

Top Ten Steps to Building a Successful Estate Sale Liquidation Business



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Estate sales and liquidation is one of the fastest growing industries in the country. You don't need a degree or advanced education, and start-up costs and overhead are very low. With hard work and some guidance, you can make a very good living as an estate sale agent.

My team and I have run hundreds of successful estate sales, helping hundreds of clients liquidate their property, and have generated over \$1.5 Million in revenue. We know what works, and what doesn't work, and we use our specialized knowledge to benefit our clients.

But the most rewarding part of my career in estate liquidation has been helping people like you start their own recession-proof career.

How much money can you make as an estate sale agent? A quick search on Indeed.com shows an average of \$66,000 per year.

But with proper training, education, and a commitment to hard work, you could easily exceed that figure. In my own experience in the industry, many companies make well over \$100,000 a year.

TALK TO US NOW

We realize you may not have time to read this entire report.

You may simply have specific questions you want answered.

Or you may want to find out more about who we are.

[Click here](#) to set up a one-on-one appointment so we can talk.



But, it's not just about the money. It's also about independence. Being your own boss. Taking charge of your own career and future.

Is the estate sale business for you? Only if you:

- Enjoy working with and helping people, and have patience dealing with folks who may be going through a difficult time in their lives
- Are good at online research, record keeping, and managing details
- Are dedicated and willing to work hard and get dirty to build your own successful business

Conducting an estate sale is a huge responsibility. It's not just pricing and selling someone else's personal belongings. You are responsible for every aspect of the sale from start to finish.

It takes ongoing education and training to establish, grow, and maintain a successful estate sale business.

YOUR RECESSION- PROOF BUSINESS

If you're looking for a low-cost, recession-proof startup business, and you don't know where to start, there's a new program available that can show you how to confidently start your own successful estate sale business.

[Click here](#) right now to find out more.



Now that we've talked a little about the estate sale liquidation industry and the income potential of estate sales agents, let's get on to . . .

Top Ten Steps to Building a Successful Estate Sale Liquidation Business

#1 What is an Estate Sale, and What Does an Estate Sale Agent Do?

An **estate sale** is held to dispose of all or most of the personal property owned by a person or family. An **estate liquidation** is an estate sale that includes the sale of the residence.

An estate sale is generally held because an individual is recently deceased, or because an individual or family is moving (a **living estate sale**). **Downsizing** refers to an individual or family who is moving to a smaller home, or a retiree moving to their retirement home. **Senior move sale** refers to a senior who is moving in with family, to an assisted living facility, or to a skilled care facility.

An **estate sale agent** assesses and values the property to be sold, sets up and promotes the sale, runs the sale, handles the financial transactions and accounting, and disburses the funds to the appropriate parties at the end of the sale.

#2 What Steps Should I Take to Start My Estate Sale Business?

First, you'll need a **name** for your business, and you may want to consider having a professional **logo** designed for you. You'll need to decide on the **financial structure** of your business (talk to your accountant), get your **business license**, **tax identification number**, and **sales tax number**. You should also look into **bonding and insurance** requirements.

YOUR BUSINESS
NAME WILL BE WITH
YOU FOR THE LIFE OF
YOUR BUSINESS



You'll need a phone dedicated to your business; usually a **cell phone** is best since you will be spending a lot of time in the field. A **computer with internet connection** will be crucial to your business, and a **fax machine** or internet fax service will save you trips to the office services store.

Many clients and customers will find you through an internet search, so you'll need a **website** and **email address** (both should match your company name). And, you'll need **business cards, stationery, and flyers**.

You'll obviously need some **office space** to work from (a home office is a good option). You'll need an **appointment book, calendar, or organizer** to keep track of contacts, appointments, and sale dates. We recommend keeping a **notebook** with all of your research and pricing information in one place. And you'll need a way to take quality photographs, either with a **digital camera** or a **smart phone**.

Finally, you're going to need some basic **forms and contracts**, and a **marketing package** or **presentation kit** for meeting with prospective clients.

#3 How Do I Get Clients and Customers?

First, we need to clarify the difference between clients and customers.

