

Holiday Hints

Cashing In On Clutter To Pay For Holiday Shopping

(NAPSA)—If you're like the average American, you've got 35 unused items sitting around your home with a potential resale value of \$670. That figure—along with the economic downturn—helps explain the heightened interest this holiday season in local online classifieds sites as consumers seek ways to fund their gift shopping.

More than 179 million adults have bought, sold or browsed for items on such sites in recent years. Kijiji.com, for example, which strives to be safe and family-friendly, allows users to post ads for free.

“Online classifieds sites are great for helping you generate cash and restore some order to an otherwise chaotic home during the holidays,” says Lisa Zaslow, founder of Gotham Organizers, which provides customized clutter-cutting solutions for homes and offices.

According to a recent survey by the research firm Chadwick Martin Bailey, nearly 85 percent of consumers polled say their personal financial situations have stayed the same or gotten worse in the past year, and 60 percent plan to keep to a holiday budget. Here are some tips from the experts on how to maximize your profits.

Step No. 1: Make an Honest Assessment. Admit it: You're never going to use that exercise bike you bought on a whim for anything other than a giant clothes hanger. Nor will you be using that surround-sound stereo you never figured out how to install correctly. If you're expecting guests for the holidays, that's all the more reason for you to re-evaluate what you should keep. Should you decide those bulky dining room chairs simply can't fit enough people around the table, say, consider listing them on Kijiji in exchange for sleeker ones.

Step No. 2: Know Your Competition. Understand that you're not the only consumer looking for some extra holiday cash this year. Therefore, reconsider placing a \$500 price tag on



Cash-strapped consumers look for novel ways to pay for this season's presents.

your antique rocking chair if a similar item is being offered for \$200 elsewhere on the site.

Step No. 3: Know Your Buyers. Try perusing a site's "wanted" ads to help get a better idea of what's in demand. If you see numerous ads seeking a pull-out sofa to accommodate guests, it might be a good idea to list the one that's been gathering dust in your basement the last year.

Step No. 4: Be as Descriptive as Possible. When writing your ad, be sure to include important details like measurements, colors, model numbers and other distinctive features. Adding clear photos of the item, taken from different angles, can also help improve your chances of selling it.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans say they're more likely to use a classifieds site if it has a customer service team that focuses on monitoring and removing fraudulent and offensive ads. In light of that, Zaslow advises would-be sellers to gravitate toward services with such a reputation.

"If you're going to be selling online," she says, "you should consider using a site that keeps things clean and friendly. That's where you'll find the most responsible buyers."

For more information and tips, visit www.kijiji.com.