

Nearly New Sales

Top Ten Tips for Selling Success

The number of sellers at our Nearly New Sales (NNS) is usually around 100. With 60 labels per pack and some sellers using more than one pack, it means there are thousands of items in each sale. In such a competitive environment you want to make sure that your items stand out from the crowd. That's why we've asked some of our experienced sellers to let us in on their selling secrets:

1. Be prepared

It may sound like a cliché but getting organised prior to the sale really can help to sell your items. Watch out for the date of forthcoming sales. We advertise the dates well in advance on our website, facebook page, twitter feed and when you apply for a sellers pack you can sign up to our mailing list. As your children grow out of their clothes or toys/equipment, start making a stockpile of items to sell, so you are all ready to go when you receive your sellers pack.

2. Be a buyer

If you are a novice seller and you are not sure how to price items, sometimes being a buyer at the NNSs can be a real advantage; you get to see what your competition prices its items at!

3. Is it still Nearly New?

Try to remain objective when submitting items for sale – would you buy it yourself in the same condition?

So, Grandma bought a beautiful little jacket from Osh Kosh for your first born and they got excellent use out of it as did your second child. Now it is a little worn; you've had to stitch up a tear but it's still a designer label, it should sell well. Don't bet on it. It may be a designer label but if it's not considered to be in 'nearly new' condition you risk a volunteer rejecting it before it even reaches a hanging rail.

4. What season are we in?

Our sales for clothes are seasonal, so summer wear in the spring and winter wear in the autumn. Some types of clothes such as t-shirts, light weight jumpers, trousers are suitable for both sales but sun dresses and shorts are not suitable for the autumn sale and likewise snow suits and woolly hats are not suitable for the spring sale.

So it's the end of August, still warm (ish!), you've got really organised and have all your items ready for the next autumn / winter clothing sale. You've included all the summer dresses and shorts the children have grown out of, after all it's still very warm we're not really even in Autumn yet... Well, yes, you're right it might still be warm outside but buyers are thinking ahead and expecting to pick up clothing for their little ones to wear when the weather becomes a little colder.

So the advice from our veterans – don't risk it. Make it worth your while and sell items you know will pass inspection before they are displayed on the sale floor; anything considered inappropriate for the seasons being sold will be rejected.

5. Remain realistic – think like a buyer!

So you've got a great little three-piece outfit, which cost £25 brand new. It's still in nearly new condition, in fact it's hardly had any wear as it was a 'for best' outfit. You want to see some return on your purchase so you're going to price it at £12. You may get lucky, but it is more likely you won't.

Ask any volunteer of a Nearly New Sale and they'll tell you about the amount of beautiful items in excellent condition which do not sell. Ask why that is and the volunteer will probably say 'because the item was priced too high'. Why you ask? Buyers want bargains. In an age where we can all nip down to the supermarket or Primark, and purchase half a wardrobe of brand new clothes for the cost of one or two outfits in a high-street store, buyers at a NNS generally want to get those high street items at supermarket prices. Don't be put off by this; you obviously want to get a reasonable price for your items, especially if they are in good condition, but if you really don't want to see your items back again then try to price your items keenly.

6. Presentation is key

If an item looks good it is more likely to sell. Here are some tips to make your items catch the buyer's eye.

- Iron clothes and hang them on hangers wherever possible, ensuring all buttons, zips etc are done up. This makes them easy to see when the seller is scanning through the rails.
- Give all your items a thorough clean. A once over with some Detox can make all the difference.
- If you have the box that the toy or equipment came in, then use it to sell your item – buyers generally tend to be lured to the item in the box as opposed to the identical item with just a label on it.
- If you have several items you can sell as one e.g. babygros, wrap them together in clear plastic or seal them in a large re-sealable food bag. It makes it easier for the buyer to see what they're getting for the price and also your items are less likely to get separated without a label.
- If you don't have a box for large items and there are lots of bits and pieces that go with that item, e.g. a dolls' house, put all the pieces in a re-sealable food bag and masking tape the bag to the side of your item

7. Double check those labels!

Remember, all your items have to get past the inspection of NCT volunteers before they are displayed for sale. Any incorrectly labelled items will be rejected, which means your perfectly sellable item will never even meet the eyes of a potential buyer.

8. Do you really want it back?

If you really want to get rid of an item then price it to sell. Think about grouping your items to make them more saleable. Vests and babygros often sell better in packs of 3, 4, 5 for £2 rather than individual items for 50p or a £1.

If the item doesn't sell and you haven't marked your label with 'D' or tick for donate then the item will be returned to you, for you to find another home for.

Remember to put the 'D' or tick on the label in the donate box and the NCT will sort your item into their donate pile - a great way to get the recycling done for you! (We pass on the best items to other child/parenting related charities).

9. What our sellers say sells well

- character clothing (Bob the Builder, Thomas, Disney etc.)
- designer labels (in good condition and not too out-of date)
- dressing-up outfits
- character toys (Star Wars, Thunderbirds, Barbie etc.)
- wooden toys
- staple favourite toys (pop-up farm animals, rattles, balls, building blocks, Lego, jigsaws)
- baby-related equipment (hippy chick seats, bumbo seats, travel high-chairs)

but remember to get your pricing right!

10. What our sellers recommend you miss out:

We receive a lot of certain items which do not necessarily sell well. In particular please consider finding alternative homes for -

Soft toys	unless they are branded such as night garden or peppa pig they often go unsold.
Underwear	the reason for this is self explanatory however the exception is girls tights which are often grown out of before they become too worn.

With thanks to former committee member Lisa Mason for the original article