

# Garage Sale Tips



**Special report from  
Donna Donaldson,  
Professional Organiser**

[www.Organizelt.com.au](http://www.Organizelt.com.au)

As you declutter & organise your home, have 3 containers:

1. Items to keep
2. Items to sell/charity
3. Rubbish to throw away

When you go through each room, think about each of the categories below and use this as a guide to prompt you to see what you have that you no longer need or use or have accumulated duplicates of. Take your box which will likely become boxes and go from room to room collecting those items that can make you extra cash.

Don't think about how much you paid for them and that you don't want to part with them, but how when all put together, how much cash you will have made. Then use this as a deterrent from going out and buying more things that will sit and collect dust until your next garage sale.

It's a good idea to go right through the house at least once if not twice or more throughout the year and have a clean out!! The more often you do it the easier it gets, you may find that over time you get just as much if not more enjoyment from the feeling of clearing out than from buying in.

Buyer's remorse is an awful feeling and the high you get from buying something new can be short lived. However the joy and freedom that you get from having a home that is free from clutter can be long lasting and much healthier. Everything in moderation!

A garage sale can be organised in a week or a month depending how much time/goods/care you wish to put into your sale. If you have time take an hour or two and go visit some garage sales to get a feel for prices, presentation and to see what you like and dislike.

**BUT** don't be tempted to spend more money as the idea is to clear out and declutter, not to collect more!! Maybe go with empty pockets and if there is something you

really want enough to go back home and get your money and go back to buy it, but only if you really need it, and you probably don't!!!!

2. Garage sale items- put like items together:

<b>Kitchen</b>	<b>Clothes</b>	<b>Toys</b>	<b>Tools/ Accessories</b>	<b>Furniture/ Electrical</b>	<b>Linen</b>
crockery	clothing	toys	mowers	lounge/dinning	blankets
glassware	shoes	books	blowers	bedroom	doonas
cutlery	accessories	games	wiper snipper	electrical items	mattresses
cookware	bags/purse/wallets	DVD's/CD's	bikes	outdoor furniture	cushions
plastics	hair care	hobbies	tools	office	sheets
electrical items	electrical items	collectables	camping gear	fridge/freezer	towels etc
cookbooks	cosmetics/make-up	Lego etc	hobbies	sewing machines	tea towels
gadgets	sunglasses/glasses		pet/pool/ acc	vacuum cleaners	table clothes
	jewellery		car acc	fans/heaters	electric blankets

Instead of having a box full of little toys/books/hair accessories etc it is a good idea to use zip lock bags to group similar items together like matchbox cars mix a couple of good ones with the ok ones and then you are not stuck with all the average stuff.

You may not charge much or any more for the cheaper items that go in the bag, but you will get rid of them. Mc Donald's toys you may fill a small zip lock bag and put \$1 or \$2 on it. We mostly think what we have is more important and that we should get more for it because it cost ..... However better we get rid of it and make some money than get stuck with it all and sell hardly anything. You have put the effort in so you want to see your goods sell. Be realistic, you are not going to sell everything!!

Depending on how much you have and how many households are combining, will make a difference to how you set up your categories. You may have a small amount and not need all of these categories, nevertheless try to keep like items together. As you sort through be sure not to put broken rubbish in as customers don't like it. If the cars only have 2 wheels would you like to buy them for your kids?

If the crockery or glassware has chips would you buy it? Test all electrical or if unsure have an electrician test electrical. Test mobile phones and battery operated goods. When you know things are working properly you can put a better price on them and don't have to waste time on the day testing.

Now that you know what you have and have some order as far as categories go work out where you will have your garage sale. E.g.

- Garage
- Carport
- Patio
- Front yard
- Back yard
- Covered area

Remember if it rains and you are not undercover you will lose a lot of customers and have a battle on your hands with keeping things dry or having to cancel. On the other hand if it is a hot summer's day customers don't like having to stand out in the sun while perusing your goods. If you don't have a good covered area, see if you can combine a garage sale with someone who does. It's also a great idea if you don't have a lot to sell see about combining with friends or neighbours!

You could see if you could borrow a gazebo or likes thereof. If you have no choice but to have it out in the elements then be sure to have some tarps or plastic even blankets that you can throw over the things that will get spoiled by the rain. Likewise think of what delicate items you are putting out in the blazing sun.

If possible put as much as possible on tables or makeshift tables and get as much off the ground as you can. Most people are not interested in leaning over and rummaging through your stuff! You can use bricks, plastic storage containers or strong boxes to put boards across to create a makeshift table. You can use desks, tables, book cases, ironing boards that you are or aren't selling to display goods on, by covering with a sheet or cloth.

Try to hang as many of your clothes as possible or have them neatly folded on a table. Use clothes racks, string up lines hand over hooks, open brickwork etc. Always make sure you keep your area safe so that customers are not likely to trip over things or have things fall on them!!

Be sure to price all items before the day. If you are combining with friends or family, ask them to present their items well and have them priced and what time you are opening so they can be there with you!!!! There is no fun in being lumped with a group of friend's items that they dump at your doorstep unsorted and no prices.

Colour coding tags or an initial next to the price is a good way to differentiate between who owns what. That way you can all collect your monies separately. If they don't want to be there you can always offer to go 50/50 with the profits from their goods if you are doing the work. If so have a note pad next to your money and a divided page and write down what money is collected for each of you.

