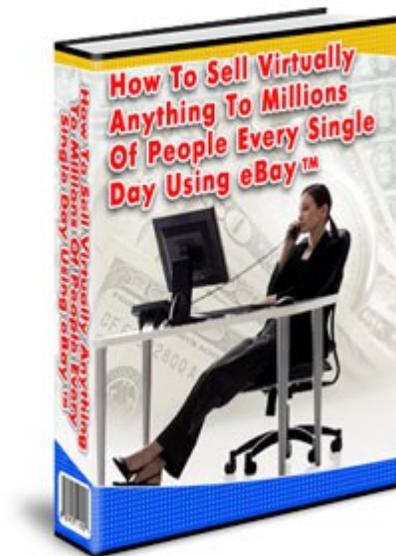


The eBay eBook

A Beginner's Guide To Earning Money
Through The Web's Most Popular Auction Site



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INTRODUCTION

eBay is the monster of Internet commerce. There is no other site that gets the kind of exposure and creates the opportunity for sales that eBay does. A recent estimate states that over 430,000 people use eBay to generate the bulk of their income.

If you were to wright up a short list of sites that have completely changed the net, you would have to put eBay among the top names on the list.

You could build your own site, drive visitors to it, offer a product and collect the proceeds. Hey, thousands upon thousands of people do that, and it makes a lot of sense for most of them.

Ebay, however, offers a different means of doing business online. You pay them a small fee and you get to list your product for sale or auction on a site that will have millions of eyeballs staring at it daily.

You get to use their handy interfaces, their easy tools, and conduct transactions in an environment with which customers already feel comfortable.

It's a wonderful opportunity.

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This ebook is designed to help you, the new eBay seller, exploit that opportunity. We are going to discuss some of the basics involved with becoming an eBay seller. We are then going to cover some valuable concepts and tips that will put you on the way to success.

This is not a comprehensive guide to every single aspect of eBay. Ebay is vast and the number of products and methods one can use to sell on eBay is nearly infinite.

Instead of focusing on simple processes you can learn at eBay or elsewhere, or on incredibly specific techniques that may only be applicable to a small percentage of sellers, we have instead concentrated on necessary basics and proven methods to increase your profits.

Good luck with eBay. It's a great place to make money. With a little study and effort, you can make eBay a winner for you!

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GETTING STARTED

THE BASICS

Let's start at the very beginning. Some readers may have a passing familiarity with eBay and may find some of this information unnecessary. We recommend reading it anyway.

You might be surprised at some very basic ideas you may have overlooked as you prepared to start selling on eBay.

First, of course, you need to register with eBay. You can do that easily at eBay.com by clicking on the "register" button or link. You will need to choose a User ID and will set your password. You will also need to provide your contact information.

Be smart in choosing your eBay User ID. Every transaction with which you are involved will carry that name with it. It will become the equivalent of your business name on eBay.

Although it might seem cute to take a goofy or fun User ID, you need to consider how that name might affect your sales in the future. Is it the kind of ID people will remember? Does it communicate honesty, credibility and reliability? Think about those factors when choosing your User ID name.

Provide accurate contact information, too. Some of us are suspicious of giving out too many personal details to a website, but if you plan to make eBay an income source, you

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need to recognize that you will be doing business with them for quite a while.

Treat them the same way you would treat any other business partner--honestly. This honesty can come in handy if you ever have a problem in the future that requires eBay's intervention.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email to which you will need to respond to make your account active. Do so and then move on to creating a seller's account.

Ebay offers different kinds of accounts and has different standards for them. Buyers don't have to give as much information as do sellers. Sellers are held to a higher standard and you will have to provide the company with extra information before you can start making money with eBay.

One critical difference between being a buyer and a seller is that, as a seller, you will need to provide current banking and/or credit card information.

This is required both as a means of establishing identity and as a means by which eBay can be sure to collect its fees from you as you post auctions.

After providing that information, you should go through eBay's "ID VERIFIED" process. That will give eBay further substantiation that you are the person you claim to be. They will reflect that on the icon displayed alongside your User ID, which can increase your credibility in the eyes of potential buyers.

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SETTING UP FOR SELLING ON eBay

Once you have your User ID and registration established, it's time to make sure you are really prepared to make money using eBay. Keep the following considerations in mind as you prepare to become a profitable eBay seller:

Your Internet Connection

You can certainly make a living on eBay using a dial-up connection, but it will be a frustrating, slow and inefficient experience. If you don't have a high speed connection, get one. It will pay for itself in no time.

Your Camera

Ebay success will involve taking photographs of the products you'll be selling. You will also want a picture of yourself for your "About Me": page and other digital photo needs will undoubtedly emerge as you progress in your business.

You don't need a professional grade camera. You will need a camera that can take crisp, clear digital pictures. You'll want a camera you can use easily and that is capable of handling close-up images.

Generally speaking, any commercially available digital camera offering 2.0 mega pixels or more should do the job for most eBay photographic needs.

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Get Organized

A traditional office space is packed with file cabinets and organizers for paperwork. The bulk of your business will be conducted in the paperless environment of the Internet, but you will soon find that some of that old-fashioned paperwork will begin to pile up. Make sure you have a strategy for organizing it.

Your computer will need to be organized, too. Look at your PC and pull off the garbage you don't need and/or that might be slowing you down. Prepare yourself to create directories in which you can store data as necessary. You want to be able to find the data you need on command.

Also, make sure you have a plan in place for backing up that information. Even the most reliable computer will eventually see its final day. Often, that day comes without warning. If you have backed up your critical data, you will avoid a potential disaster.

