

Preparing To Sell Your Horse

The first few days you place your horse on the market are very important. Your horse may not sell in that time, however you may very well lose buyers if you have not taken the time to properly prepare your horse and yourself .

Before placing a single ad online.....

Make a Veterinarian Appointment

1. Have your horses teeth checked
2. Update vaccinations if they are due
3. Ask your vet to check your horses heart and lungs, and perhaps lunge him and ask your vet to see if he notices any issues that may be due to soundness.

Why?

Many issues in horses do go undetected, and they will be picked up in a pre-purchase exam. Riding issues or weight may simply be due to your horse needing to have his teeth floated.

The above of course is optional. However a buyer does appreciate the fact that a veterinarian has looked at the horse recently and although in-depth tests may not have been performed, nothing out of the ordinary was noted.

If something is noted, depending on the severity of the issue, you may need to delay selling your horse while treatment is performed, or you can re-evaluate what you would sell your horse for, and perhaps what disciplines they would be suitable for.

The above is not necessary and many people do not do this.

Next

1. Have your horses feet trimmed.
2. Bath and groom your horse if possible (no they won't stay clean)
3. Spend some time with your horse and ask for a friends assistance. Make a list of everything your horse is trained to do both under saddle and on the ground. (stand for mounting, tacking up, accepts his bit, leads well, side passes, picks up feet etc.)

Picture Time

These days it is very difficult to sell a horse without photographs. People are more likely to drive two hours to see a horse they have either seen photographs of or video.

If it is spring and your farm is muddy and your horse is white and there is no chance of getting him clean, either wait to list him or use photographs taken within the last year.

Recent photographs are preferable, and you should have a number of them, in a good size such as 600 pixels width and height, that are clear, that you did not take a mile away and in good lighting (preferably outside) that show the following.

1. Conformation – No saddle, tack or boots.
Have your horse stand square and take photographs from all 4 sides.
This allows potential purchasers to get a good idea of your horse's conformation, if his legs are straight etc.
2. While standing square take some close up photographs of his legs from the front side and back, as well as any brands or scars he may have.
3. Take some photographs of your horse while he is moving without tack on. At this point he can have boots on if you prefer. The real key to taking a nice photograph is to not wait for a nice picture, perfect shot or angle. Keep clicking away, yes you will have a ton of photographs to look through, but chances are you will find much better photographs.
4. Tack up your horse and have photographs taken of him being ridden. Basically you are aiming to get a few nice photographs of your horse's movement, and abilities. If he jumps, take some pictures of him jumping, if his legs are horrible in the air, don't put up a bad photograph just to show he can do it. You may also wish to re-evaluate if you should market him for jumping.
5. Go through your old photographs of him and see if there are any that a potential purchaser may like to see.

Sometimes it is a good idea to have a couple of friends help you. One to hold your horse and one to stand behind you and flap their hands, call, whistle etc. to get them to keep their ears towards you.

Make sure your horse is clean, and groomed. Depending on your horse's price and discipline you may wish to have his mane braided.

Indoor arenas are NOT the best place to take either video or photographs. There are exceptions to that rule, as some have excellent lighting, and in some you can get some decent lighting facing one direction and not the other.

Before you decide which photographs you will use or send to prospective buyers, have a few other people look at them and see what they think. Sometimes it is hard to see that your beloved horse's head looks like a mule when you take a photograph of him from a certain angle, or that the way he is standing makes him look like he is toeing in, when his feet are perfectly straight.

If you can it is always a good idea to remove manure or any other items that may be in the background, that may take away from your horse. Your photographs do not have to be perfect. The main keys are in focus, good lighting, no arena aura's floating around the picture, and photographs where your horse is the main attraction.

Video can help sell your horse. We won't go into detail, but if you can have a video taken of your horse being ridden, then it is a good idea if your horse has nice movement. Some horses are best seen in person, and some just aren't far enough along under saddle, for it to look pretty. So if in doubt, unless you are asked for it, don't make it a main priority.

If you do take video.....DON'T RECORD SOUND, or if you can, mute the sound when you edit the video. It is simply a distraction and does not need to be there. Neither does music to fill the void.

So now you have your photographs and perhaps some video and your horse looks so great, you are rethinking if you should actually sell him. You think he must be worth a million dollars and in this frame of mind you are at risk of pricing him too high.

