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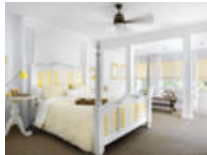
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Spring cleaning? Turn your clutter into cash

May 16, 2011 ADRIENNE BROWN

SPECIAL TO YOURHOME.CA

If cleaning isn't at the top of your fun-things-to-do-on-a-sunny-spring-day list, consider that you can make some money doing it.

In fact, a recent Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Kijiji found that in 2010, more than 40 per cent of Canadians trashed up to \$400 worth of household items instead of selling them.

Try selling your furniture or offering it up for free in online classifieds before kicking it to the curb or dumpster.

SHUTTERSTOCK

Just think what you could do on a sunny day with an extra \$400 in your pocket!

Jaclyn Ray, the Clutter Wrangler, says it never hurts to try putting something up for sale in online classifieds. Even if you find items in your closet for which you have absolutely no use, "there's probably somebody out there who wants it," she says.

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Most people face two main challenges when it comes to clearing out unwanted and unused items: time and hassle. Sometimes, when people are faced with the option of spending time driving around town to used book stores, clothing stores and other donation centres versus just throwing things in the trash, they opt for the quicker route to an organized closet.

But you don't have to leave home to make a little cash on your clutter.

"One of the best advantages is people will come to you to pick it up, so you're not driving around town trying to sell or donate your item," says Ray.

Here's how you can join the 20 per cent of Ontarians already clearing out their closets, basements and garages by selling unwanted items online:



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## Sort your items

According to Ray, tossing your unwanted items in the trash should be a last resort.

It's environmentally unfriendly and most items people are ditching during spring cleaning can still be useful.

"It's not nice to put up a suitcase if the zipper is broken and it smells mouldy," says Ray, "That's garbage. But if you want to get rid of it because you hate the colour or if it isn't big enough for your needs, don't throw it in the garbage, put it online."

## Name your price

Ray recommends always having a top price and a bottom price. What do you ideally want to get for the item you're selling, and what's the lowest amount you're willing to accept for it?

Then, list your item at your top price, because people will haggle with you.

Since online listings can be somewhat "garage sale-y," says Ray, it's rare that you can buy an item in-store and then repost it for the same price. People will just visit the store and buy a new item if they're willing to pay that much.

But if you have a brand new item with tags or stickers still attached, it's not unreasonable to ask for about 75 per cent of the original price.

Slightly older or more worn items can be reasonably priced at 50 per cent of the original cost, to start with.

Otherwise, if you are unsure of the price or value of your item, try searching for similar items to determine a fair price.

If no one has responded in a week to 10 days, try dropping your price. Since you can update and refresh an online ad as frequently as you like, you can adjust your asking price whenever you want.

## Write an effective online classified ad

To compose an effective listing, start with a detailed subject line. Don't be vague.

Next, be descriptive in the body of your ad. Include brand names, measurements and be up front about any damage to the item. "You don't want someone to come all the way to your house and be disappointed," says Ray.

Finally, include photos. Ray suggests at least one of the whole item, plus a close-up, so people can see patterns, textures, colours and details. Again, if there is any damage, such as a scratch on a table, show this so people have a clear picture of the item.

If your item just isn't selling, or you want to get rid of it quickly, there's always the free section. Items listed for free often get snapped up in a jiffy — before your next garbage pickup.

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