

Turning Your Trash Into Cash

by: Jeffrey Strain Junk. We all have some of it lying around the house. Whether it's boxed items cluttering the attic or everyday items that just don't fit with the room's decorating theme anymore, many of us have more than we need. At some point it all gets to be too much and in a fit of energy we decide that our place needs to be cleaned. Then the junk gets moved, typically to the nearest trash can. But wait. Before you throw out all that stuff, it pays to take heed of the saying "one person's junk is another person's treasure." If you are about to throw out something because you think it has little value, you may come to regret it later. Those things that you consider to be trash many times have great value to collectors. If you have an item and have no idea if it has any worth, a quick first step is to head to the online auction sites like eBay. Input the item you have into their search engine. If similar items come up and there are bids on them, then someone out there thinks that the item you were about to trash has some worth. If you are trying to get rid of a few select items, the online auction sites may be the perfect place. Simply place the item on auction for a minimum price and let others bid away on it. This is where you may find that old, ugly toy you could no longer stand the sight of looks like a perfect jewel to somebody else. You don't even have to know how to list the items yourself anymore since sites like eBay offer services that will match you with someone who will list the auction for you for a small fee. Even if the item doesn't sell at auction, it still may be worth some money to you. If you have a large number of items that didn't manage to sell on the online auctions, having a garage sale or heading off to sell at a local flea market for a day may bring in some extra cash. This is also a good way of getting rid of those everyday items that still have life, but you are certain are not worth a lot of money. If you have an item that you suspect has some value, it pays to do a little research before placing it on auction. While the auction sites are a good place to see if something may have worth, they are not a good place to determine what the true value of something. Auctions can easily turn more emotional than sensible, and items may go for far more than their true worth. In the same vein, unique items that may not be familiar to those frequenting the online auctions may sell for far less than their true worth. If you want to find the general true worth of something, the least expensive alternative is to head to your local library and check out collectible books and price guides on the subject. You can also search for Internet sites dedicated to the particular item in hand that can give you a good approximation of what the item may be worth. Another low cost alternative for those who don't want to take the time researching is to take it to a pawn shop and see if, and how much, the shop would be willing to give you for it. Pawn shops will buy the item for a fraction of its true worth, so if you are offered a decent amount, you know that you have something of value. For items that you believe may be worth quite a bit such as antiques or if you have a lot of items and want to make sure the gems don't get accidentally placed with the ordinary items, it may be worthwhile to hire an appraiser. Appraisers charge between \$150 and \$300 an hour and you want to make sure that you get an independent appraiser that has no interest in purchasing the items you are having appraised (if the appraiser is interested in the items, he or she will be tempted to lowball their true worth in order to get them for a good price). You can get references for appraisers from organizations like the Appraisers Association of America: <http://www.appraisersassoc.org> Even if you are not willing to put in the time and effort for any these events, there is always a better place than the trash can for most items. Simply load them up in your car and take them to a local charitable organization or the larger nationwide organizations like Goodwill and the Salvation Army. Not only will you be extending the life of the item, your donation will entitle you to receive a tax deduction for it if you itemize your tax return, and that's certainly better than getting nothing at all. Copyright (c) 2004, by Jeffrey Strain This article may be freely distributed so long as the copyright, author's information and an active link (where possible) are included. A complimentary copy of any newsletter or a link to the site where the article is posted would be greatly appreciated.

About the Author

Jeffrey Strain has published hundreds of money saving articles and the creator of the Daily Money Saving Challenge Program. He is the co-owner of <http://www.savingadvice.com> -- a website dedicated to saving you money.
savingadvice@gmail.com

Source: <http://www.serverforever.com>