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March 9th, 2018

## Using Collectibles as Ad Props: A Good Sign?

by Jeanne Schinto



It's encouraging to see the props that were chosen for this TD Ameritrade ad: a small collection of early telephones, along with a Big Ben alarm clock that could be vintage. There are also some old books, a couple of them set up as they might be for a trompe l'oeil still life painting, hanging a bit over the edge of the shelf.

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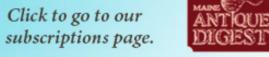


To be sure, the phones are collectibles, not antiques. The person who bought them didn't spend much. Except maybe for the one on the extreme left, which is partially cropped out of the photo, they are probably flea market finds,





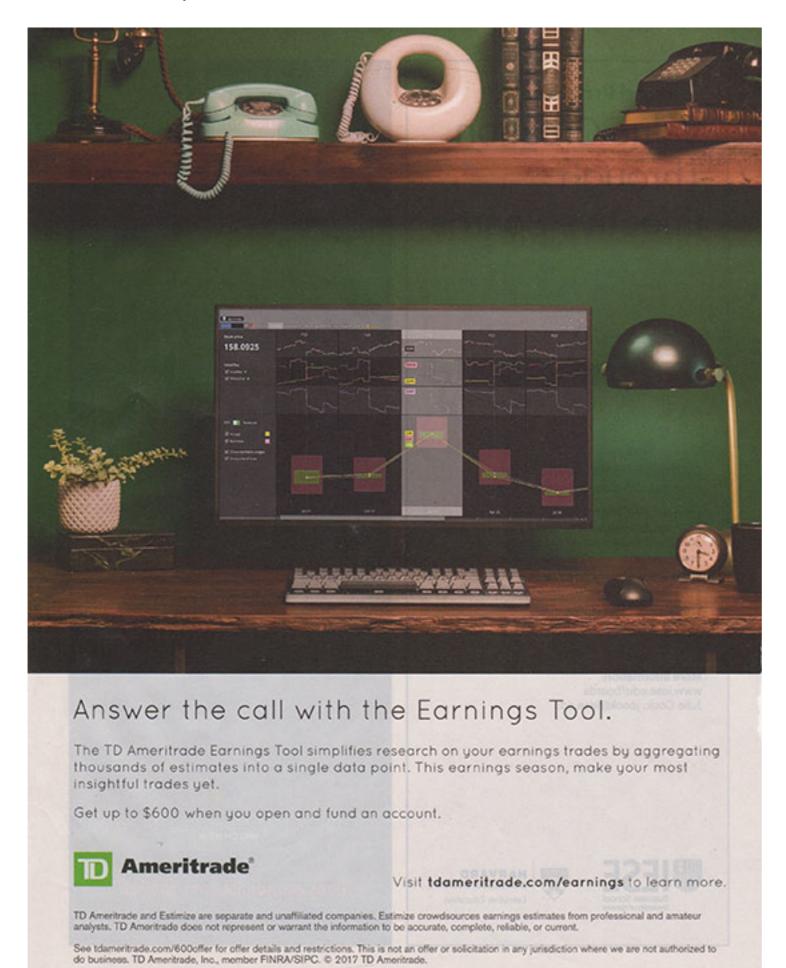


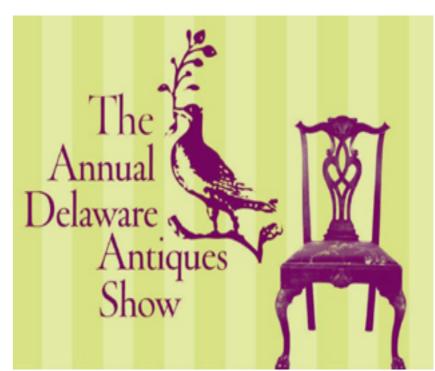


amusements, not serious collector purchases. Undoubtedly, the books aren't any big deal, either. If they were, the collector would have them in a glass-front bookcase, away from the dust.

The little plant is a nice touch. It shows that this collector has an interest in the environment or at least the natural world—a soft side, if you will. But the desk is industrial-looking, no-nonsense, a plank set on iron legs.

Front and center is, of course, the computer. Its owner is someone who understands a sophisticated series of graphs about stocks. "This earnings season, make your most insightful trades yet," reads the text, an appeal to the vanity of a would-be TD Ameritrade customer, since it implies that he or she already has made some wise investment moves.





Taking all its elements together, what does this tableau say to the antiques trade? Will the unseen person who inhabits this room ever buy a real antique? Is it a glass half full or half empty? What do you think? Whatever your opinion, the ad must be working. I have been seeing it in the *Wall Street Journal* and in *The Economist* for several months now.

The TD Ameritrade press office did not respond to a request for more information.

Originally published in the March 2018 issue of Maine Antique Digest. © 2018 Maine Antique Digest

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