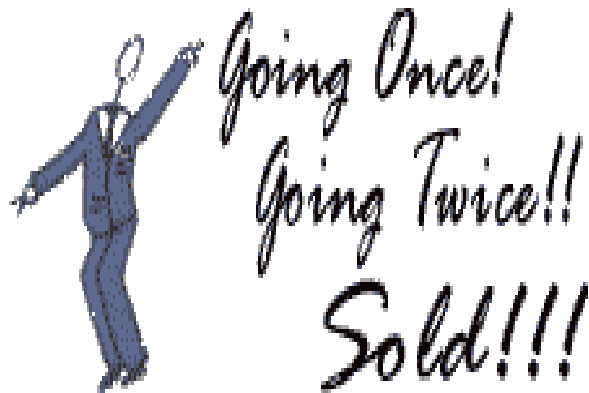


A Guide for Attending Live Auctions

by Patricia Shannon



Have you ever wanted to go to a live auction but not sure what is involved or what to buy?

Do you want to resell your items on eBay!

This eBook will give you the information you need to attend a live auction!

A helpful guide to make live auctions turn into a pleasant and profitable business!

I can remember back in the day when I was just a child that all my mom's girlfriends would gather together early on Friday morning and map out all the garage sales from the newspaper into the most efficient garage sale route one could ever imagine. And I will never forget what one lady said, "I don't need a thing but I'm going to buy this so I can resell it at my own garage sale." \$\$\$ This was truly a pre-eBay spirit! Those words have been stuck in my brain ever since! I have attended thousands of auctions, garage sales, estate sales and flea markets in my life and with each one I attend I look at everything that is for sale and figure out how and if I can resell it. It was always a lot of fun going to the garage sales but I have acquired a passion for live auctions for buying things and then reselling them on eBay!



I love the energy of all the people at a live auction waiting to get that certain item that they can take home and say "You'll never guess what I paid this for?" I have heard these words over and over again. Let me give you an example of one of my best finds at an auction. My husband and I went to an auction a few years ago that was being held at a Lumber Yard that was going out of business, and since we were in the process of building our home we were able to get 60% of the building materials for much, much less than what it would have cost in a retail store. This is just an example of what can be found at auctions. Everyone has their own special thing that they look for at the auctions and I'm sure you do to or maybe you will find your niche after attending a few auctions. I started buying glass items and still do to this day but that is what I have an eye for. What catches your eye? Can you resell it on eBay?

Looking for an auction

Look in your phone book under AUCTIONS, AUCTIONEERS or AUCTION HOUSE. Copy down the information and again go to your computer and look up the locations. Is the auction near or far away from your home? I have driven up to 60 miles for an auction but what was listed for sale at that auction was something that I really, really wanted. That particular auction had a grandfather clock and I was searching the market for one at that time. The grandfather clock that was up for auction was a Howard Miller. When I got to the auction, it was the first thing I searched out and yes, it took my breath away because it was so beautiful! When the bidding finally started for this clock, I was in the front row of bidders. There were only I and another lady, standing behind me, who were bidding. I won the bid and paid literally pennies on the dollar for that magnificent piece that still stands tall in my home. Sometimes when you find the right item for yourself it becomes difficult to resell them so don't fret about it...keep it, and smile each time you look at it knowing that you found such a bargain!



So you have found an auction, now what?

When you first read an auction ad the list can sometimes be overwhelming, so I like to take a yellow high lighter and mark the things on the list that I would be interested in buying. This list is where you need to start doing your research on what you want to buy. Use your favorite search tool on the Internet and do some homework. Is the item something that you want or need or is it something that you will be reselling on eBay? What is the trend on eBay for this item? What is the current price on that item? How many of these items are listed on eBay? If you win the item and you are not able to resell it, do you have the extra room for this stuff to be stored? All of these questions are things you need to ask yourself before you start bidding on anything.

Let's get ready to go!

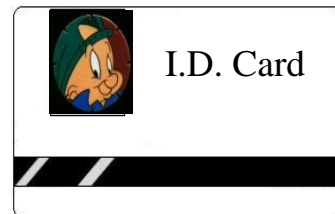
Here is a list of things that I take with me to every auction

- The list of items to bid on including all the research
- A pen or pencil
- A photo ID (this is used to get your bidding number)
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes
- Bring some food and water (some auctions can be all day long)
- An umbrella (rain or shine)
- Your poker face (for when you are bidding against someone else)
- Your manners
- A moving dolly or cart
- Packing containers with newspaper (I use the heavy plastic kind)
- Moving pads and rope (to secure any furniture or large items)



Lets cover the list

We have talked about making the list of items you're interested in and any research that you have done but make sure to bring this list with you to the auction. By now you have put some effort into that list and sometimes when your bidding, that is all you can think about, so the list of information can be a handy guide. Be prepared for items at the auction that were not listed on the information you have in your hand. Plan extra time before the auction to look around at all the items and write down any additional items you are interested in. I usually write down the additional items either on my main list or on the back of the bidder's number card. I have seen some people actually write down exactly what they spend per item so they can keep track of what they have spent. This is a good idea because you can double check the total amount that you have spent on your day at the auction against what the cashier has for a total. Everyone makes mistakes but if you are a penny watcher then by all means do this.



