

DESPERATESELLER.CO.UK's

THE 10 ESSENTIAL STEPS TO SELLING YOUR CAR

STEP 1: Know your market:

Is your car going to be easy to sell? Is it a hot commodity? Or will you have to drop your price and search out additional avenues to sell it? For example, Family saloons, while unexciting to many, are in constant demand by people needing basic, inexpensive transportation. Sales of 4x4's on the DesperateSeller.co.uk website are very popular right now and often move quickly, even older models. The sale of convertibles and sports cars is seasonal. Sunny weather brings out the buyers. Autumn and winter months will be slow. Collector cars will take longer to sell and are often difficult to price. However, these cars can have unexpected value if you find the right buyer.

Check out other ads

Your first step is to check on-line classified ads to see how much others are asking for your type of car. DesperateSeller.co.uk allows you to search with specific criteria. For example, select the make, model, year and trim level of your car and see how many similar cars are currently on the market. Take note of their condition, mileage, geographic location and selling price so you have a rough idea of a price that will sell it quickly. Remember that if your car is in particularly good condition and has covered fewer miles than average, it'll be worth more.

Get a true market valuation

If you want to get a true market valuation for your car with prices adjusted for mileage, colour, region, options and condition, then use the DesperateSeller.co.uk free valuation service. Simply log onto the Desperateseller.co.uk website and click on the "Value my car" option in the top menu.

STEP 2: Price your car competitively

Once you have a realistic valuation for your car you need to know how to price your car competitively so that it stands out against the rest. There are always some exceptions to the rules of pricing, so you should follow your intuition. Be sure to leave a little wiggle room in your asking price. Ask for slightly more money than you are actually willing to accept. So, if you want to get £10,000 for your car, you should list the car at £10,950. That way, if you get £10,950 — great! But if you have to go lower, it won't be a terrible loss.

Creative pricing

You may have noticed how creative used car dealers get in pricing their cars. Their prices usually end in "999," as in £12,999. Are we not supposed to notice that the car basically costs £13,000? There is a lot of psychology in setting prices. A product that doesn't sell well at £20 might jump off the shelf at £19.99.

On the other hand, as a private party seller, you don't want to look like a car dealer. Therefore, you might want to take a simple approach and set your price at a round figure such as £10,750 or £11,500.

STEP 3: Give your car a special "make over"

When people come to look at your car, they will probably make up their minds to buy it or not within the first few seconds. This is based on their first look at the car. So you want this first look to be positive. You want your car to look special."

Before you advertise

Before you advertise your car for sale, make sure it looks as clean and attractive as realistically possible. This goes beyond just taking it to the car wash. Here is a to-do list that could help turn your heap into a cream puff:

Make sure it is washed, waxed and detailed. If you can't be bothered to clean the car yourself, get it done by a valet company. You could spend between £15 and £50, depending on the service, but if you sell the car quickly, you'll save on having to re-advertise it

Make sure your car is both mechanically sound and free from dents, dings and scrapes.

Consider making low-cost repairs yourself rather than selling it "as is."

Shovel out all the rubbish from the inside of the car. When prospective buyers go for a test-drive, you don't want them to feel like they've walked into your messy bedroom. Let them visualise the car as theirs.

Wipe the brake dust off the wheel covers/alloys and clean the tires with a tire gloss product.

Thoroughly clean the windows (inside and out) and all the mirrored surfaces.

Wipe down the dashboard and empty the ashtrays.

Collect together all the relevant paperwork for your car, including the V5C registration document, servicing schedule and MOT certificate. If you have receipts for work done, so much the better – it'll show that you've cared for your car.

If the car needs servicing or even a routine oil change, take care of that before putting it up for sale.

Have your mechanic check out your car and issue a report about its condition. You can use this to motivate a buyer who is on the fence.

Do a car check on your own car

Use DesperateSeller.co.uk car check report and show it to the buyer to prove the car's history is clean and the mileage reading is accurate. Give the buyer all the confidence they need to purchase your vehicle. You can get a check for your car now by login onto the DesperateSeller.co.uk website and clicking on the "Car Check" option in the top menu.

STEP 4: Where to advertise your car:

So, you've cleaned up your car as best you can and, touch wood, it's running well. So now it's time to advertise it for sale. Traditionally, people advertise in newspaper classified ads. This type of advertising can be extremely expensive and that's why advertising online on websites such as DesperateSeller.co.uk is becoming increasingly popular.