Whether you use a removable drive, Cd's or some other storage device, make sure you have and are prepared to use a regular backup plan.

Prepare For Shipping

If you plan to sell physical goods, you will need to package them and to ship them. Make sure you have the space and materials necessary to handle this aspect of your business.

Your kitchen table may be your packaging area. Your garage may serve as your warehouse. It doesn't really matter where

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you perform these tasks, as long as you can handle them in an organized fashion.

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FOLLOW THE RULES

If you are selling on eBay, you are going to have to play by the company's rules. That means your auctions will have to conform to all of eBay's Terms of Service.

Take the time to read the "TOS" fully. Find out what you can and can't do, and abide by those limitations. You might not always like all of the rules, and you may even want to become involved in efforts to have them changed at some point in time.

However, if you hope to make a living with eBay sales, you will need to follow the rules to a "T."

Ebay is a massive marketplace, and it is true that some rule-benders (and breakers) are able to function on the site for some time. In most cases, however, their behavior is noted and their accounts are revoked.

The risk of running afoul of eBay's TOS is high enough, and is associated with sufficiently negative repercussions, that you should take great pains to play by the rules.

Remember, you might not always love eBay, but you are making the company your business partner. You will be paying them fees in order to access their service, contingent upon your willingness to abide by their rules.

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It's a simple contractual agreement to which you are bound. There is no solid justification for intentionally violating the TOS.

Most eBay sellers will also make use of PayPal as a means of receiving payment. PayPal is a critical aspect of many, if not most, sellers' businesses. The same need to abide by the rules holds true for PayPal.

PayPal is notorious for taking severe action against those who operate in violation of its TOS. One's money can be tied up for an extended period of time and there really is no clear substitute for PayPal for eBay vendors.

Thus, it is essential that you do everything necessary to remain on PayPal's "good side." Read the TOS carefully and don't take any actions inconsistent with those regulations.

Again, you may not like the way PayPal does business in every sense, but it will be an uphill struggle to make money as an eBay seller without it. As a business decision, it's a no-brainer. Play by the rules.

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LET eBay TEACH YOU, TOO

In order to reach your maximum potential as a seller, you will want to keep your eyes open for new research and ideas at all times. You will also want to pay close attention to your own experience, tracking and testing your sales methods in order to perfect your craft.

I always preach that knowledge is everything in online marketing. Knowledge is the number one investment you should make.

To set you off the right track, do read the [Internet Marketing Cookery](#), a resource for some fantastic tactics about selling goods in the World Wide Web.

There is someone else you can use to help you find out ways to make money with eBay.

Listen to eBay. Remember, your business partner does have a vested interest in your success. If people aren't listing products, people aren't buying products. If people are putting up auctions, eBay is collecting fees. You get the idea.

What's good for you is good for eBay, so they want to provide you with helpful information when they can.

New sellers should start, for instance, by watching the eBay sellers' tutorial online. It shows the basics of selling on eBay and it's one of the reasons why this ebook doesn't break down every aspect of the process step by step.

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It's a solid introduction to making money with eBay.

Ebay also operates a forum-based community in which sellers can meet and talk shop. You can learn a great deal from other experienced sellers by participating in these community discussions.

Ebay offers a newsletter to sellers to which you should subscribe. Although the information within it may not always be earth-shattering, it will give you a heads-up on system changes and on limited-time special offers from the company (fee free days, etc.).

Remember, eBay is your business partner. That means you need to know what eBay is doing and why they are doing it.

Their decisions will have a direct influence on your bottom line. Keep tabs on them while simultaneously gathering solid information that can help you build your selling business.

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NOTES ON PRODUCT ACQUISITION

FINDING PRODUCTS ONLINE

A product is a prerequisite for any auction. You must have a product to sell.

Many people start their eBay selling experience by getting rid of household items they no longer need or want. That's a great way to get one's feet wet, but after a while, you run out of things to sell!

Others visit local garage and yard sales, flea markets and regional auctions looking for under-priced merchandise that can be sold at a profit on eBay. This strategy has been remarkably successful for many people.

However, one's ability to rely upon these sources may be limited by his or her schedule and physical location.

Not every area plays host to flea markets and garage sales and logistical issues like transportation can also make that route tough for some would-be eBay profiteers.

The methods we just discussed all have one thing in common. They involve physically traveling to the goods in order to purchase them. Not only is that not always possible, it can also be inefficient. Fortunately, there is another way to obtain merchandise.

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One option involves the use of a drop-shipping company. We will be discussing the drop-shipping option in greater detail later in this guide.

Another great way to accumulate merchandise for resale via eBay is to find under-priced merchandise online.

Although eBay is the “king” of the auction sites, there are many other smaller, similar endeavors online. The smaller participation levels sometimes allow great products to sneak through at amazingly low prices.

Many eBay sellers have made a career out of finding bargain products at other auction sites and then selling them on eBay at a profit. Overstock.com, Yahoo and other smaller auction sites can be a great place to find merchandise to sell at a wonderful price.

There’s another option that many newer sellers won’t consider. That’s eBay itself. Remember, the tactics revealed in this guide will help you sell your items for more money than others might get.

Not everyone is using this information.

There are plenty of people offering products on eBay who don’t have optimized auctions. They make poor category choices, write lousy descriptions or commit other mistakes that result in their auctions receiving less attention than they deserve.

As a result, potential buyers never find the products in the first place and a smart buyer can often find them at incredibly low prices. You might be able to snag a great item for a one-dollar bid that you can re-list and sell for a small fortune.

