

The 5 P's of Successful Garage Sales

By Tashia Calhoun

Planning and having a garage, yard or tag sale is a lot of work and it can be very disappointing when you put all of that effort into it and don't make any money! Here are some tips and techniques that will help you to plan and pull off a Successful Money Making Garage Sale this year!

The 5 P's of Successful Garage Sales:

- 1. Planning**
- 2. Preparation**
- 3. Pricing**
- 4. Presentation**
- 5. Profits**

Planning

Start Early and allow yourself enough time to properly prepare for your sale. If you have a lot of stuff or are having a group sale, I would suggest that you start planning 4 weeks in advance. There is a lot of work to be done and if you spread out the work, you will not be stressing out and on the brink of a breakdown come sale day!

Choose a Date for your sale. If your town or city has an annual neighborhood sale day or celebration days, those are both great times to have your sale because there will be lots of shoppers. Some folks discourage having your sale on a holiday weekend, but I have had good luck with those because of all of the traffic going through my small town on the big weekends. Fridays are the most popular garage sale day in my area; choose a day that is best for your area.

Choose a Location for your sale. If you are having a group sale, whoever has the biggest garage and yard may be the lucky winner! A garage is best, but if you don't have a garage, you can always put up tents or set up under a shady tree in your yard.

Bigger is Better! Group sales are very successful and you can share the workload. Ask your extended family or a neighbor to join you.

Take Inventory to get an idea of what you want to sell at your sale. Grab a notebook, pen and take a walk through every room in your house, garage and/or shed and make a list of items to sell.

Make a Checklist of all of the things you need to accomplish to prepare for your sale, this will help keep you on track in your planning and ensure that you don't forget any important tasks, like getting change from the bank! You can also download our Free Garage Sale Checklist [here](#).

Preparation

Gather Your Inventory items to sell one room at a time. You can price items as you go or move all items to another area for pricing later.

Prepare Your Items for the sale by making sure everything is clean, attractive and in working condition!

Advertise, Advertise, Advertise...this is not the place to skimp! Tell your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, church, daycare etc. about your sale. Post flyers around town, put a creative attention grabbing ad in your local newspaper, post your sale on www.craigslist.com, www.communityhotline.com and don't forget your favorite social networking sites like www.twitter.com, www.facebook.com or www.myspace.com.

Create some fabulously flashy Garage Sale Signs; if you point them in the right direction...they will come! Who can resist the bright neon pink with big and bold thick black letters "Huge 5 Family Garage Sale 1 Block this way" with big and firm (not deflated) neon green balloons?

Make sure your signs look the same, use the same colors and wording on each sign. Post your signs at all high traffic intersections surrounding your home, check with your city/town's policies regarding signage.

Pricing

Pricing Garage Sale Items is definitely not as fun as collecting that money! You want to be reasonable in your pricing, not too high, not too low. I understand that everyone is out to find the deal of the century...but don't let that deal be had courtesy of you! You don't have to give your treasures away!

Consider the brand, age and condition of the item you are pricing. Your shoppers will usually pay a slightly higher price for popular items that are name brand and in excellent shape.

Your prices should also reflect your location. If you are not familiar with average garage sale prices in your area, go to some local sales to get an idea of what things are selling for.

Stickers are great for pricing! You can buy pre-printed price stickers, print your own on the computer by using address label templates or just write each price yourself. Masking tape also works. The removable stickers are wonderful for dishes, glass and books.

Make a Pricing Box to hold your pricing supplies (anything you may need while you are pricing and preparing your items): stickers, tape, markers, pens, paper, scissors, safety pins and Ziploc bags.

Put a Price on Everything! Except the dog, of course! Your customers want to know how much your items are and they don't want to have to ask.

A Price Chart will work if you are not concerned about keeping track of who sold what (i.e. all shirts \$1.00, pants \$2.00).

Keep your prices at even amounts like .50, .75, \$1 and not .95 cents. Stay away from .10 and .20, I figure my time in preparing is worth more than that! If you do have items that you believe are only worth .10, try bundling them with other like items, then you can give it a higher price.

Presentation

Your setup and display should be attractive and well organized, think Wal-mart. You know, arrange clothing according to size and gender, display signs for specific areas and clothing sizes, toys over here, shoes over there, baby items on that table and so on. Don't make your customers dig through boxes or tubs full of stuff!

