

PRICING YOUR ESTATE SALE



Pricing is where estate sales are won or lost. Price too high and items sit; price too low and you leave real money behind. This guide gives you the framework, tools, and strategy to price confidently and sell everything.

UNDERSTAND FAIR MARKET VALUE

Every price you set should reflect fair market value — the price a willing buyer and a willing seller can agree on. This is not retail. It is not what you paid for it, what it is insured for, or what antique stores are asking.

The practical benchmark: look at actual sold prices on eBay and other auction sites — not current listings, but completed sales. Then price roughly 30% below the top of that range. Auction buyers wait weeks or months. Your sale runs three days. Your goal is to move everything, not to achieve a theoretical maximum.

THE GOLDEN RULE

It is always better to be properly priced than to be too high or too low. Overpriced items stall the sale and make everything else look expensive. Underpriced items leave money on the table and signal low quality to experienced buyers. Aim for the sweet spot: fair, reasonable, and clearly marked.

CONDITION IS EVERYTHING

Before pricing any item, assess its condition honestly. The same item in different conditions can be worth three to five times as much — or nearly worthless.

CONDITION	PRICING APPROACH
LIKE NEW / UNUSED	NEAR TOP OF COMPARABLE SOLD PRICES
GOOD – MINOR WEAR	MID-RANGE OF COMPARABLES
FAIR – VISIBLE WEAR	LOWER THIRD OF COMPARABLES
POOR – DAMAGE PRESENT	PRICE TO MOVE OR CONSIDER REMOVING FROM SALE
BROKEN / NON-FUNCTIONAL	PRICE AS PARTS ONLY, OR DISCARD

Items in poor condition can drag down the perceived quality of your entire sale. When in doubt, remove them.

PRICING RESEARCH: WHERE TO LOOK

Always research before pricing. These resources cover most categories you will encounter:

- **eBay completed/sold listings** — The gold standard. Filter to sold, not active listings.
- **Google** — Start here for quick identification; search the item name plus 'value' or 'sold.'
- **LiveAuctioneers** — Auction results for antiques, art, jewelry, and collectibles.
- **Google Lens** — Photograph unknown items and identify them instantly.
- **Replacements.com** — China, crystal, silver, and flatware patterns.
- **1stDibs** — High-end furniture, art, and jewelry. Use as a ceiling, not a target.
- **WorthPoint (paid)** — Deep database of auction results; worth it for frequent sellers.
- **AskArt / ArtPrice / Live Art** — Fine art and signed prints.
- **Antiques Roadshow Archives** — Free reference for antiques and collectibles.
- **Facebook Groups** — Specialty collector communities for niche items.
- **TheSpruceCrafts** — Crafts, vintage items, and general collectible guidance.

Examine everything carefully. Limited editions and collectible variants often look identical to standard versions. A quick search can reveal a \$5 item is actually worth \$200.

THE DISCOUNTING SCHEDULE

Multi-day estate sales follow a predictable pricing arc. The best prices are achieved on day one, when motivated buyers arrive early. Use a structured discount schedule to clear remaining inventory:

DAY	PRICING STRATEGY
DAY 1	FULL ASKING PRICE. NEGOTIATE ON HIGH-VALUE ITEMS AS NEEDED.
DAY 2	MODERATE REDUCTION – TYPICALLY 25 TO 30%. NEGOTIATE AS NEEDED.
DAY 3	DEEPER DISCOUNT – 40 TO 50% OFF ORIGINAL PRICES. FOCUS ON CLEARING EVERYTHING.

Announce day-two and day-three discounts in your marketing. Post a reminder on Facebook and Nextdoor each morning of the sale.