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It might seem counterintuitive to do your buying right where you do your selling, but the strategy can work when you make the effort to spot under-performing auctions featuring high-demand products.

DROPSHIPPING

Dropshipping sounds like a fantasy to most new eBay sellers. It seems too good to be true.

Imagine being able to sell items you don't physically possess and not having to pay for them until someone has already paid you.

That sounds more than attractive, right? Now, let's sweeten the hypothetical pot.

What if you never had to take possession of the products and that a third party would handle all of your shipping needs? Wow.

That's dropshipping. A dropshipping company holds the inventory and makes it available to you at a predestinated price. If you pay that price, they will ship the material to your customer (who has already paid you).

You keep the profit. The dropshipper gets paid. The customer gets the order. Everyone lives happily ever after and you make a fortune in the process. That's the theory, anyway.

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The reality is usually quite different. Why? Think about this... If a company could get $\$X+\Y for a product by selling it on eBay themselves, why would they only charge you $\$X$ for the product?

That isn't just an academic question. It's at the very heart of dropshipping. The shippers are willing to sell a product to you at a set price. Why would they set the price considerably lower than what the product would bring on eBay?

The idea that they don't want the hassles associated with eBay selling doesn't make a lot of sense. They are still selling, on an individual basis to people like you. Besides, as this guide demonstrates, selling profitably on eBay isn't rocket science.

The notion that the dropshipper just doesn't have the marketing know-how that you might is a possibility. They may not be able to construct the kind of listings you can and may not be capable of bringing buyers to the product.

Of course, they could hire a pro and if the difference between "dropshipper price" and "eBay price" was meaningful, they would still be money ahead.

So, why are they willing to sell that product to you cheaper than you can sell it online? Remember, this is a dropshipper, not a bulk wholesaler, so it has nothing to do with volume.

The answer? By and large, they don't. If you can get more than their asking price via eBay, that's great for you, but it will probably be a rarity. It's just another distribution channel for the manufacturers of those products.

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If the price gap between eBay auction rates and direct-to-seller rates was meaningful, dropshipping wouldn't exist.

That sounds pessimistic, right? Well, it is. But that doesn't mean you need to rule out the concept altogether. Sometimes, you can get lucky, constructing a great listing for a product or marketing it in a way others can't.

A superb marketer can find ways to create auctions that will produce prices in excess of what it will cost to pay the dropshipper.

It's also virtually risk-free. If your effort falls flat, you are only out the cost of the eBay fees. You won't have a living room filled with widgets with which to deal.

If you decide to take the dropshipping plunge, realize that your best bet for profit is to construct a stunning listing and earn your money in volume. The margin per sale is unlikely to be huge, so you will need several sales to make it worth your while.

Also, be sure you are dealing with a reputable dropshipper and make sure you construct loose enough shipping and delivery terms to keep your customers satisfied with the sometimes-slow reaction of drop shippers to orders.

Dropshipping remains a constant topic of discussion among eBay sellers because it sounds so good. It's a nearly irresistibly concept and it does work just often enough to seem valid.

In the big picture, though, dropshipping usually isn't a winner for new eBay sellers. Some experienced veterans might be

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able to pull it off profitably, but most newcomers find it to be a dead end.

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DIGITAL PRODUCTS

Tangible goods aren't the only things you can sell through eBay.

You can also try your hand on digital products such as software programs and information materials. These are easy to create, if you possess the skills for the same.

Do consult with the [Info Product Creation Manual](#) for some fabulous tips on how to easily come up with your own digital items. You can even refer to the [Online Video Marketing Manual](#) for some definitive steps on how to use videos for your digital offerings.

The easiest way to procure digital products, however, is by buying the resale, master resale, or private label rights of existing goods. This may sound confusing for novice marketers, so do refer to [All Rights Explained](#) for a comprehensive explanation on how these different rights work.

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SUPPORTING MATERIALS

ABOUT YOU

One of the most important things you can do to build your credibility as an eBay seller is to create a great “About Me” page.

These pages, which you can build using eBay’s own simple interface, are a great way of adding a personal touch to all of your auctions (which invariably encourages sales) and of enhancing your perceived trustworthiness.

As you write your “About Me” page, do so with a few different considerations in mind:

Be Direct And Honest

The “About Me” page is a great marketing tool for eBay sellers. However, if you “lay it on too thick” you risk making it seem more like advertising than information. Avoid hyping your products or auctions directly.

Don’t overdo it on the self-congratulatory comments or superlatives. A direct and honest approach will do the best job of enhancing your credibility.

Be Personal

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You don't have to reveal your deepest darkest secrets, but you want your "About Me" page to communicate, "who you are" to prospective bidders.

Let them know a little bit about you. Make it something of a personal profile.

When bidders feel they "know" you, they automatically feel more able to trust you. That trust can be the difference between a click-away and a bid.

Don't make your "About Me" page a generic corporate bio. Make it an honest look at you.

Use A Photo.

Let people see you. Even if you don't think you are particularly photogenic, the presence of a visual image will immediately add a dimension of personalization and trust to your page.

Bidders will instantly feel as though they know the person on the other side of the transaction and will feel more comfortable than when they are dealing with a nameless and faceless screen name.

Counteract Low Feedback Numbers.

Are you just starting? You may not have the hundreds of positive feedback comments that other sellers do.

You can't gain all of that cache with an "About Me" page, but you can counteract low numbers by providing the right comments.

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When you are just starting, use your “About Me” page to explain what else you have done and the background from which you came.