Your **client** is the person who hires you. They will usually be either an individual representing themselves and/or their family, or the executor of an estate representing someone recently deceased.

Your **customers** are the folks who come to your estate sales and buy the personal property you're selling. We'll talk more about how to advertise your sales to draw customers in **#5 Where Should I Advertise My Upcoming Sale?**

The **internet** will definitely be where most of your clients and customers find you. There are lots of free "yellow page" style internet sites where you can list your business, including sites that list local businesses—companies, like yours, whose services are tied to a particular location.

DON'T FORGET
ABOUT GOOD OLD-
FASHIONED
NETWORKING



If you're just starting out and you're on a shoe-string budget, be cautious about spending money on paid internet advertising. Start with the **free stuff** first. You might be surprised how much interest you'll get.

But, while you're working out your marketing plan, don't forget about good old-fashioned **networking**. Friends, family, former or current co-workers—let them all know you're starting your own business. Tell them when you've got a sale coming up and what kind of interesting stuff you're selling.

Talk to people you bump into in the produce section of your local grocery store, at your favorite coffee shop, or just about anywhere else, and tell them about your interesting business. Give them your business card and ask them to keep you in mind if they come across someone who's moving or downsizing. Ask them if you can add them to your email list for upcoming sales (we'll talk about that more in **#5 Where Should I Advertise My Upcoming Sale?**)

Talk about your business on **FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram**, or wherever you already have folks following what you're up to. Be cautious about asking people to hire you outright—just let them know you're in business and give them a peek into what you're doing. Keep it light, interesting, and **informative**. If you regularly post information that's useful to your followers, they're more likely to recommend you when a situation calls for an estate sale agent.

#4 How Do I Prepare for an Upcoming Sale?

A lot goes into preparing for a sale, so you're going to want to have a **checklist** set up for each sale you hold. Here are some of the most important things to include in your checklist.

Immediately after signing the contract with your client, post your **online advertisements** (without the address), and begin your **online pricing research**.

Within a week of signing the contract, be sure you have a **Letter of Testamentary** (if required), **written permission from family members** to hold the sale, and **written permission from the landlord or HOA** (if required).

HAVE A CHECKLIST
SET UP FOR EACH
SALE YOU HOLD



One week before the sale, be sure that:

- Any **items not being sold** have been removed from the house
- There are no items in the house that **should not be sold** (such as alcohol and medications)
- All **utilities** (gas, water, and power) will be turned on during the sale dates
- There will be **access** to the home and adequate **parking** on the day of the sale
- Decide where you will **advertise** the sale, and place classified ads if that's part of your marketing campaign
- Verify **permits for signs** have been obtained (if required)
- **Check your supplies** to be sure you have everything you'll need on the sale date.

One day before the sale, you should:

- Send notices to your **email list**
- Verify **advertising details** are correct, including address
- Post an ad on **Craigslist**
- Recheck your **supplies**
- **Prepare signs** for posting

(We have a complete, detailed, printable checklist in Part 1 of our online [Estate Sale Course](#).)

#5 Where Should I Advertise My Upcoming Sale?

As mentioned in **#3 How Do I Get Clients and Customers?**, there are plenty of free internet sites for advertising your business, which can draw both clients and customers. But targeting customers for your upcoming sale is a slightly different strategy than advertising for clients.

There are **industry-specific websites** designed to support estate sale businesses. There is usually a fee for joining these online sites, but we recommend signing up because of the number of **potential customers and clients** you'll be able to reach

CHECK OUT
ESTATESALES.NET,
ESTATESALES.ORG,
ESTATESALE.COM



National Association of Estate Liquidators
www.NAOEL.com
(800)521-8220

immediately and consistently. Check out **EstateSales.net**, **EstateSales.org**, and **EstateSale.com** to see how they can help you find customers for your sales and grow your business.

Local **newspapers** and **Craigslist** are great places to advertise your sales. Think about where you would go if you were looking for a garage or yard sale, and find out about advertising in the same places.

A lot of your customers will come from your **email campaign** advertising upcoming sales. Start building your **email list** immediately, to include any friends, family, and associates who agree to let you send them information on upcoming sales. Have an email **sign-up sheet** at the check-out table at every sale you hold, and encourage customers to sign up.