Your shoppers will feel much more comfortable shopping and purchasing your items when you take the time to display your beloved belongings with care.

Have an Extension Cord or Batteries handy for those who want to test their new found treasures. For battery operated toys, you can test them in advance and put a sticker on them that says "Works - Needs Batteries."

The Free Box is always a big hit, I like to put lots of toys in there, and this will keep the kids busy so mom can shop!

You should have everything set up and ready to go the night before your sale, this way all you have to do in the morning is uncover tables and/or pull tables and items out into the driveway and yard and get ready to collect your money!

If possible, **remove or cover anything from the yard or garage that is not for sale.** A big "Not for Sale" sign will work too.

Remember "Safety First," as you are setting up for your sale. You are going to have a lot of people going through your garage and yard. Take a minute after you get setup to study your layout and spot any dangerous or unsafe situations.

Profits

The day of the sale is going to be busy, busy, busy...hopefully you have done your organizing and prep work so it will go smoothly! You should have everything ready when your customers show up! And of course, expect some early birds. Don't forget your sunscreen!

Get Change from the bank a day or two before the sale! If you are having a pretty big sale, I would recommend that you have \$80-100 in change, \$20-30 in \$1's, \$20-30 in \$5's, \$20 in \$10's, a \$10 roll of quarters and maybe \$2 in dimes and nickels.

Prepare the Checkout Area, you will want a good sized table, calculator or adding machine, money box or cash apron, a system to keep track of individual sales, boxes or bins available for the heavy duty shoppers and lots and lots of bags!

Make sure you have enough help. If you are expecting a big turnout, you will want 2-3 people at the checkout on your opening morning.

Keep track of all money - coming in or going out! If something does not have a sticker or if you borrow some money for coffee and donuts, be sure to write it down!

The Concession Stand is always a great opportunity and learning experience for the older kids. If they are old enough, they can take care of all the details like purchasing and/or making treats and beverages, pricing their items and tending to their stand the whole time. And they get to keep 100% of the profits!

Be sure to **plan the Parking Situation ahead of time** and designate "parking" or "no parking" areas clearly.

Watch for opportunities to **Encourage more shopping,** when you see customers with their arms loaded up (and I hope you do), politely grab their stuff and put it in an empty bin or box up by the checkout area. This frees up their arms for more stuff!

Create a relaxing and inviting Atmosphere. Have some mellow music playing and use the slower times to straighten up the tables and other areas throughout the day to keep things looking nice.

If you are having a 1-day sale, you can start **slashing prices** in the afternoon or reduce prices on the second day for a 2-day sale.

After the Sale

Don't forget to take down your signs & flyers! There's nothing more annoying than following signs to last week's sale!

I almost forgot...**COUNT YOUR MONEY!!!** That's the whole point here, isn't it? Let's see if your organization and preparation paid off!

So, you made a fortune, but there will always be lots of stuff left! Oh, what to do with it...

The Keep – Throw – Donate Method

- **Keep** – If you have the room, you can save any items that are valuable to you or that you know will sell at next year's sale.
- **Throw** – Throw away any items that you do not want to keep or donate.
- **Donate** – Donate your left over items to a Goodwill, thrift store, charity or any local outfit (our local lions club accepts donations for their big annual sale!). Give items to friends. Donate books or movies to your local library or your school's library.

The Salvation Army accepts donations and you can even schedule a pick up or find a local drop off on their website www.salvationarmyusa.org. They have a Value Guide so you can list your items and figure what your total donation value is for tax purposes, don't forget to get a receipt!

Goodwill also accepts donations, you can search for locations and they also have a value guide on their website www.goodwill.org.

*Tashia Calhoun is the author of the **Secrets of Successful Garage Sales** ebook and the **Easy Garage Sale Planner** which includes a 4 week Time Line, an overall extensive Garage Sale Checklist, Inventory Lists, Writing your Ad, Mapping your Layout, Mapping your Signs, a Sales Record Sheet and a Donation Record Sheet. Also included is the **Garage Sale Pricing Guide**, which has low, average and high prices for over 100 items! She made \$1400 at her 2007 sale! Find out how at www.Garage-Sale-Secrets.com.*