You don’t need to say, “I lack feedback, but you can trust me because...” In fact, that approach would probably raise more concerns than it would calm.

However, if you write, “I am relatively new to eBay. I have been working with, and selling widgets for decades and have decided to bring my experience and interest online at long last,” you can make up for a lack of feedback.

JUST THE FAQs

No matter how comprehensive and full-featured your listings are, bidders will have questions. In time, you will begin to notice that many of them are asking the same kind of questions again and again.

That might be an indicator that you need to do a better job of writing your listing. That’s particularly true when you are receiving the same questions repeatedly even though you believe you have already covered them in the listing.

That may mean that your comments are unclear or aren’t being read in the first place.

In many other situations, however, those repeat questions are inevitable. They are a byproduct of buyer impatience or the

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result of new users trying to feel their way through the eBay process.

You could get annoyed at all of the repeat quizzing, but that won't help your bottom line. Instead, use the opportunity to improve your auctions and to improve your perceived level of credibility.

You can do that by creating a Frequently Asked Questions page. When potential buyers click on the "ask the seller a question" button, they will see your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section.

Use this area to present clear, concise answers to common questions. That should be your first objective--making life easier for your customers.

At the same time, however, realize that the FAQ is a marketing opportunity, too. It gives you an additional venue in which you can showcase your voice and your top-notch selling practices.

So, how can you make the most from a FAQ? Here are a few ideas:

Supply The Right Information.

Look carefully at the questions you are receiving and provide direct answers to them. Make sure your responses to those common queries are clear and concise. Your FAQ should resolve ambiguity.

Write The FAQ Carefully.

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Use the same standard of care you would use for a \$10,000 auction on your FAQ. It's a "document" that may be used again and again with a variety of auctions, which means it has lasting value and importance.

Quality writing will also serve to let the prospective customer know that you take selling on eBay seriously and that they can put their faith in you to deliver the goods.

Provide Additional Information.

The products you are selling may have a variety of great features or benefits that you feel customers should know about. Certainly, you included that information somewhere within the listing.

However, that material may be buried within a long listing or may just not feel adequately emphasized.

You can use your FAQ to focus on some of those otherwise potentially overlooked aspects of your product.

Ask yourself a few of the questions you would love to have your potential customers ask and then provide the answer, which will give you a chance to explain what is so great about your product.

Obviously, you can't overdo it. At some point, it will become obvious that your FAQ is less about being helpful as it is about selling a product.

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You don't want to turn your FAQ into an obvious advertisement, but you shouldn't overlook the opportunity to milk it for just a little bit of marketing value.

Invite Interaction.

Sellers who are ready and willing to interact with potential buyers might end up with a little more work on their hands than others might, but they also have a series of unique opportunities to convert prospects into buyers.

Include an open-ended question to which you can attach an open invitation for additional interaction. You might ask yourself "What if I need to know something else?"

You can then advise the potential bidder to contact you through eBay and explain your policy of providing quick, informative responses to all questions.

This not only provides you with another way of enhancing your own credibility, it also gives a chance to interact with bidders directly, giving you additional opportunities to encourage a purchase.

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QUALITY AUCTIONS

SCOUTING THE COMPETITION

One of the more challenging aspects to selling on eBay is the fact that all of your competitors are lined up right there with you. You don't have a lot of opportunity to get your prospective customers alone for a one-on-one sales effort.

That challenge, however, can also be a great way to improve the quality of your listing. Your competitors' auctions are right there for your consideration. You can use their efforts to guide your own.

Before you write your own listing, take a look at what others with similar products are doing. After you have reviewed the competition, follow these helpful hints to make your listing the cream of the crop.

Fill In The Blank(s).

After looking over those other listings, you may have noticed one or more things about the product that others aren't mentioning. They may have neglected to mention some aspect of the product or failed to discuss one of its features.

Make sure you include that information in your listing.

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By providing the most comprehensive listing, you communicate your credibility as a buyer and increase your chances of giving browser's the kind of information that may lead them to make a purchase.

Avoid The Cliché.

If everyone else is using similar language, expressions or analogies to sell a particular product, it is an excellent chance for you to take a different course and to create a listing that stands out in a crowd.

Now, sometimes "everyone is saying it" because it is actually important. In many cases, though, people are simply doing the same thing out of laziness or a lack of creativity.

If you can tweak and individualize your message without neglecting important information, be sure to do so.

Pick On Weaknesses.

What are other sellers doing poorly? What weaknesses do you spot in their listings? Make a commitment to stand out as a strong performer in those areas.

Doing that makes your listing stand out as excellent. Matching your competitors at their strengths and separating yourself at their points of weakness is a tried and true marketing method that applies well to the eBay environment.

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Find The Big Boys.

Look for sellers who seem to have successful track records. That isn't always easy to discern, but a look at their feedback and noticing whether they have "Power Seller" status can help.

You want to find the most successful sellers in your part of the market and learn from them. What are they doing that makes their listing more attractive than those of others? What techniques are they using that would appeal to buyers?

These people are selling and that's what you want to be doing.

You should learn from them as much as possible.

Please note: this is not an invitation to copy the work of others. Plagiarism of any type is unacceptable. Learning from the best and mimicking aspects of their strategy is different than stealing their work.

In the end, your ability to produce a solid but unique listing will be a huge factor in your success as an eBay seller.

Those who steal from others rarely find long-term success and don't develop the skills necessary to excel.