Bring a Photo I.D.

It is very important to bring your photo ID! When you arrive at the auction look around for the cashier as this is usually where you will go to get your bidding number. A bidding number is a paper card with a number on it. You will use this number to bid on items during the auction. Some places won't let you get a bidding number unless you have a photo ID, while other places will give you a permanent number. The information needed off your photo ID can vary from auction to auction but usually the information is used to make sure that if you bid on something that you pay for it before you leave or else they will send you a bill. This has happened to me once when my husband and I were at a sale and while I was paying for our items, my husband bid and won something else, and we left unintentionally without paying for the last item but since we know the auctioneer it was not a problem except for some good ol' fashioned joking at the next auction I attended. hahaha

Dress for comfort

Wearing comfortable clothes is essential. Dress for whatever weather or location the auction will be at. Sometimes these auctions can be inside and sometimes outside and some can run all day. There is nothing worse than not being comfortable because you are cold or your feet hurt because of your shoes. So keep a jacket or a raincoat in your vehicle just in case. Make sure you're wearing comfortable shoes because finding places to sit is not always so easy. If you have a portable chair you can bring that along if you need to sit frequently. I like the kitchen step stool where you can step up above the crowd or you can sit.



I always keep an umbrella in my vehicle for either rain or shine. Usually auctions won't be held outside during the rain but I have used an umbrella before at an outside auction where it was a hot, sunny day and the only shade around was under my umbrella.

I also bring a cooler filled with water and some food or snacks. Most of the time there is a food vendor at the auctions but I prefer to bring my own food.



Bring your poker face!!!

What I mean by this is that there will be other people at the auction who will be bidding on the same item as you. How bad do you want it? How much money are you willing to bid to win the item? Let me give you an example of an auction I went too recently where there was a young woman who was bidding on a brand-new bed mattress. The auctioneer started the bidding at \$25. There was two people bidding on the same thing and when the bid got to \$100 the other person stopped bidding, which left this young lady thinking she had won UNTIL someone else started bidding against her at the very last second.

Now here is the catch...

This lady wanted the mattress so bad that she put her bidding number up in the air and left it there, which only means to me that she really DID want it! The other person who started bidding against her at the last second didn't want the item and was only running the bid up. I heard him tell his friends this after the bidding stopped. The lady finally won the mattress but she had to pay \$225. The lesson learned here is to bring your poker face!

Important Tip!

Watch and listen to the other people you are bidding against!
Are they determined too win the bid?
If so, how high are you willing to go on your bid
to make sure you win? You will only have split
seconds to make this decision!

Parking

When you arrive at the auction look for the designated parking area and find a good parking place, especially if you have a truck with a trailer. You want to be able to leave when you want to and to be able to load your purchases without walking a mile to do it. If this auction is at a private location you do not want to park on the yard unless it is marked to do so. You don't want to be THE ONE who tore up the yard. Usually at auctions at a private location there will be a parking area marked out. If you have to park on the street just remember that other people will be doing this too so leave enough room between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. And please respect the personal property of the host site of the auction and any adjoining property.



Loading the Honey Pot

Let me explain what the Honey Pot is first of all. Usually at auctions there will be boxes of stuff. Just plain, old stuff that they put together in a box and usually sell for \$1 or more just depending on who wants it.

Here are some examples. I bid and won a \$1 box and when I got it home I found a nativity scene made of porcelain with gold trim. It was a 20-piece set and now remember I paid a \$1 for the whole box and I sold the nativity set for \$30 on eBay! Now you do the math. PROFIT!!! Another box that I bought for \$1 had an original Santini sculpture in it. The sculpture was worth more than \$300. Some boxes might not have such great treasures but here are just a few more \$1 boxes that we have bought over the years. A box full of the plastic that goes over your windows in the winter, a box full of brand new Tupperware, a box full of hardware to hang pictures. The list can go on and on but you get the idea. Spend a \$1 and get surprised!

Here comes the part about the loading of the honey pot. If you are looking at items at an auction that are in boxes - don't load the honey pot! I have seen people changing things around in the boxes of stuff so that when that box went up for auction that they will get exactly what they want, that is just presuming that they win.

