

HOW TO SELL YOUR VINTAGE SEWING MACHINE



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WELCOME

This guide will give you information about selling your vintage sewing machine. Although price is a big consideration when selling a vintage sewing machine, *how* you sell your machine can have a big impact as well. This guide outlines the four steps to selling your machine:

- Considerations
- Preparation
- The Ad
- The Sale

CONSIDERATIONS

Selling a vintage sewing machine is pretty straightforward but there are a few things that you should think about before putting yours up for sale. First, decide how much effort you are willing to put into selling your machine. Are you trying to get the highest price or expend the least effort? Obviously the more effort you put into the sale the higher the price you will be able to charge.

Next, assess your machine. Is the machine you are selling common or one of the “rare” machines? Is your machine in good condition for selling or do you have to do a lot of work to make it saleable? Understanding the value of the model of your machine and its condition will help you decide on a price and will give you an idea of how easy it will be to sell.

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Then, decide on how you are going to sell your machine. Selling locally using an online want ad is usually the easiest, however this means that you will have people visiting your house. If you have one of the “rare” machines you may want to consider selling it on something like Ebay because the cost and hassle of shipping may be acceptable to a motivated collector. These machines are heavy and cost a lot to ship safely.

Finally, decide what price to ask. The price you can ask for your machine will depend on the model, what condition is in, and how you have decided to sell it. You should do some research on what similar models sell for in your area. You may want to read my **Pricing Guide for Vintage Sewing Machines** for more information on the typical price ranges for the various models.

PREPARATION

Once you have decided to sell your machine, it is important to prepare it for the sale. I highly recommend cleaning and restoring the machine and cabinet, if you haven't done so already. If the machine has not been restored, you may want to consider if the extra effort is worth the additional price you may be able to charge for it. It is much easier to sell a restored machine because they are more attractive and are an “easier” purchase for someone who may not want to restore it themselves.

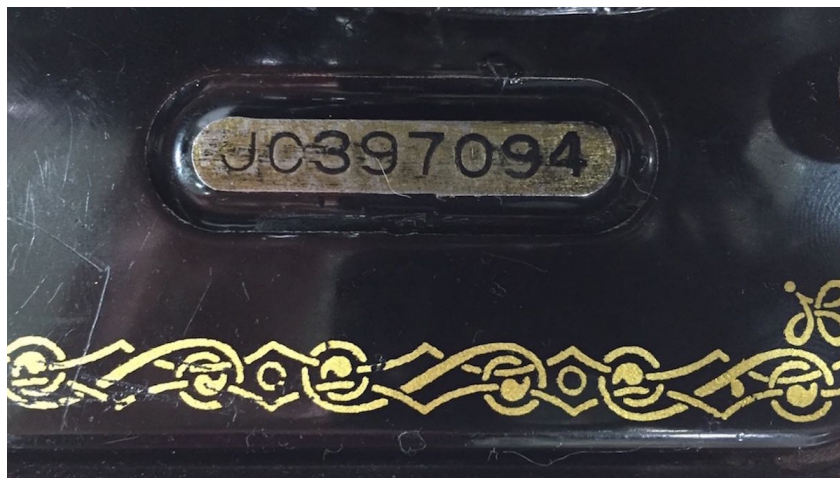
If your machine is already in good condition, then all you probably have to do is shine and oil the machine and dust off the cabinet and you are “good to go”.

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THE AD

The ad for your machine will determine how fast you sell your machine. Prospective buyers are often looking at several machines and are trying to decide if it is worth their effort to respond to your ad and drive to your home. A clear and informative ad will make the decision easy for them and will increase the chances that they will respond to your ad. Be sure to include the following elements in your ad:

- A clear description of the machine model and its age (if you know it).
- A list of what attachments are included.
- A statement about its running condition and how you have used it while you owned it.
- Good photographs of all sides, top and cabinet. Spend some time photographing your machine in a place where the setting and the lighting make it as attractive as possible.
- A photograph of the serial number if your machine has one. The serial number will allow sophisticated buyers to verify the age and model of your machine.



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- Good photographs of attachments and manual if they are included in the price.
- The price. Always include a price. There is nothing more frustrating as a prospective buyer than to see an ad without a price.
- A general location where they can see it so they can decide if it is “worth the trip”.
- Contact information so they can make arrangements to see and/or purchase the machine. Only provide the minimum contact information such as an email or phone number for initial contact. Do not provide your address until you have had a chance to talk to the prospective buyer. It can be very disconcerting if a buyer shows up unannounced at your door.

THE SALE

Finally, the moment you have been waiting for – the sale. First you should get yourself organized prior to anyone coming to your house. It is a good idea to decide on what time people can visit you so you are prepared when a potential buyer asks to see the machine. You should always have someone with you when a prospective buyer comes to your house. The majority of people are nice, but you want to make sure you have company if the situation does not feel right.

You also need to prepare your machine for the buyer. Have the machine in an attractive well-lit location that is easily accessible to the buyer. It should be spotless, shiny and looking its best. The machine should be set up and ready to go so that the buyer can try it out:

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- Make sure it is plugged in. You don't want to be searching for an electrical outlet while the buyer is waiting for you.
- Have a chair available so the buyer can sit down to sew with the machine.
- The machine should be threaded, the bobbin wound, a needle in and a piece of attractive material ready for the buyer to sew.
- Finally, make sure it works!

When the buyer arrives it is important to be friendly and strike up a conversation about sewing. Ask why the buyer is looking for this particular model so that you can point out the good points on your machine. Try to talk about how much you have enjoyed the machine and what kind of projects you have created on it. Finally, I always think it is important to tell them why you are selling to reassure them that you are not getting rid of a piece of junk. Hopefully you are selling to make room for another vintage sewing machine.

Last, but not least, you must negotiate a final price and accept payment. I can't help you negotiate so it will be up to you to decide if you are willing to lower your price. I can give you one word of advice and that is to take cash only, if possible. The buyer will be leaving with your vintage sewing machine and you need to be certain that you will get paid. Checks are convenient but you can't be certain that they won't bounce.