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Don't Settle For Second Best

You have, or can develop, the skills necessary to produce a grade-A listing. You know what the best of the current bunch look like. There is no reason to end up with an auction that isn't the best one out there at the moment you post it.

Don't allow yourself to settle from being the "second best" auction on eBay for your product. Look at the rest and figure out how to be better. Use the instant access to your competitors eBay provides to your advantage.

Use the right tools. Sometimes, the difference between a winning strategy and a doomed one lies in the weapons we choose to use. When scouting your competition, scout your own progress as well. For this, avail of [Adtrackz](#), an amazing set of online tracking devices that will reveal vital statistics about your eBay campaigns.

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SELECTING THE BEST POSSIBLE CATEGORY

One of the most important decisions you will make with respect to your listing is choosing the best possible category for it. Although a majority of users does rely upon eBay's search option, there is a huge contingency of buyers who work by browsing categories.

If your product is in the wrong category, you risk almost a third of all users NEVER noticing your listing.

There are thousands of different categories available into which you can place your listing. Finding a good match should be a relatively simple process, right?

On one hand, it is. You can usually find a nice fit with a little investigation. You might find a few different categories with potential, but usually one or two will really stand out as the "right place" for your auction. In that sense, it is a pretty easy process.

On the other hand, there is more to category selection than meets the eye. That's because you don't just want to list your auction in the taxonomically correct location, you want it to land somewhere where prospective bidders will actually see it.

You can use the following process to find an optimal category.

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Look through the available categories, keeping track of which ones are the best fits for your particular product. As you note these categories, also take a moment to note how many auctions are happening within the category. That information is right there next to the name of the individual category.

Now, rank those categories based upon the number of auctions occurring. You will want to put your listing in one of those busy categories.

Why would you choose a category that might not be quite “perfect” over another that has more auctions?

Your objective in choosing a category is two-pronged. You don't want to make sure people who are using the browsing function can find you, but you also want to choose a category people actually visit with regularity.

With well over five thousand categories, there are places on eBay that just don't receive a great deal of attention. These “graveyard” categories just won't bring enough people to your listing in sufficient numbers.

The busier categories are the more popular ones. In essence, you are going to where the action is when you use this strategy.

There is an exception to this rule. If you are selling a product that has a very specific and limited target audience, it will make more sense to choose the category that provides the tightest fit.

You may not get as many looks, but you will be getting highly-targeted attention from those who are specifically interested in your product.

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Aim for the biggest possible relevant audience when choosing your category unless your product's appeal is limited to a very precise group of people who will be looking for it specifically.

By using this category selection method, you can improve your chances of attracting bidders to your auction, thus increasing both the number of sales you will make and increasing the price you receive for your auctions.

REGIONALIZE IT

Some of the techniques we're covering in this guide require a fair amount of effort. Some, like this one are incredibly simple. Even so, they can produce some powerful results. Many sellers overlook them completely, multiplying their power for those who use them.

Every time you list an auction at eBay, you can specify your region and have the listing placed in the regional categories. This maneuver doesn't cost a dime and it doesn't limit people from outside your region from bidding on your auction.

Always regionalize your listing. That's because there is a contingency of eBay users who prefer buying from those who are in their same general area. They might be motivated by a regional bias or just feel more comfortable dealing with someone nearby.

Regardless of their justifications, they are out there and it only makes sense to showcase your offerings for the folks in your region who feel that way.

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The overall percentage of auctions that use the regional listing option is surprisingly low.

Think about it.

It takes less than a few seconds, guarantees your listing will appear in another location (as well as your primary choices), doesn't cost anything, and will make your product more appealing to a particular subset of the eBay user base.

Why would you NOT use the regional listing option?

THE WELL-WRITTEN AUCTION

A great product and high level of credibility can only get you so far. You need an auction listing that showcases your offering in the best possible terms. That means you will need to develop some eBay-specific copywriting skills.

You can write compelling auctions even if you aren't good with words. However, if writing is a pronounced weakness for you, using a freelance copywriter to help with your listings may make sense.

Professionals, however, do come with a price tag and most new eBay sellers will be better off learning how to write a truly effective auction without outside assistance.

Writing a good listing can be challenging, but it isn't rocket science. Use the following guidelines to write spectacular listings that will help sell your products.

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Get to the point. The very first paragraph of your listing should clearly explain what you are selling. In journalism school, they teach writers to get the “who, what, where, when and why” out there in the first paragraph.

You aren’t writing a newspaper article, but that same principle--making sure all key information is there right at the top--holds true.

Clearly, define the nature of your product right off the bat. People don’t want to meander through your listing to find the basics.

Use white space. White space refers to the parts of a page of text that don’t contain information. You want to leave plenty of white space in your copy. That means writing in short paragraphs and leaving room between them.

Internet usability experts have discovered that this sort of writing outperforms other styles online.

White space increases online readability and draws attention to key ideas that may get lost in long paragraphs. Computer users tend to scan documents more than they read them word-for-word, top-to-bottom.

White space makes that process easier.

Don’t go short. Some people believe that shorter listings will outperform longer ones. They worry about boring potential bidders or overwhelming them with information. When it comes to an eBay auction, this school of thought is out to lunch.

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Prospective buyers always crave more information about the items you are selling. You need to write listings that will anticipate and answer all of the possible questions a buyer might have.

The more information you provide, the more comfortable bidders will feel about making a purchase.

You do want to provide critical information at “the top,” but it is perfectly alright to pen a long listing so long as it contains valuable information and insight.

Details, Details, Details

This is a corollary to the observation about longer listings. You want to make sure that your auction covers the key details related to your product.