If you have time and want to you can write what the items are also. Trust me you will not remember what you sold and for how much at the end of the day. Without spending ridiculous amounts of time preparing everything, try to present your goods as well as you possibly can. Dirty or broken goods, stained clothes and sloppy presentation will turn away potential buyers and seriously affect your profits for the day.

As you price your items, remember that they are likely going to the charity shop if they don't sell, so be generous with these goods as it is better to get something rather than nothing. Again too high a price will turn would be customers away. You may like to have a "Free Box" for all purchasing customers to receive a free item with purchase. Just little fun inexpensive stuff! A 50 cent and \$1 boxes are good too.

When pricing your goods, look for items that you know are more expensive and Google them to see what the going price is for them. If they are quite a new item or expensive item, I would suggest advertising them in the Courier Mail Weekend Shopper as well. In Brisbane you currently get 5 free ads in the weekend shopper for

goods under \$500, plus unlimited ads for online advertising of private sale goods.(there are some exclusions)

There are other online sites that you can advertise through like Gumtree, who are free to advertise and no fee on sale. You can also try your hand at eBay; they have a variety of selling methods that you can try.

However it is good to talk to someone that has used some of these methods before to know the benefits and pitfalls of each type of advertising. When you have your extra ads that coincide with your garage sale, you can use the enquiries for your specially advertised goods to encourage them to come and see your garage sale as they might find other things they are looking for too.

I always recommend the courier mail weekend shopper for garage sale ads. I have never had a good response from the local paper ads and they are similar in price.

There are lots of options when placing a garage sale ad. There are special headings and different packages. At the end of the day, the people that are keen to garage sale are not going to care whether you have a **MOVING** sign at the top of your add or not. The cost almost doubles when you take the deluxe package compared to the budget package. Currently the pricing in Brisbane is approx \$18.50 compared with \$29.95.

It is a good idea to place your ad early in the week so you don't forget, you can always change a few things later in the week if need be, but at least you know the ad is in and paid for. Ever heard of someone setting up a whole garage sale and forgetting to put in the ad???? Trust me they'll only ever do it once!! Here is a sample ad:

# Garage sales

**Redcliffe Sat 6am till 12 noon 26 somewhere St. Monster combined sale tools kitchenware bread maker clothes accessories toys books dvd/cds linen jewellery computer furniture camping gear fridge bric a brac and much more something for everyone.**

This is just a sample; it may not be exactly 10 lines but gives you the idea. It is a good idea to mention your most popular items like tools/antiques/collectables and more individual items like fridge/lounge etc that people may be especially looking for. Monster combined gives the impression of lots of stuff, if that's what you have! Don't waste space using punctuation.

Be sure to check at home or take a trip to the bank and get some change. Many people rock up with \$50 and \$20 notes to be changed. I use a bum bag and keep it on me at all times. Never ever leave your cash tin or container lying around.

Be very careful of expensive jewellery or collectable items. Keep any expensive items at your table where they can't be easily taken. It's always a good idea to have at least 2 people to man a garage sale especially for when it is busy.

In Brisbane and surrounding areas it is signage pollution to put up garage sale signs that are not in your own yard. Many people do put them up, but be aware that if you get caught you can be up for \$250 per sign!!!

My suggestion is to put your garbage bin on the edge of your driveway with lots of balloons tied to it with a big "GARAGE SALE HERE" sign on each side so cars coming both ways can see it. You can sometimes put little ads in your local shopping centres too.

You usually have the dealers (who on sell your goods) who arrive first, often from 5am onwards, if you really don't want this then don't put your street number in the ad, unless you live on a very long road. Even if you say from 7am onwards beware you might get some surprises earlier. The worst thing that can happen is you are unprepared, don't have prices, the dealers arrive early, you have to pull all your stuff out while they are going through your things, and you get offered ridiculous prices for valuable things but are too flustered to realise. Be prepared!

Usually between 6am and 8am is your busiest time. Usually not a lot happens after about 10am. After 10am I reduce prices on most things as it is a lot of work to pack it all up again. It's fun to do package deals with things so that you get rid of more but it doesn't cost the customer much more.

Most people love a bargain at garage sales. They also like to bargain you down. You don't want to get to the end of your garage sale and wish you had been more flexible with your prices and sold a whole lot more. Be friendly and smile! Have some easy listening music playing in the back ground as it is more inviting. Have fun!!

#### Important tips for preparing

- Sort
- Clean
- Arrange
- Price
- Advertise
- Signage
- Have change
- Be flexible
- Create a fun environment

At the end of the day, you can pack up and then pull down signage which sometimes gives you a few more stragglers that might buy and be looking for a bargain. If you have had enough then pull down your signage and pack up after. Pack into boxes and bags that are easy to get to the charity shop with. Get them out as soon as possible!!! Don't even think about putting things back inside!!!



If you have expensive items that haven't sold then keep advertising them, you may need to be a little more flexible with your pricing.

### **If You Are In Brisbane, Qld**

You can do as much or as little as you like in preparing and conducting your garage sale.

For as little as \$50, I can come and give you 2 hours of my time towards set up and pricing guide if required.

Or if you prefer I will be there as your own sales representative and share in the profits 50% for you and 50% for me for the duration of the sale. (time limits may apply).

When your garage sale is complete I can also help to take away your unwanted goods if required. (Limits apply)

**If you would like to know more about my services and how I can help you organise a garage sale, or declutter and organise your home, then feel free to contact me, M: 0403 435 685 E: [info@organizeit.com.au](mailto:info@organizeit.com.au) Or find more tips on decluttering on my website [www.organizeit.com.au](http://www.organizeit.com.au)**