Helping Hands

If you see someone with their hands full as they head to the door and you are not bidding at that particular time, go and open the door for them and ask them if they need help!?!? Remember what goes around comes around!!! We recently bid on and won a snow blower and a couple of people offered to help my husband load it. We never got to find out their names but we were very thankful for their help!



Save your back

I always bring a moving dolly or cart along with a plastic storage container filled with old newspapers. I purchase a lot of glass items so the storage container and newspaper come in handy to keep the breakage to a minimal. Which I must say that this system works well for me as I have not broken anything yet. The moving dolly or cart will keep you from hauling all your purchases out to your vehicle one at a time. If you are making a lot of purchases, this system works well because who wants their arms dragging on the floor by the end of the day?!?! You might want to include some rope and some blankets or moving pads if you plan on buying bigger items to help protect the finish of the item while in transport. I have made purchases of big items before such as a dining room table and chairs, all the way to a riding lawn tractor. Most people at an auction, if they are not bidding at the time will be more than happy to give you a helping hand to load your stuff. If you cannot find that helpful person this is what I do. I look around the crowd and see if there is a teenager who would like to make a few \$\$ helping me load my stuff. It works out for both of us! Make sure you have a few dollars in your pocket just for this reason.

Personal Space

I went to an auction once where someone got so close to me from behind that when I turned to see who was getting into my personal space, I bumped this persons' arm and I got hot coffee spilled down my back. Needless to say this person was in "my personal space."

Just be conscious of your personal space and the space of the other people at the auction. This should also include controlling sneezing and coughing and anything else that could ruin a good day of auctioning.



Cell phones

First of all if you have a cell phone at the auction, which most people do, turn the volume off and turn the phone to vibrate. If your cell phone does ring and you feel the need to answer it please step away from the bidding circle where people are trying to bid and then finish your call. My family laughs at me because I am totally connected to my cell phone but when it comes to being at an auction I will shut my phone off. This is your time to bid on items and in order to get the best deal you need to have undivided attention. So go ahead and shut it off or switch it to vibrate!

Talking

There is nothing better than being at an auction and knowing most everyone there. Kinda like that TV show where you walk into the room and everyone knows your name. But for the people that are at the auction to bid on items, they do not want to hear about Aunt Sally's last surgery or other conversations. Take your conversations out of the bidding circle. I have actually seen the auctioneer stop the auction and tell people to be quiet unless you are bidding. The biggest auction I have ever been to had about 400 hundred people at it. Now imagine just half of them talking while the bidding is going on...I'm sure you get the picture.

Bidding Tips

All right, we have covered basically all the rules and etiquette for going to an auction, now it is time to do some serious bidding. By the beginning of the auction you should have your list of things you want to bid on completed. Now its time to pick your position on the playing field, so to speak. Talk to the auctioneer before the auction and find out where they will be starting the auction and which way the auction will continue. Go to the first location and position yourself to where you feel comfortable. I am short so I like to stand right in the front row. My husband is tall so he likes to stand in the back. I have seen some people bring a step stool so they can stand in the back but still see what is going on.

The auction starts, but what do you do?

There usually are a few people who help the auctioneer out. They will hold up the item that is on the auction block while the auctioneer does their thing.

There are different signals to get the auctioneer's attention if you are interested in bidding. I prefer to raise my hand to get the auctioneer's attention and then I move right into a nod when I want to increase my bid. There are hand signals, and there is a tip of the hat, a high wave of the hand to the low wave and there is a signal for cutting the price in half. I am sure there are more out there but I just like to raise my hand. If you are not being seen and you want to bid on an item you can whistle or do what you must to get their attention because once the auctioneer says sold, it's gone!



Attention: I have a megaphone

Example of bidding

I went to an auction to bid on an upright freezer. There were two people bidding, which was myself and the person behind me UNTIL I realized that there were three people bidding and the auctioneer never seen me, even though I was standing in the front row. Once I realized that the auctioneer missed my bid I put my hand up and started whistling. Needless to say I wanted that freezer and it came home with me.

Lesson learned: Don't be afraid to speak up at these auctions because that is how you can get some good deals. You want it. Bid on it. But beware not to bid too soon as most of the time the auctioneer will start the bidding price high and if no one bids the starting price will keep coming down until someone starts to bid.

Another example

Up for auction is a complete dishware set. The auctioneer will start the bidding at \$20 and will say it a couple of times. If no one is interested, the auctioneer will lower the price by increments of a couple of dollars until someone starts to bid, say for example sake \$2. Usually you will see the pattern of the auctioneer after the first couple of bids.