The 2 Ways

There are two traditional ways to sell your car, one is more straightforward but the other should make you considerably more money.

Part Exchange & Selling your car for cash

The easiest way is to part exchange your car or "sell it for cash" to the trade. If a dealer is keen to sell you another car he may offer a good price for your old one. But, as a general rule, you will get much more money by selling the car privately. There are also several websites that will offer you cash for your car instantly and even offer to take it away for you. However, the price that they will offer you will be considerably lower than

the real value of your car. This is how they make their profit. Accepting their offer could mean losing out on £000's

Selling privately

According to Marketing Weekly, 73% of people now buy and sell cars online. That's nearly three quarters of people in the UK that now search and sell cars online. The days of "expensive" advertising in your local paper or magazine appear to be coming to an end – and about time!

So where online should you go?

The answer to that is relatively simple, online. Advertising your car online is not only considerably cheaper but you'll be advertising your car to up to 60% more potential car buyers than in your local paper. The more tricky question is "Where online should you advertise your car?". There are hundreds of websites that can all advertise your car. However, only a small percentage of these websites can actually bring serious buyers to your car. DesperateSeller.co.uk has therefore created an advertising package to solve this problem. We have collated a number of the best car selling websites on the internet and brought them all together under one roof. Advertise your car through DesperateSeller.co.uk and we will advertise your car on all these top car websites within minutes. Find out more by login onto the DesperateSeller.co.uk website and clicking on the "Sell Your Car" option in the top menu.

STEP 5: Creating your advert

So you've decided where to advertise your car. Now you need to think about creating your advert. Wording your advert the right way will draw the buyers in. Get it wrong and you could be left sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring.

Think about what you are telling people when you phrase your advert. Little words convey a lot. Besides the price, your ad should also include the year, make, model and trim level of the car you are selling along with the mileage, colour, condition and popular options.

- Include all the relevant information but be precise, accurate, honest, avoid cliches such as 'first to see will buy', or 'one careful lady owner'
- List the exact model, its year of registration and plate number (eg 1999/V), mileage (78,400 miles not 78k), whether it has a full service history, colour (in plain English), number of owners (if it's low for the age of your car), list of equipment/features, price, colour photograph and contact details.
- If you're selling online with DesperateSeller.co.uk, you'll obviously have more space but keeping it short and sweet should still pay dividends so long as you include all the relevant details. There's more scope for pictures online too, so take advantage.
- Avoid abbreviations. It's easy to scan over them and many buyers won't know what they mean. If you really have to reduce the cost of an advert, stick to the most common abbreviations such as FSH (full service history), PAS (power-assisted steering), AC (air-conditioning), EW (electric windows), RCL (remote/central locking), ONO (or nearest offer), VGC (very/good condition).

STEP 6: Showing your car

If you decide to sell your car privately, you will have to meet potential buyers to allow them to inspect and test-drive the car. Keep in mind that when you sell your car, people will also be evaluating you. They will be thinking something like, "Here's the person who's owned this car for the past few years. Do I trust him/her?" Make the buyers feel comfortable. They will probably be uneasy about making a big decision and spending money. Put them at ease and answer their questions openly.

Potential buyers will want to test-drive the car. If in doubt, check to make sure they have a driver license. Ride along with them so you can answer any questions about the car's history and performance. Also, they may not know the area, so you might have to guide them. Follow these guidelines and you shouldn't go wrong:

- You must look after your own security and your car. If you feel vulnerable, ensure you have a friend or relative around.
- You should aim to meet them at your home in daylight hours to give them plenty of opportunity to examine the car thoroughly.
- Ensure the buyer has at least third-party insurance cover. (If they have comprehensive cover on their own car, then they'll have third-party cover on your car.)
- Alternatively, you could change your policy to cover any driver during the selling process.
- Ask to see a driving licence, and make a note of the licence number.
- Make it clear to the person driving that any speeding fines incurred on the drive will be their responsibility.
- Never allow a potential buyer to drive your car without you. When it is time for the test drive, get into the passenger seat and then hand over the keys.
- Allow the buyer to drive on a variety of roads if possible and for a decent amount of time – at least half an hour. If you try to cut it short, they might think you have something to hide.

Bumps in the road

There are many unexpected bumps in the road that can arise while selling a used car. These will be handled easily if you are dealing with a reasonable person. So, as you are contacted by prospective buyers, use your intuition to evaluate them. If they seem difficult, pushy or even shady, wait for another buyer. With the right person, selling a used car should be simple.

