planning early. When choosing a date, the middle or end of the month is when most people are paid and have

extra cash. Check long-range weather forecasts. **Team-Building**
Begin by casually asking friends, family and general passers-by if they'll be in town on your sale day. Then, warn them up for the big ask. You'll need help moving and pricing items. Signs must be made and placed around your neighbourhood. You'll need to create flyers for bulletin boards and organize email and social media campaigns. You'll need help.

Marketing Your Sale
Trigger word-of-mouth advertising by spreading the news of your sale to co-workers, friends, family – anyone who might buy something. Don't be shy. Fake photos of key items for marketing. Creating a collage of smaller items also makes a nice image. Upload ads to sites like Kijiji, Facebook Marketplace and other free sites. Place flyers on bulletin boards in your community.

Signs
If you don't have well-made and well-placed signs, nothing else matters. Drive through your neighbourhood, noting the best places for signs. Then, drive in a 360° circle from your home to major intersections. Create a sign funnel to lead people back to your sale.

Organize the Chaos
A garage or basement floor are great places for organizing items. Place large items on your lawn covered by a tarp. As the amount grows, think in terms of categories. That will make setup easier on the morning of your sale. It will also make you more money. If someone asks for hockey gear, you can quickly direct them to the sports area. They may buy other gear as well.

Price It Up
If the first item a customer picks up is dusty, dirty or slimy, their shriek of "Eeeenwww!" will send a cold chill through the rest of the crowd at your sale. A little elbow grease can yield big bucks. Don't go overboard on a \$2.00 item, but sprucing things up will add value. Clean, fresh-smelling clothing hung on hangers command a higher price than stained and rumpled items dumped in a pile on a tarp or in a box.

Stuffed toys are kid magnets! Parents and grandparents can't resist buying at least one, especially if they have a cranky kid with them. Wash the toys and add extra softener for an inviting fragrance.

Price
Price items before the sale. The process will help you think through values and develop a pricing strategy. Use round numbers. Pricing items at \$1.00 or \$50.00 rather than \$1.45 or \$50.35, eliminates the need for mountains of change. It will speed things up at the checkout table.

Be Responsible
Check items with an eye to safety. If in doubt, throw it out. Examine children's toys for breakage. Old lamps with frayed cords that give off a 'burry smell' belong in the trash, not in peoples' living rooms unless the buyer knows repairs are needed. Cribs, car seats and

other children's products that are 20 years old may not meet today's safety standards. Protect other families like you protect your own.

Merchandizing
Tables make it easy to display your treasures as attractively as possible. When your tables are full, place shelving or strips of plywood on sawhorses or sturdy boxes. As items sell, keep the tables looking attractive by filling empty spots. That is an excellent job for grandkids. Garage sale cruisers will brake to a screeching halt when they see furniture, appliances, or exercise equipment near the entrance. I don't understand why, but some men hate garage sales. Help their spouses by placing man bait like sports equipment or tools in prominent places. Make it easy for people to flip through your music. Place CDs, albums or cassette tapes in sturdy boxes set on tables. Cut the flaps off so buyers can see album titles and covers. If you have 2-300 units organize them into rock, country, classical, pop or gospel. Do the same thing with books. Arrange them into business, fiction, biography's, how-to, inspiration, history, children, or other topics. Have an electric cord available for people to try out blenders, lamps, radios and batteries for toys or electronic gear. "Trust me, it works," does not always invite confidence. Show Me the Money Place your checkout table near the back of

the sale. An old tackle box, toolbox, muffin tin or plastic food containers are perfect for organizing your cash. Have a variety of bills and coins so that you never run out. A calculator will speed up bulk transactions. Make your sale cash only. Some may ask to transfer money for higher-priced items. Only do this if you are comfortable with the process or have someone on your team who is. Suggest customers go to a nearby ATM to withdraw cash. Eliminate temptation. As the amount of cash grows, periodically place larger bills in a safe place like a fanny pack or secret drawer in your house.

Security
Be safe! Not everyone visiting your sale will have good intentions. If you have a moving or estate sale, people will need to go into your house to view furniture and other items. This is where your team comes into play. Don't allow people to wander out of sight without supervision. Have a shutdown strategy. First, reduce prices by 70-80%



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Robyn T. Braley is a Brand Specialist, Writer and Speaker. Robyn's goal is to help people become resilient and make real change. He takes great pleasure in helping them discover "Ah-Ha!" moments when they hear him speak at conferences, in online tutorials, or read his posts, magazine articles and ebooks.

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