You Bid, You Win, You Pay

Auction Tip: Beware of being sucked into the bidding frenzy!

There is more than one person bidding against you and you start to see the competitive side of you come out. Do you want it or do you need it? Are you going to be reselling it on eBay? Remember to keep to your original set price that is on your list because it is all too easy to keep going on your bidding until you realize that you could buy a new one for what the bidding price is!

Auction Tip: Each time you have a winning bid, you are held responsible for payment.

Just like eBay...you bid...you win...you pay! This is how the auctioneers make their money so pay attention to what they are saying. Are you bidding on just one item or on multiple items in what the auctioneer's helper is holding up? If you bid on something and didn't mean to, then it is up to the auctioneer if they will hold you to your word. Sometimes the auctioneer will just put it back up on the block. But if you make the same mistake all the time, the auctioneer just might not look in your direction when you want to bid next. I have seen the auctioneer scold people in front of the crowd for doing this. That is just a little embarrassing but I have seen it happen. This does not mean that you can't ask questions but it is the object of the auctioneer to finish the auction, not to wait around for your decision.



Keep it safe!

Once you have won an item put it in a safe place. Most people will find a place somewhere outside of the bidding circle to place their new treasures. A word of caution - do not place your items back in the line of where the auctioneer is going to be selling next. You don't want him to sell your items again, do you?!?! Know exactly where the auctioneer will be going during the sale. I have taken another person with me for when I go to big auctions and I know I will be buying lots of stuff. This person will take my purchases to the vehicle for me. If you are just going to make a pile of your purchases outside the bidders circle try to keep your eye on it, which can be difficult when you are bidding. But I have had some things taken by other people while I was not watching my stuff. Sad but true! Most people are honest, however, you need to remember that once you bid and win, you pay! Whether you have the item in your possession or not.



Photos

I have been at auctions before where I am buying for someone else and will take photos of the items with my phone camera and send them to my absent buyers while at the auction. That is another reason I get to the auction early. I then wait for the absent buyer to contact me with a "go for it or no thanks." And of course they need to call me back before the auction because I usually shut my phone off. If I buy something for someone else, I charge a fee. The fee amount is something that you will need to set for yourself. I usually set my fee between 25% and 50% but it really depends on what the item is. Will I need to hire extra people to move it? Or is it something I can just carry? How will it be sent to the absent buyer and what are the charges for that? Or will the buyer pick it up?

A few last tips

If you had your eye on something at the auction that someone else won, whether it was in a box with multiple items or a single item, do not be afraid to go and ask that person if you could purchase the item you wanted from them. Sometimes it works and sometimes not, but once its out of your site it will be gone! So do not miss your opportunity! Who knows you might just make a new auction friend!

Arrive early to look around. I try to take at least 45 minutes to an hour before the auction starts to look at everything. Then when I am finished looking at everything I will go around and look at everything again. Sometimes I missed something that I did not know I needed until I saw it!

Last but not least is to just relax and have fun!!!

If you make a mistake at an auction, it's not the end of the world! It just means you made a mistake and everyone does it, including me, an old pro at these auctions.

Plan your day at the auction and have a fantastic time!

Happy Bidding!

And one last story about my daughter's first auction experience!

This is just to cute so I had to share it with you,
with my daughter's permission of course!

Last year I took my daughter with me to her first live auction. It was on July 4th which meant there were A LOT of people there. We arrived at the auction early so we could look around and then we both got our numbers and waited patiently for the auction to start. I could see my daughter looking around at some more stuff that she wanted to bid on when my cell phone rang. It was my husband who wanted me to bid on a lawn tractor that was going to be sold first. No problem, I told him as the auctioneer was just announcing to everyone that the auction was going to start outside in two minutes. I headed out to join the group of GUYS standing around the tractor. I had my sunglasses on as they helped me to maintain that "poker face" hehehe The bidding started at \$75 and up it went as the familiar calling of the auctioneer keep the bidding going. My daughter had made her way outside by now and was standing by my side whispering in my ear. What was she saying? I was listening to the Auctioneer and I could not focus so I (in my best parent gesture I could muster in such a moment of intense bidding) waved my hand in front of me to hush my daughter up ALL AT THE SAME TIME THE AUCTIONEER SAID \$500 AND POINTED TO ME...yes...that was me standing there with my mouth hanging open in bewilderment as to what had just happend. My husband had said not to go higher than \$350 but thankfully someone who really wanted to spend that much money outbid me. YEAH!!! I know my daughter knew exactly what had happened when it happened and was just as thankful someone outbid us. We can laugh about it now. The day of bidding \$500 on something with just a wave of the hand!

*Laughing until
your stomach
hurts*

is what friends
are for



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