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Can I sell my stuff and is it worth it?

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Photo W. Scheck

If you are wondering if something in your home is worth selling, how can you find out if it has value and can you sell it?

This is a question that I am often asked by my clients. If you have jewelry, furniture, artwork or decor that you believe is of high value, try searching the artist's or designer's name on Google or similar platform to see if you get any results. If that name shows up in a search engine, you might be in luck.

Unfortunately, I have found that just because an item has value, it doesn't mean you can get money for it and just because you paid a large sum for the item doesn't mean it has monetary value now.

For consignment stores, such as Hilton House in Orinda (www.hiltonhousedesigns.com) or Divine Designs in Lafayette (www.divineconsignshop.com) or auction houses, the item usually needs to be trending for them to sell it. Recently, a client had a beautiful large armoire from Italy that they spent a fortune on years ago, and now hoped to sell. Unfortunately, they could not sell or even donate this piece because of its size. Large furniture can be hard to sell because it costs a lot of money to transport the item both to the consignment shop and then to the buyer's home, and the buyer has to have room to accommodate it. I recommend taking photos and sending them to an auction house or consignment store to have them evaluate whether they will take the item.

Selling platforms

Ebay: Ebay can be very deceiving when you first look up your item. Just because someone has a price on an item, doesn't mean it has sold for that amount. Here are a couple of steps to get to the actual information on what someone has paid for this item:

1. Go to the Ebay website and enter your item in the search bar.
2. Look at the menu on the left-hand side of the screen where it says BUYING FORMAT and choose AUCTION. Now choose SHOW ONLY, then COMPLETED AND SOLD ITEMS. These are the true amounts someone paid for the item.

Nextdoor, Facebook Marketplace, Lamorinda Treasures, Craigslist: To be able to sell on these platforms, it helps to be somewhat familiar with taking photos and posting on your phone. You will need to register on the platforms first, then take several pictures of the item from all angles, measure the width, length and height, and write a detailed description. If your item has any damage or flaws, be sure to indicate that too. One of the drawbacks of selling this way is that you have strangers coming to your home. If you live alone, this can be risky. Keep in mind that selling on this platform can be very time consuming as you may receive many responses that you have to follow up on and people don't always respond or show up after expressing interest in an item. It's important that you decide in advance how much time you are willing to spend for the amount of money you may receive for the item.

Estate Sale: This is a great way to sell an entire house's contents. The estate sales team will come to your home, put items together strategically and then price them. Some companies will promote your sale on social media and post signs around town. Customers will come directly to your home or online to shop and purchase the items. At the end of the sale, most companies will donate or haul everything that remains (there is a charge involved). My preferred local estate sale company is Beehive Estate Sales, www.beehiveestatesales.org. If you are considering this option, you will need to make an appointment with the estate salesperson to see if you have enough items for an entire sale. The estate sale company will go over all of their costs to manage the sale for you which includes their percentage of the sales.

MaxSold Estate Sales: MaxSold is another kind of estate sale company where the auction is held entirely online. A team will come to your home, group items together, photograph and list the descriptions of each group to create an online catalog. The auction catalog will be live for a couple of weeks and buyers will purchase the items through the MaxSold site. Then, the buyers are assigned a set day and time to pick up their items. The team comes back on pickup day to give the buyers their items. This type of sale can be helpful if you live in a community that does not allow in-person estate sales. To learn all about the Maxsold process, go to the website www.maxsold.com. There is a fee to create the catalog and for the team on pickup day. Like any consignment, they charge a percentage of the total sales. As another option, the

homeowner can run the sale and create the catalog which will save you money.

Auction Houses: This is a good option for items that you believe have high value, such as artwork, decor, collectibles and furniture. The auction houses are very selective about what they consign. Again, just because you paid a lot for your items, doesn't mean they will sell. Keep in mind, if you want to sell it at a reputable auction house, they will most likely require a certificate of authenticity. If you don't have any official certificate, you can hire an appraiser.

Garage Sales: Garage sales can be an efficient way to sell a lot of items in one weekend. This can be a huge amount of work - setting up, pricing everything and advertising your sale - so you need to decide what amount of money is worth all the time it takes. Don't forget, whatever is left over, you should put in your car and donate or haul at the end. Don't put it back in your house. Good Luck! Do you have a freshman college student heading off to university later this summer? Visit my blog on my website to get some tips on organizing dorm rooms, and what to and what not to bring. This article also appeared in the Lamorinda Weekly in August of 2021.



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPOr founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

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