Make sure you let people know about sizes, weights, condition, age, strengths, weaknesses and everything else they might want to know about a project.

When we shop in a store, we can have a tactile experience. We get to pick products up, reviewing them visually and physically. On eBay, we don't have that luxury.

Your listing needs to put the product into your prospective bidder's hands. Give them all of the information they could get if they were able to pick up that product and could review it carefully themselves.

Grammar Matters

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You might have used your grammar classes as an opportunity to catch an afternoon nap, but the time has now come to brush up on your writing skills.

Well-written listings inspire confidence and clearly communicate information. Listings filled with errors don't perform as well. Run the listing of your text through a word processor with a grammar and spelling checker.

That will help a great deal, but it won't insure a perfect result.

You also need to read the listing out loud to make sure everything is right. If you can get a friend or family member to proofread it, that can be an extra layer of protection against the kind of errors that can kill auction effectiveness.

Keep It Simple.

You are writing for a mass audience of browsers, not for a controlled group of detailed readers. You want to get your message across to everyone who takes a look at your listing.

Avoid incredibly long sentences. Avoid the use of uncommon words in your listings. Make sure you are communicating clearly at all times.

Those who have a tendency toward an "artistic flourish" in their writing should look for other outlets. The best auction is a simple auction.

Be Creative

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Wait a second... Didn't we just say to keep it simple? Absolutely. Creativity and simplicity, however, are not at odds with one another. You want to create an easy-to-read auction that people will remember.

A fresh use of language and creative approach can make reading easier and more pleasant. It can reinforce your message. You are writing a SALES piece, not a technical manual listing.

Be simple. Be honest. Be interesting, too.

Sell

Your listing should make people want your product. Many eBay sellers fall victim to thinking that they are listing a product for those who are already interested in it.

They believe that the pre-existing desires of users will dictate whether or not (and for how much) a product will sell.

That perspective is fatally flawed. Yes, there will be a few people out there who are willing to bid on your auction based on the nature of the product itself without concern for how you present it.

Many, however, are still in "consideration" mode. Your listing needs to convert them from shoppers into buyers.

That means you should use vibrant, active language. You should write persuasively.

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Don't think of your listing as an informational essay; understand that it is a sales document designed to make people WANT what you are offering.

Stay Honest

You want to construct a great sales pitch, but you don't want to cross the line into "pure hype." Be honest about your product and its condition.

Many of the bidders who will be looking at your listing will have some knowledge of your product and will be completely turned off if it appears you are trying to mislead or oversell potential buyers.

Make It Readable

Have you every seen blue text on a red background?

Have you ever tried to read a piece of text written with an obscure, fancy font?

Have you ever struggled with reading something presented in a too-small font?

A creative presentation can be helpful, but it must be easy to read. Resist the urge to get too fancy with your font choices.

Don't shrink your text to microscopic levels. Use color combinations that look good and are easy to read.

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Don't trust your own judgment, either. You might think that text in a light gray twelve-point Impact font looks great on a dark brown background.

On someone else's computer, or through someone else's eyes, however, it might be impossible to decipher. Research proven color schemes and use free online resources that provide examples of appropriate color combinations.

Look at the listings of eBay power sellers and notice the combinations and sizes they are using. Information like that can insure that you build readable listings.

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HEADLINES SELL PAPERS

The title of this section is an old newspaper maxim. A good headline will sell a newspaper.

If a headline can capture the reader's interest and make them want to learn more, you can bet they will be forking over their change to the newsstand operator or sliding it into the vending machine.

The same principle holds true in the world of eBay.

A good headline will get people to read your auction.

All of the work you put into your listing is absolutely meaningless if no one reads it. The only way to get readers (and, thus, buyers) is by hooking them with a winning headline.

Here are a few proven methods to help you produce awesome headlines that will bring bidders to your auctions:

Use The Key Words

Almost two-thirds of buyers find auctions using the search function. That means your headline must be written to both attract interest from the reader and for eBay's search function to find it in the first place.

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You need to use key terms in your headline--the words for which probable buyers will be searching. That seemingly obvious statement has some important ramifications.

It means you will need to think about your product in terms of the different possible audiences to which it is likely to appeal and that it will need to contain a combination of words that will work for as many of those groups as possible.

That goal needs to be realized without sacrificing the “enticing” nature of an exciting/interesting headline.

Do your research, think about your product from different perspectives and uncover the three or four most critical words you should include in your listing. Try to use these as you build your headline.

Keep It Interesting

You are dealing with space limitations and the need to use multiple key words. That might make it tough to come up with a memorable, catchy headline that people just can't resist reading.

However, it is possible to make your headline more enticing by adding a few well-placed adjectives or descriptors.

Which headline resonates more with you: “Ceramic Cat, Siamese” or “FLAWLESS CERAMIC SIAMESE CAT ~ LIFELIKE”?

One gives you the basics. The other gives you a reason to take a look at the listing. Sure, a few ceramic cat collectors or diehard fans of the Siamese breed might have looked at the first listing, but the overall number of views will be much higher with the more descriptive headline.

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Stand Out

Your headline needs to pop off the monitor. It needs to grab the attention of the reader immediately. The actual words play a huge role in that process, but so does the actual form of presentation.

Many top eBay sellers recommend the use of capital letters. Using ALL CAPS may be considered a breach of “netiquette” in other parts of the online world, but it is acceptable for auction listings.

The use of bold text or highlighting can also help separate your listing from the crowd. However, those features do ring up extra eBay fees, so you will need to consider your margin and willingness to invest more in the listing before going that route.