No one can price your horse but you. However the market does fluctuate, there are other horses on the market, and no matter how much better you think your horse is, you cannot let that affect his price.

Start by looking around on websites, magazines etc. for horses with similar breeding and training. You are going to find some priced extremely high and then some quite low. Make sure they are actually comparable. A horse that is doing flying lead changes, and has won on top level circuits is going to be worth more than yours.

Your horse is worth what your actual horse is worth. He is not worth how much you have paid in board, or your vet expenses, or how much you paid to trailer him etc. You cannot take what you paid for him, add the money you spent having him trained and say that is his asking price. You could end up with a greenbroke, unregistered horse of unknown parentage, that you are going to ask \$4500 for.

Try to find the middle figure, give yourself some room to negotiate, and then ask your horse friends to be completely honest with you, when you ask them "how much would you pay for _____?"

SO, remember to be prepared for an answer you may not like, and don't hold it against them. You want them to be honest. Most potential buyers are NOT going to agree with what you are asking for your horse. How to deal with that will be in another article.

4. Make a list of any not so wonderful things he does also. No they won't ruin your chances of selling him. It is very important to be honest about any bad habits, injuries or riding limitations your horse has before someone drives 3 hours to see him. You will also save yourself many emails and phone calls if things that are important are noted in the ad.

5. Trying to figure out what level of rider your horse would be suitable for can be quite the task. If you have been riding him for years, he has been at the same facility and is familiar with his surroundings, you may feel that a complete beginner can ride him. However what would happen if he went to a new facility with a new owner, who is just learning to ride? Would he possibly develop an attitude, start bolting, misbehave? We simply don't know. So what can you do? Ideally you could send him off to a friend's farm for a week and have them ride him. However, many of us do not have that option. An alternative is to have an experienced individual ride your horse and take him out of his familiar routine. Ride him on a trail, tack him up, lunge him, behave on him as if they are a beginner rider to see how he would handle someone pulling a little harder on his mouth than you would, or giving the wrong cue, or no cues, and see what he does without you around.

Then ask that person to be completely honest about what level of rider they would put on him and what areas he had issues with.

Really the fact is that he could still react differently with new owners and at a new facility, but at least you tried, and will feel more confident in putting beginners on him if that is what you feel he would be suitable for.

Just remember NO horse should ever be sold as Bombproof. There is no such thing. Just because a dog has never bitten anyone, does not mean he never will, and likewise, just because your horse has never spooked, bolted or reared does not mean he never will. So you can't guarantee that. What you can say if he has not done these things, is that he has never done them while you have owned him and under various situations and surroundings.

Placing Your Ads

Your best bet is to write your advertisement in a word document and save it to your computer. Place the photographs you plan to use, in various sizes in a separate folder, so you know where they are when you need to upload them.

This will also save you the time of rewriting your ad every time you wish to post it. You simply just copy and paste it.

Always include basic information when posting your ad.

"15 year old quarter horse, rides, \$1500.00, no photographs available" will likely not get you much of a response. However on the other hand it is proven that people do not like to read a great deal, so they will first look at the photographs and then they will scan your ad.

Sometimes it is a good idea to place your ad in point form.

Some people believe that the less they place in the ad, then the more responses they will receive with questions regarding the item.

This is true, but you also end up answering a lot of ads from people looking for a completely different horse because you failed to mention your horse is not broke to ride and they need a trained horse, or your horse is too small, too expensive, trained for the wrong discipline etc.

So include the basics.

Horses Name

Breed

Registered

Age

Height

Level of rider needed

Trained in what discipline and what disciplines does it have potential for?

Optional information:

Price (I always include this to avoid the inevitable "How Much?")

Are you negotiable on the price?

Shown & Placed

Temperament

Vices

Riding Limitations (due to injury)

Information on its pedigree

Trail Ridden

Traffic Safe

Clips

Baths

Lunges

Ties

Cross ties

Jumping? How high...

Neck rein

Turn on Haunches

And this list could go on and on.....

Basically you can include whatever you like, you can just write "horse for sale, call if interested" the response may not be the same, but it is up to you.

You should now have everything together that you need or may need to start placing ads for your horse.