

# Cutting a Deal

The easy way to  
sell tools online



**W**hether because of an upgrade or a lack of use or shop space, the time may come when you need to sell a tool. One of the most effective ways to turn that tool into cash is to list it online. Follow these steps to ensure a safe and profitable transaction.

## Photos are essential

To build a successful ad, you need digital pictures that clearly show the tool. And for this purpose, a cell phone or tablet takes great shots. First, make the tool look its best by cleaning it thoroughly [Photo A]. Replace worn or broken parts, or be prepared to reduce your asking price accordingly.

For a backdrop, find an uncluttered wall, or hang a bedsheet or drop cloth behind the tool. That way, buyers see only what you are selling. Make sure the tool is well lit without harsh shadows; use a tripod, sawhorse, or chair to steady the camera; and fill the camera view screen with the tool [Photo B]. Take photos from different angles, and include in

## CLEANLINESS GOES A LONG WAY



**A** Just as you would clean up for a job interview, spend some time priming the tool. Use an air compressor to blow sawdust out of small crevices. Then give the tool a thorough wipe-down with a clean cloth to remove dust.

at least one frame the owner's manual and any shop-made jigs or accessories for the tool that you're willing to part with. Resist the urge to use photos of the

tool from the manufacturer's website. Such photos raise a potential buyer's suspicions that you're hiding something or worse—that you're a scam artist.



**B** Pointing a shop light at a section of white gypsum board or a silver or white surface reflects and diffuses the light, creating soft shadows. Steady the camera on a chair.

## Draft an ad that sells

Before writing your ad, research pricing of similar tools on sites such as craigslist.org and eBay. Based on this research, price your item on the high side, taking into account its condition. Pricing it too low eliminates any bargaining cushion, and may cause potential buyers to think that something is wrong with the tool. Many folks enjoy the back-and-forth dickering of a sale; if you don't, indicate the price is firm.

To reduce chances of being scammed, and to eliminate shipping hassles, list the item on your local craigslist or on websites belonging to nearby wood-working clubs or guilds. They attract local buyers you can meet in person.

Create an ad title that clearly identifies the tool: "Porter-Cable 10" Miter saw" rather than "Saw For Sale." Then list the tool's main features and its condition. Keep it brief, as buyers won't read lengthy descriptions; 30–50 words should be plenty to describe most tools. For heavy items, state if you're able to deliver or help load it into a buyer's vehicle. Don't list identifying information, such as your personal email address, home phone number, or address.

**Quick Tip!** Create an e-mail address from Gmail, Yahoo, or another free e-mail provider just for the transaction. Although craigslist doesn't display your e-mail address in the ad, when you respond to a buyer, that person now has your e-mail address.

## Doing the deal—smartly

Once your ad generates responses, review them carefully to weed out scammers. If a potential buyer e-mails generic inquiries, such as "I am interested in your item," or the message has particularly poor spelling or grammar, assume it's a scammer. Less-than-honest respondents often offer to pay more for the item than you're asking, claiming they will provide the extra money first to cover shipping costs—never accept such a deal. Read the "Avoid Scams & Fraud" link at craigslist for more details.

Try to meet your buyer in a public place, and, if possible, bring along a friend. If you must meet at your home (often necessary for stationary tools or if you need electricity), bring the item outside before the buyer arrives. Allow them to see only the tool for sale, and if anything makes you feel uncomfortable, end the meeting.

When you reach a deal, only accept cash; most buyers understand and will not take offense. (See **Detecting funny money**, right.) If a buyer wants to pay with a money order, wire transfer, or a check, politely decline. Instead, offer to follow them to their bank or an ATM where you can then conduct business.

Even if the sale doesn't happen, remember that it's just business—shake hands and be respectful; that way, both you and the buyer have a positive experience. 🌿

## Detecting funny money

Although cash is the securest form of payment, even it is not foolproof—fake money is very real. The most commonly counterfeited denominations are the \$20 and \$100 bills. To protect yourself from accepting any bogus bills, check them with a counterfeit detector pen. Readily available at office supply stores, these pens quickly reveal counterfeit currency.



Counterfeit detector pens use an iodine solution that reacts to the starch in wood-based paper—a black stain indicates fake money.

## More Resources

► Read free reviews of tools you are considering purchasing and add reviews of your tools at [reviewatool.com](http://reviewatool.com).

WOOD MAGAZINE'S  
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Produced by Mike Berger