Screen your buyers

Some sellers feel uncomfortable about having buyers come to their house to see the car. However, you can generally screen buyers on the phone. If they sound suspicious, don't do business with them. If you don't want people knowing where you live, arrange to show the car at a park or shopping centre near your home. However, keep in mind that people will eventually see your address when you sign the title over to them.

Inspections

Some buyers will want to take the car to a mechanic to have it inspected. If you have an inspection report from your mechanic, this might put their doubts to rest. However, if they still want to take the car to their mechanic, this is a reasonable request. By now, you should have a feeling for the person's trustworthiness. If you feel uncomfortable or have reason to think they will steal the car, decline the offer or go along with them.

Awkward questions

Be ready for trick questions such as, "So, what's really wrong with the car?" If you get this, refer them to the mechanic's report or invite them to look over the car more carefully.

STEP 7: Negotiation

If a person comes to look at the car and it passes their approval after a test-drive, you can expect them to make an offer. Most people are uncomfortable negotiating, so their opening offer might take several forms.

"I like the car, but..." This is the softest way to negotiate on the price. They may not even state that the price seems too high. If they say, "I like the car, but..." and then lapse into uncomfortable silence, you might consider an appropriate response. If you really want to move the car, you could say, "How much would you be willing to pay?"

"What's your best price?" This is a more direct way to probe the seller to find out how much he or she will come down. If you get this from a prospective buyer, don't seem too eager to reduce your price.

"Would you accept...?" Now we're getting somewhere. This buyer has thought it over and is making an offer. But the offer is being presented in a polite manner designed to allow for a counter offer.

"Take it or leave it." This buyer is making an offer that supposedly leaves no room for a counter offer. In reality, this buyer might be bluffing. Still, they are sending a message that they are close to their final price. The only way to know for sure whether it really is a "take it or leave it" offer is to leave it — and let them leave. They may return tomorrow ready to pay your price.

The above are just a few of the openers you might encounter. Think of your responses ahead of time so you won't be caught unprepared. In general, it's a good idea to hold to your price when your car first goes up for sale. If you don't get any buyers right away, you'll know you have to be flexible about the price.

STEP 8: Receiving payment

Rules governing the sale of motor vehicles are outlined by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. Make sure you check with the (DVLA), and keep in mind that much of the information is now available on DVLA Web site. (www.dvla.gov.uk)

There are certain steps you should take to protect yourself against problems such as time-wasters, theft and fraud.

- Once a price has been agreed, take a deposit, making it clear that it is non-refundable. That way, if the buyer pulls out and you have to re-advertise, you won't be out of pocket.
- Never hand over the car until you have been paid the full agreed price.
- Always wait for a cheque or banker's draft to clear before handing over the keys – inform the buyer that this will be the case.
- Prepare two copies of a written sales agreement, and make sure you both sign and date each copy. Include the following:

Make and model

Registration number and VIN

Year of registration

Mileage (if known to be genuine. If you're not sure and have no way of finding out state 'mileage not verified')

Agreed sale price and deposit paid

Buyer's name and address

Your name and address

Note that the vehicle is 'sold as seen'

Finally, remember to contact your insurance agent to cancel your policy on the vehicle you have sold (or transfer the coverage to your new car).

Last looks

Before your car drives away for the final time, take a last look through the glove compartment, the trunk and under the seats. You might find some long forgotten treasures you misplaced years ago.

STEP 9: Doing the paperwork

Once the deposit has been taken and the deal sealed, and before you say goodbye to your car, make sure you fill in all transfer documents.

- You must inform the DVLA of the sale by filling in and sending off the form on the vehicle's V5C registration document.
- If your car is listed with a security register (such as the RetainGroup) you must inform them of the sale, too. The forms you need to fill in and send off should be with your car's documentation. If not, call the number on the car's windows.
- Finally, you should call any company providing a warranty on the car – either a manufacturer or an independent – to inform it of the new owner's details.

STEP 10: After the sale

The best way to feel peace of mind after selling your used car is to make sure you did everything correctly. This means being open about the condition of the car before the sale and timely and complete in transferring DVLA paperwork after the sale.

When done correctly, selling a used car can be a win-win situation. You have turned your used car into cash and provided reliable transportation for the next owner. Focus on the benefits to both parties and you are likely to have a smooth and profitable experience.