WHAT SELLS BEST

These categories consistently draw the most buyer attention and justify stronger pricing. Lead with them in your listing and at the front of your display:

- **Vintage and antique items of any category**
- **Collectibles — signed pieces, limited editions, branded memorabilia**
- **Mid-century modern furniture and decor**
- **High-end furniture in good condition**
- **Fine art and signed prints**
- **Jewelry — especially gold, silver, and gemstone pieces**
- **Sports memorabilia**
- **Power tools and shop equipment**
- **Musical instruments**
- **Books, records, and media collections — call these out specifically in listings**

QUICK PRICING TIPS

- **Price everything before day one.** Unmarked items create friction, slow sales, and frustrate buyers.
- **Use round numbers.** \$15 and \$40 are faster to process than \$14.75 or \$38.50.
- **Group small items.** A basket of kitchen gadgets at \$1 each moves faster than 20 individual tags.
- **Don't anchor to sentimental value.** What an item meant to the family has no bearing on what a buyer will pay.
- **Research before you guess.** A few minutes on eBay sold listings can reveal a sleeper worth ten times what you assumed.
- **Remove items you won't price fairly.** An overpriced item signals poor judgment to experienced buyers.
- **Consider a free table.** Items under \$1 slow down transactions. A free table clears them and builds goodwill.

PRICING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist for every sale. Check off each item as you complete it.

Before You Price Anything

- RESEARCH COMPARABLE SOLD PRICES ON EBAY FOR EVERY ITEM YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT FILTER TO COMPLETED/SOLD LISTINGS – NOT ACTIVE LISTINGS
- CROSS-REFERENCE ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES ON LIVEAUCTIONEERS OR WORTHPOINT
- USE GOOGLE LENS TO IDENTIFY ANY UNKNOWN OR UNMARKED ITEMS
- CHECK REPLACEMENTS.COM FOR CHINA, CRYSTAL, AND SILVER PATTERNS
- NOTE ANY ITEMS THAT MAY BE LIMITED EDITIONS, SIGNED, OR COLLECTIBLE VARIANTS THESE MAY LOOK IDENTICAL TO STANDARD VERSIONS – EXAMINE CAREFULLY

Assessing Condition

- ASSESSED CONDITION OF EVERY ITEM: LIKE NEW, GOOD, FAIR, POOR, OR BROKEN
- REMOVED ITEMS IN POOR OR BROKEN CONDITION THAT WOULD DRAG DOWN SALE QUALITY
- NOTED ANY DAMAGE OR MISSING PARTS ON TAGS OR IN DESCRIPTIONS

Setting Prices

PRICED ALL ITEMS AT APPROXIMATELY 30% BELOW THE TOP OF COMPARABLE SOLD PRICES

USED ROUND NUMBERS FOR CLEAN, FAST TRANSACTIONS

GROUPED SMALL LOW-VALUE ITEMS INTO LOTS OR A FLAT-PRICE BASKET

SET ASIDE A FREE TABLE FOR ITEMS UNDER \$1

AVOIDED PRICING BASED ON SENTIMENTAL VALUE OR ORIGINAL RETAIL COST

ALL ITEMS CLEARLY TAGGED BEFORE OPENING DAY

High-value Items

RESEARCHED ALL JEWELRY, ART, AND SIGNED PIECES SEPARATELY

CONSIDERED PROFESSIONAL APPRAISAL FOR FINE ART, JEWELRY, OR RARE COLLECTIBLES

PHOTOGRAPHED AND DOCUMENTED HIGH-VALUE ITEMS FOR YOUR RECORDS

DISPLAYED HIGH-VALUE ITEMS PROMINENTLY AT THE FRONT OF THE SALE

Discounting Schedule

ESTABLISHED FULL ASKING PRICES FOR DAY 1

PLANNED DAY 2 DISCOUNT (25–30% OFF) AND PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE IT

PLANNED DAY 3 DISCOUNT (40–50% OFF) TO CLEAR REMAINING INVENTORY

PREPARED DAY 2 AND DAY 3 REMINDER POSTS FOR FACEBOOK AND NEXTDOOR

Final Check

EVERY ITEM IN THE SALE IS PRICED AND TAGGED

HIGH-VALUE AND BEST-SELLING ITEMS ARE STAGED PROMINENTLY

RESEARCHED ANY ITEMS YOU WERE UNSURE ABOUT – NO GUESSING ON PRICE

ITEMS IN POOR CONDITION REMOVED OR CLEARLY DISCOUNTED