Also collect emails through your **website** by offering **special reports** (like this one) or **give-aways**, offering a **newsletter** full of interesting and valuable information sent out regularly, or **blogging** about your sales and interesting items you come across.

#6 How Do I Price Items for Sale?

This can be the trickiest part of the business, and the one that can make or break your success. Many of the customers coming to your sales will be near-professional shoppers who hunt down and stake out estate sales and garage sales every week. They bring their smart phones with them to look up prices, and they know what things are worth. And nothing screams “amateur” like an incorrectly priced item.

NOTHING SCREAMS
“AMATEUR” LIKE AN
INCORRECTLY PRICED
ITEM

You’re going to be doing most of your pricing research on the internet, using sites like **eBay**, **Craigslist**, and **WorthPoint**. Be sure you’re checking **actual sales** (not just items listed for sale), the relative condition of the item, how long ago it sold, and where it sold. All of these factors affect the price you can expect to get at your sale.



Pricing is one of the areas of your business where it's invaluable to have a **mentor** on call who can help you figure out what's what. Don't be shy about asking for help from professionals who've been at this longer than you have. **Antique dealers, jewelers, art dealers, and other estate sale agents** in your area can provide invaluable information and support if you establish a good working relationship with them.

And don't forget, we're just a phone call away. If you're in a dither trying to price a particular item that could be of higher value, schedule a [one-on-one appointment](#) to talk to one of our seasoned estate sale agents.

#7 What Do I Need to Know About Working With My Client?

The most important thing you need to keep in mind is that your client is probably going through a very difficult time in their life. Maybe they've **lost a loved one**, or are helping an **elderly parent** move into a skilled care facility. Perhaps they're **losing their home** and are being forced to move on short notice, or have to downsize because of a **financial downturn**.

YOUR CLIENT IS
PROBABLY GOING
THROUGH A VERY
DIFFICULT TIME

Whatever the reason for the sale, you need to always remain **professional**. Be prepared to occasionally have a client who is upset or difficult to handle, but still show your client proper **respect, attention, and support**.

During your presentation with your client, you will need to go over the **Agent's Responsibilities** and **Client's Responsibilities**. You should have a **printed list** to give to your client to go through together, and to give to them as a reminder of what they should expect. There isn't space in this report to list every responsibility of both parties, but here are a few of the most important items.



As the **Agent**, you are responsible for:

- Having a **signed contract** with your client
- Getting any **licenses or permits** required
- **Advertising** the sale
- **Preparing, pricing, and staging** all items to be sold
- **Discussing pricing** of particular items with your client
- **Staffing** the sale
- Handling all **financial transactions** during the sale
- Providing your client with the **funds and paperwork** at the end of the sale

Your **Client** will be responsible for:

- Providing you with a **Letter of Testamentary** or other **written permission** to hold the sale
- Getting permission from their **landlord or HOA** to hold the sale
- Ensuring **access** and **adequate parking** on the sale date
- Removing from the home any **items not to be sold**
- Ensuring all **family members** have removed any items they don't want sold
- Ensuring all **utilities** will be on and that a restroom will be available and functional

A FUNCTIONAL
RESTROOM WITH
TOILET PAPER AND
HAND TOWELS WILL
BE WELCOMED BY
YOUR CUSTOMERS

(We have a complete, detailed list of Agent's and Client's Responsibilities in Part 1 of our online [Estate Sale Course](#).)

#8 How Do I Set Up the Home for Sale Day?

Setting up the home for the sale is called **staging**, and it usually begins the **week before** the sale. Many items will need to be **cleaned up** or **unboxed**, and all items will need to be **set out for display** and **tagged** with price stickers. You'll need to check the **working condition** of all items.



Furniture should be moved to face the entry and tagged with large index cards. **Smaller items** can be grouped together by type and displayed on **folding tables**.

You'll be setting up your **cashier's station** in the living room, with more **expensive and desirable** items displayed near the cashier. **Jewelry** and small **expensive items** should be placed in a **locking glass display case**.

