



Estate Management – 7.0 Selling - Show Tables

Planning:

Without any planning, you can sell something, or you can give it away! To do the latter, rent a table at a relevant local show, cover it with your stock, mark it free, and walk away. At the end of the day, if you are lucky, there will be nothing left. Otherwise, you will have paid for the table and still have something to take home and throw in the garbage! Alternatively, selling, without planning, might earn you some money, but too many smirking customers or trembling hands, means your agreed price for their purchase was too low!

On the other hand, if you pay an entrance fee into a show, taking the inventory list (per Section 2, Inventory Listing) with you, if necessary with someone, who can identify similar stock, you will gain knowledge on local asking prices. Some dealers may even offer to buy the whole lot or part of it (see Section 8, Selling by Auction or Dealer). Bear in mind that scarcity and / or size of the local market for any specialized models / paraphernalia / books, can greatly alter its potential monetary return. Similarly, considering how many locations you intend to visit or participate in, defines how much you will be prepared to haggle with a potential buyer/consignee. Just as in real-estate, there are always those looking out for any seller in “distress”. While there, remember to pick up advertising flyers for upcoming shows. They include contacts, through which you can reserve tables. This contact also allows you to compare table costs. Locally tables range from \$25 to \$40 per day. That charge, usually required to be paid in advance, and the distance to the sale location, will aid in the decision of which show you will enter.

Preparation:

Any location can bring good or bad results, through no fault of the seller. Making an effort to show good intentions can only help. Take along table covers that extend to the floor. Do you really want to show potential customers your empty boxes, coffee cups or garbage? If a two day show, consider how you will cover the table and the stock you will retain, overnight.

Do you have a practicable dolly, in order to reduce your number of trips between car and table? Earlier practice loading of that dolly, will give ideas on what size and quantity of containers you will need for transportation. Mark the ends of your carrying containers with initials or distinctive coloured stripes. Common cardboard boxes and plastic bins look essentially all the same at a glance.

Display:

Taking the time to prepare the items you intend to sell, before leaving, saves time before the opening. Most hobbyists have many different containers holding loose parts. Only the owner knows what is kept where! Selling these containers individually will give a quick return, but from a buyer's point of view, they usually do not want to pay extra for stock they already have, just to get the few details they need. At a minimum, separate parts from different subjects, gauges or continents! In some cases then, sorting out the parts can result in a better return. Each seller has to decide which process to follow.

Older collectables and locomotives can return more, if in original containers. Families may need assistance in putting the related models and boxes together correctly. Including item numbers in the inventory list (per Section 2, Inventory

Listing) and tagging both the item and its container, requires more work initially, but will result in fewer discrepancies later (a good reason to start the list earlier!) (I was once offered a Tyco 2-8-2 in a Tenshodo brass Great Northern 2-8-2 box for \$175 !! That box can add considerably to the asking price of the correct locomotive, but not to a Tyco example. I wonder what was sold in the Tyco box and at what price!!)

When you arrive on site, a host, or at least a plan near the front or loading doors, will indicate where you are to be located.

Take your time during set-up. Any loss or damage, at this stage, will not start your day off well. Some competing vendors, and others, who have come in through the back door, will try to make offers before the start time. You must decide whether you can spare the time to accommodate them, but be gentle about it. You may find out later they have something you want, such as a part or car necessary to complete one of your sets! That early action may even be indicating that some of your prices are low!

You want to be ready before the doors open. (Be aware some hosts open the doors early in bad weather to accommodate those waiting in line.)

Regular show attendees are used to layers of cardboard boxes full of related cars or parts. The vendor is trying to display a large variety of stock. But that usually looks tatty. Multiple handling, in the "wrong" hands, can result in damage.

Do not put expensive items near the table's front edge.

Prepare your display from the buyer's point of view. That includes looking it over occasionally during the day from the buyer's side.

Do not show lots of the same item. That can only reduce the value of any offers.

Talk to attendees. Sitting down asleep, or with your arms and legs crossed, does not "advertise" well.

Mark prices on all items for sale, if possible before arrival. Include an allowance for haggle. Discussions over what someone said was the price, do not help sales. Using knowledge gained during preparation; know how much you are willing to accept. Allowing a bigger discount on multiple purchases must be considered, but not if you feel overwhelmed. Tell potential buyers your "small print" conditions such as does it run, come with a box, certificate, guarantee, or return policy, etc. Plan how to let someone test a locomotive before purchase.

If you are working alone, take along your own food and drink. Most halls have some sort of catering available, but the quality and price vary greatly, and you want to reduce the number of times you must leave your table. (How many trusted friends are attending?)

Whether you want to record the value of each sale is a personal decision. If working with an inventory, try to keep it up to date, but not at the cost of lost sales. If pressed, mark sales down on a handy blank list at a minimum. Old memory does not work as well as it used to do, after 24 hours!

Safety:

Always have eyes on your table, especially while packing up. I heard of one dealer who lost a whole box of models, possibly to his neighbour! Especially during opening and closing, there are so many people carrying boxes around, while the vendors unpack or repack their stock, that one set of eyes may not be sufficient.

During the show, keep the table covered in items for sale. Replace any you sell, or spread out the rest. Thus any thing missing will be quickly noted. But be very careful about accusing someone.

Keep money out of sight. Having some small change handy is ok, but not rolls of bills!

At the end of the function, a lighter load, or empty boxes, returning home should mean a good day.

Hopefully you also had fun!