Use Real, Full Words

Yes, you have to deal with space limitations. That doesn't, however, mean you should turn your listing into an riddle to be decoded. You are writing an auction headline, not creating a personalized license plate.

Avoid using letter combinations in place of words--no “UR” instead of “you are,” for instance. Getting your message to fit might be easy if you abbreviate non-essential terms, but the destruction of readability makes that a no-no.

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There's no reason to write "GR8 DL." If you feel that "GREAT DEAL" is really essential to your headline (which it probably isn't), find a way to spell it out.

Your headline isn't the place to use your "1337 hax0r" skills or your spam email title-writing talents ("F*REE prescr1pt1ion p1lls').

Use real, full words when creating headlines.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

When we go shopping in traditional retail stores, we get to take a good close look at the products in which we are interested. Those visual inspections often determine, in large measure, whether we buy or not.

Looking at something closely reveals its strengths and its weaknesses. It gives us a clear idea of what our money will purchase.

When people buy on eBay, they don't get that opportunity. They can't pick the product up and scan it. They can't look closely at the construction or evaluate the color to make sure it will match with an item they already own.

This inability to see the item leads many buyers to pass on auctions unless their prior knowledge or the listing itself allows them to get a very, very good idea of the product, its construction and appearance.

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As an eBay seller, it is your job to put that product “in their hands” by writing a fantastic listing that provides all of the information necessary for a prospective bidder to make a good decision.

It should also lead you to use photographs.

There are some items that don’t necessarily require a photograph. However, even these products tend to sell better when a picture is available. Across the board, you are better off including a photograph with your listing.

You could just snap a few quick snapshots and use them to improve your listing. Even that might help increase sales.

However, to fully exploit the power of photography in eBay listings, you really should follow some specific recommendations.

You don’t have to be Ansel Adams to sell your products using photographs, but it does require an informed approach.

Here are a few tips for using photographs in your listings:

Use Crisp, Clean Photos

A lousy, out of focus picture may do more harm than it does good. Remember, you are trying to replicate the experience of personal viewing for your buyers. You want to give them a clear look at what they are buying.

There’s really no excuse for out-of-focus photos these days. Digital cameras are inexpensive and their “point and shoot” technology can turn anyone into a passable photographer.

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Using crummy photos is an immediate turn off and it makes the seller look as though he or she doesn't care about the auction. Use quality pictures!

Size Matters

You need your photos to be big enough to clearly communicate a fair representation of the product available for sale. However, sizing photos for eBay is something of a balancing act.

Even though you may be wired up with a DSL or cable Internet connection, many users still rely on dial up connections and large photos can take a long time to load.

Use acceptably high resolution photos at a size that balances loading speed with detail.

Clean Presentation

If there's one thing everyone should understand about photographs, it is that they don't hide imperfections. If anything, they make them even more noticeable.

If you are trying to sell a dress on eBay and just toss it on your bed to snap a few pictures, you can be sure that everyone is going to notice that you have a stain on your blanket or that there is a big chunk of lint on the dress.

Quick "home" photos of products may be efficient, but they usually contain distractions. You want the attention placed on your products, not on your messy living room or the cat that was bathing himself in the background.

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Take your photos in a clean, controlled environment free of clutter.

Minimize distractions and provide a clear presentation.

Be Steady

Depending upon your camera and your own skills as a photographer, you may be able to take photos while holding the camera in your hand. However, that strategy can backfire for some people.

Many find that they take their best photographs from a tripod, which will insure a blur-free picture. Again, this is less of a problem today than it was before we all had digital cameras, but it can be a factor to consider.

Establishing Scale

If you are selling a smaller item, it can be helpful to include something else in the photo to establish the size of the product you are selling.

Although your listing should fully describe the size and dimensions of the item for sale, putting the object in perspective can be a big help.

You might want to place it alongside a ruler or some other recognizable item so that prospective buyers understand just how big (or small) the product really is.

Lights, Camera, Action

The first part of that familiar refrain is important. Lighting has a huge impact on photograph quality. Most people find

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that outdoor photos can work if the sun isn't high in the sky or if it is overcast. Indoor photos can also work so long as there is sufficient light.

If you take your pictures at noon on a sunny day, you can expect annoying contrast levels that will detract from the quality of your photos.

Take a look through your non-eBay photo album and note which pictures seem to be the most attractive. Try to replicate those lighting conditions when you take your auction snapshots.

Distances

You should try to include a photo that shows your product from a reasonable distance. You want at least one photo that shows the product in its entirety while retaining as much detail as possible.

Supplement that picture with other similar shots from different angles (if applicable). You will also want to include close-up photographs. Some eBay sellers recommend close-ups only to illustrate exceptional artistry or to fairly disclose flaws.

Both of those rationales are solid. However, one should probably include a few close ups no matter what.

Buyers are beginning to expect some detailed shots and your close-ups will also display a willingness on your part to let prospective bidders know everything about the product.

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The most important thing to remember about eBay photo-taking is that you are trying to provide your buyers with more information. You want your pictures to give them the same opportunity they would have if they encountered the item in a traditional retail setting.

If you believe your photos provide a true and accurate portrait of the item you are selling, consider your photography a success.

It is possible to produce more dazzling photos that will really help sell a product. However, those attempts only work if and when the basic needs for clarity and accuracy are met.

If you were able to snap a few photos that are particularly arresting or attractive, feel free to use them if they don't detract from a prospective bidder's ability to understand the nature of your product clearly.