The **kitchen** is often the most time-consuming and difficult room to stage, because there are so many items. Everyday **dishes** and **silverware** can be put on counter tops, with **formal dishes** displayed on the dining room table. **Glassware**, cups, and odd dishes can be left in cabinets, with the doors open. Leave **pots and pans** in their cabinet with doors open. **Small appliances** can go on countertops, but do NOT place anything on stove tops or grills.

THE KITCHEN CAN BE
THE MOST TIME-
CONSUMING ROOM
TO STAGE

In the **bedrooms**, price each piece of **furniture** separately, not as a set. Leave **clothes, shoes, purses**, etc. in closets with the doors open. **Furs** or **higher-priced** coats, hats, and designer accessories should be secured separately.

In the **garage**, large **tools, machinery**, and **garden equipment** should all be priced separately, with smaller tools and items grouped by price.

You'll want a variety of **signs** posted in the home, such as *PLEASE ASK FOR ASSISTANCE*, *PLEASE DO NOT HANDLE OR TOUCH*, and *SEE CASHIER FOR PRICE*, as well as directional signs. Keep in mind that you'll need to control the **flow of traffic** and **access to merchandise** on the day of the sale, so consider those factors when you're staging.

(We have a complete, detailed description of the staging process with video examples, as well as a detailed, printable list of supplies you'll need, in Part 1 of our online [Estate Sale Course](#).)



#9 How Do I Conduct the Sale on Sale Day?

On the morning of the sale, you will:

- Put out **signage** (*ESTATE SALE*, and *PARKING* if needed)
- Unlock and/or lock doors for **traffic flow** through the house
- Stock your cashier's station with **cash** for making change

During the sale you'll be:

- **Overseeing your workers** (cashier, hostess, salespeople, and runners)
- Answering **questions** about items
- Handling "**do not touch**" items for customers
- Possibly **negotiating prices** (this is when your research notebook can be useful)
- Securing the excess **cash** on hand as the sale progresses

Don't allow customers to shop with **large bags** or **backpacks**, and be sure they're holding their **childrens'** hands at all times.

DON'T ALLOW
CUSTOMERS TO SHOP
WITH LARGE BAGS OR
BACKPACKS

Some other things you will be responsible for include:

- Ensuring no **damage** to the house occurs as customers remove large purchased items
- Having every customer who makes a purchase sign an **Authenticity Disclosure** form
- Checking for **counterfeit bills**
- **Bundling cash** into easily counted groups for the end-of-the-day accounting

At the end of the sale, you will:

- Remove your outside **signage**
- Be sure all customers have left the home before you **lock up**
- **Count the cash** and reconcile with your **receipts** (after you have locked up)



#10 What Paperwork Do I Need to Complete to Wrap Up the Sale?

At the end of the last day of the sale, you'll need to complete a **Seller Proceeds Sheet** for your client, which shows the total amount of funds collected, your commission (per your contract), and the total funds to be disbursed to your client. You'll have your client sign the form and give them a copy, along with the receipt book from the sale, and their portion of the funds collected.



Once the paperwork is done and the key is returned to the client, the sale is officially concluded.



So, there you have it . . .

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But, is this enough to help ensure your success as an Estate Sale Agent? There are a thousand and one details that go into every estate sale, and hundreds of questions to answer in deciding on your marketing and presentation. As in every industry, the difference between a business and a **successful** business is experience, know-how, and hard work.

The **National Association of Estate Liquidators (NAOEL)** has specialized industry information not included in this report. If you're committed to becoming a successful estate sale agent, and not just another start-up barely getting by, then call us to get started.



Want even more? We've poured all of our industry experience and expertise into our two-part online [Estate Sale Course](#). We go into the details of the business, so you'll have confidence that you're doing it **right** from day one. We even include sample forms, contracts, and presentation kit for free!

And for a limited time, we're offering this exceptional online training at a special **reduced price** of only **\$400**. That includes Part 1 and Part 2, regularly priced at \$400 each. That's **half off!** But only if you **enroll now**.



Don't wait to get started down the path of your new career as a successful Estate Sale Agent. Contact us now!

[ENROLL IN OUR
ON-LINE COURSE
NOW](#)

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