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## Tips for holding a successful garage sale

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Want to make a few bucks and get rid of your household clutter at the same time? It may be time for a garage sale.

Aaron LaPedis, author of "The Garage Sale Millionaire," has hosted some 50 garage sales of his own and frequents them in search of artwork and antiques. Done right, a garage sale not only can generate some cash but also land you a tax deduction.

Here's what you need to do to get the most cash from your clutter.

**Gather widely:** The key to getting lots of customers is having lots of stuff to sell, LaPedis said. People are going to drive by and take a quick glance before they get out of their cars. The more they see for sale, the more likely they are to stop.

Besides, much of the spadework you need to do before the sale is the same whether you're selling 20 items or 2,000. You might as well make your sale as comprehensive as possible. That means going through every closet in the house, not to mention the attic, basement and garage. If you don't have enough on your own, see if you've got neighbors or friends who would like to host a joint sale.

"When you say 'Multi-family sale' on your signs, it stops people dead in their tracks," he said. "You'll have a highway backup."

**Sort your stuff:** If you have big and expensive items for sale, you might try to sell them on [eBay](#) before hosting a garage sale. People expect bargains when items are displayed on your lawn. So make sure you've already tried to sell the things for which you want top dollar.

**Price only the big items:** When LaPedis expects to get less than \$20 for an item, he doesn't put

a price on it. He lets people ask how much it costs and responds with: "What do you think it's worth?" That gives him a chance to bargain. And he's often surprised that people offer more than he would have asked.

**Advertise:** A week or two before the sale, post event notices on your [Facebook](#) page and Twitter feed. Also advertise on [Craigslist](#) and a site called TagSellIt, which allows you to list your garage sale free of charge.

In addition, prepare 20 big poster boards, at least 3 by 3 feet in size, to post the day before the sale in prominent locations, such as near the post office, library and neighborhood grocery store, as well as at major intersections. They should have your event — "Multi-Family Garage Sale," for example — and your address in big, bold letters. But also include a few items that you'll have for sale.

**Double dip:** If you have children or a charity willing to host a lemonade stand or bake sale, arrange to get them a nice table and spot in the shade. Not only will they make money off your garage sale customers, but the customers will stay longer and buy more if they have something to eat and drink, LaPedis said.

**Get change:** Make sure you're prepared for cash sales, LaPedis said. You're going to get lots of \$20 bills, so you'll need plenty of \$1, \$5 and \$10 bills, as well as quarters, dimes and nickels.

**Put early birds to work:** If your garage sale starts at 9 a.m., expect to have a lineup of garage sale groupies at 8. These are hard-core buyers, so don't turn them away. But if you're prepared, you can open your garage door and have those groupies help you set your items out on the driveway or lawn, LaPedis said. These buyers don't mind helping, because pulling items out of your garage gives them a good look and first crack at the things they want, he said.

**Keep customers outside:** Do not let anyone into your house, LaPedis cautioned. Law enforcement authorities say crooks have been known to case a house at a garage sale by asking to use the restroom or making some other excuse to wander through the home. The sale is outside. Keep the doors to your house locked. If someone needs a restroom, direct him or her to the nearest public facility.

**Donate:** Anything you have left after the sale can be donated to a charity thrift store. If you keep records, you can take a deduction for the value of the goods when you file your next tax return.