



## QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE HIRING AN ESTATE SALE PRO

### What services do you provide?

1. Who prices, cleans, sorts and displays the items?
2. Where will all the items be placed? On tables or display cases? Who provides these?
3. Are any permits required? Who takes care of obtaining the permits?
4. Do you take care of advertising the sale?
5. Who is responsible for the signs directing people to the sale?
6. How many people will you have working at the sale? What exactly will they be doing?
7. Do you take care of the sales tax? Do you keep track of it and make sure it gets paid?
8. Will you clean up after the sale? What does that include?

### Charges

1. How do you charge for the sale?
  - a. Is it a percentage of gross or net sales?
  - b. Is it a flat rate?
  - a. Is it a minimum or a percentage of the sales?
2. What do your charges include? Does it cover.....
  - a. The cost of all permits
  - b. Advertising charges
  - c. Credit card processing fees
3. Is the charge for clearing the residence after the sale included in your fees?



4. What happens with things that do not sell?
5. Is a deposit required?

### **Pricing items**

1. How do you price items?
2. Do you have a professional appraiser? What are their areas of expertise?
3. How do you price items that are outside the appraisers area of expertise? Are the items researched?
4. Will you hire an appraiser if there are items your appraiser is not familiar with?
5. Do you rely on price guides? Or items that have sold on eBay or other online sale sites?
6. Can I set the prices on some items? If they do not sell, for the price I want can I hold on to them or have you sell them via eBay or auction house?

### **Insurance**

1. Are you insured?
2. What does your insurance cover?
  - a. Does it cover robbery when you are working on the items in the house?
  - b. Items that get stolen during the sale?
  - c. A buyer who slips or falls during the sale?
  - d. A buyer who gets injured by an item after they have purchased it [either at the sale or later]?
  - e. If an employee gets injured while loading items into a buyers vehicle?
  - f. Or if an employee damages a buyers car while loading an item?

### **Surety Bond**

1. Are you bonded?
2. Will you purchase a bond to protect your losses if your company doesn't perform as we agree?



## **Security**

1. What kind of security will you provide?
2. What do you do to protect the property and the items for sale?
3. Do you hire security staff? Will they patrol all the rooms, the garage?
4. How will security handle the entrance when buyers come in?
5. Will security take care of crowd control and limit the number of people who enter at a given time?
6. To prevent stealing will security prohibit large bags and backpacks and similar items?
7. How do you deal with little children at the sale especially around breakables?

## **Discounts**

1. How do you deal with lowering prices?
2. Do you allow buyers to negotiate prices the first day? Or any other day of the sale?
3. How do you negotiate the price?
  - a. Based on a percentage off the tagged price?
  - b. Or based on how much they are buying?
4. Do buyers call you or your staff with offers? How do you handle calls like this?
5. If you don't negotiate pricing – do you offer scheduled discounts?

## **Early purchases**

1. Is anyone [including staff] allowed to make a purchase before the estate sale starts?
2. What if someone calls wanting to buy an item from one of the ads before the sale?
  - a. Do they pay full price? Do you let them come to the sale early to view the item?
  - b. Do you negotiate the price?
3. Does your company purchase items from the sale at all? Before or after the sale opens to the public?
4. Do you allow dealers to come in ahead of the public? How will you ensure they are not partnered with the estate sale company at an antique mall booth?
5. Do you allow friends or relatives of yours to make purchases early? Will they pay full price?



## **Before the sale**

1. What do I need to do?
2. Do I need to move all the items that are not part of the sale out of the house before you walk through? Or can the excluded items just be pointed out? Can we make one room off limits and put all non-sale items in that room?
3. Who is responsible for moving items from the attics, garage, etc., to the main house for the sale?
4. Who will take care of cleaning items or the house for the sale?
5. Am I expected to be available to answer questions during the set up?
6. Will you call me about offers on items during the sale?
7. What else am I expected to do?
8. If I change my mind on selling some items is there a penalty? Is there a timeframe for being able to pull items from the sale?
9. What if you find items I did not know were on the property? Can I decide to pull them from the sale? Is there a timeframe for this?
10. What happens if I change my mind about selling an item or two?

## **Advertising**

1. What is the plan for advertising the sale?
2. Do you take photographs or video to post the sale on major estate sale websites?
3. Are social media and email lists used to advertise? What social media do you use?
4. Do you place ads in local newspapers and on Craigslist?

## **Accounting for the merchandise**

1. Do you keep a written list of the items sold and their prices?
2. Is this list available to me at the end of the sale?
3. How detailed is the list?

## **Payment**

1. When do I get the money from the sale?
  - a. Each day?
  - b. As soon as the sale ends?
  - c. Within 30 days of the final date of the sale?
2. In what format is the payment made?
3. Company check
4. Cashiers check

## **After the Sale**

1. What happens after the sale ends?
2. What is done with the items that do not sell?
3. Do you clear the property of the items? Do you clean the house?
4. Do you just set all the items wherever possible and take your tables and display cases?
5. Do you donate these items?
6. Or take them to a consignment shop?

## **References**

1. Will the contract include the things I request?
2. When and where are your upcoming sales?

## **Other questions**

1. Can family members or I, attend the sale?