START LOW

One of the most common fears of new eBay sellers is that if they start an auction with too low of a selling point, they might end up selling their products at a loss.

That concern makes perfect sense at face value. If you are trying to sell a widget that cost you \$100, you might be reluctant to start the bidding at a penny. What if you only receive a single bid?

The prospect of losing \$99.99 is unattractive, to say the least.

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Interestingly, that seemingly reasonable fear appears to be nearly baseless. The growth of eBay has captured the attention of academics and researchers, and optimal auction start prices have been the subject of some interesting studies.

Professors from the London Business School and Northwestern University found that lower starting prices tend to yield higher final prices! That might seem counterintuitive, but researchers have hypothesized that low starting prices encourage participation and create a psychological investment in auctions that push prices upwards.

For instance, cameras that were sold with a start price of \$.01 in one study resulted in sales that significantly outdistanced the average in terms of final prices.

Again and again, research shows that lower start prices tend to produce higher final prices.

If you have faith in your product and your approach, you don't need to fear a low start price. If the market is there for your product, bidders will drive the price up accordingly.

You may want to start with a somewhat protective start price for higher-dollar items as a beginning seller, just in case you have made an error along the way.

The only other exception to the "start low" rule would be if you are selling a very specialized item that will only appeal to a small sliver of the overall eBay demographic.

In those cases, it may make more sense to lift the opening bid to a price at which you could handle selling the item.

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COMPARE AND CONTRAST

People come to eBay looking for bargains. Make sure they know that they will be getting one. One of the best ways of hammering that point home is to compare the opening bid price of your item to the manufacturers suggested retail price of the same, or similar item.

If you are selling shirts that retail for \$29.95, mention that fact. Let the public know that although the bidding starts at a dollar, these shirts fly off the racks at Major Retailer, Inc. for \$29.95.

Encourage the bargain-hunting instinct that brings people to eBay in the first place.

Research conducted by experts at Stanford University discovered that eBay auctions that explicitly mentioned the standard retail price of an offered item fetched an additional 7%, on average, than did those auctions that neglected to make the comparison.

A few percentage points might not seem like a big deal, but multiplied over a number of sales, it can really add up.

When you think about how easy making the retail/auction comparison is within your listing, there is no good reason not to feed your prospective bidders' hunger for a bargain.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

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Well, timing may not be EVERYTHING, but it certainly can be important. The length of an auction and the time at which it is scheduled to end can have a definite impact on final prices.

You can boost your profits as an eBay seller by using research on auction timing to your advantage.

The length of auctions is an important consideration. Ebay allows you to choose auctions of varying length. Research from the University of Arizona indicates that longer auctions outperform shorter ones substantially.

Three-day and five-day auctions don't seem to be that different, but seven-day auctions bring prices almost 25% higher than the shorter options.

That's right, those few extra days can make a HUGE difference.

If you can muster the patience for a ten-day auction, you can expect, on average, to see profits that are over 40% higher than the shorter versions, according to the research.

There's a simple lesson there, and it makes a great deal of sense. Longer auctions work better. We can reasonably assume that's because it creates more opportunities for people to take action.

Although some may have thought that shorter auctions might create a perception of urgency, inspiring action, that doesn't seem to be the case--or if it is, it is certainly outweighed by the advantages of increased exposure.

Picking the right ending time for an auction can also help to make you money as an eBay seller.

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Many sellers assume that the best time to end an auction is at eBay's busiest times. They reason that having their soon-to-expire auction in front of as many people as possible might encourage last minute involvement and increased bidding (and, thus, higher final prices).

That doesn't appear to be the case, however. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania determined that those auctions ending during eBay's peak hours were nearly ten percent LESS likely to produce a sale than those that finish earlier or later in the day.

Over one-third of eBay auctions end in the evening hours between five and nine. There's more activity and more bidding overall during those times, but that increase in activity means there is more competition, too.

Those who find auction end times on the outskirts of the busier times are more likely to log sales than those who go "prime time" and risk getting lost in the shuffle.

The conclusions of the research look at average experiences, and certain products and categories may not always work according to these recently discovered "laws."

However, a smart seller will certainly investigate these conclusions about timing in order to build the most profitable possible auctions.

TALK ABOUT YOUR PRODUCTS

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There are many different factors that go into creating a winning auction. We discuss many of the best ways to optimize your listings in this guide. One of the most overlooked and powerful means of improving sales is to integrate audio into your auction.

An audio component to your listing can help it to stand out from the competition, who will be primarily relying on raw text and graphics alone. Some eBay sellers have found that their sales doubled after using audio within their auctions.

Not only do they sell more frequently, they usually get a higher price for their items than they do with audio-free listings.

You can add a voiceover to your audio through any one of several means.

Those with a higher level of computer knowledge may want to record their own message, host it, and include the necessary HTML to facilitate playback into their listings.

Those who are interested in making money on eBay but who don't have that level of expertise can rely on one of the many online services who will help you to create audio files and will then work with you to place them into your auctions.

Those services, of course, do involve a charge. However, the increase in sales volumes and prices can make it a great investment.

Here are a few factors to keep in mind when you produce an audio segment for your auction.

Keep It Short

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People like to hear more about a product, but they don't want to listen to a prolonged sales pitch. Present important information in a friendly, upbeat manner. Don't drone on too long.

Keep It Positive

Your audio is part of your sales pitch. You are using it to convince people to bid on your product.

If you sound flat or dull, that can actually decrease your potential bidders' excitement. Keep your message positive and pleasant.

Quality Matters

Make sure your recording is free of static or interference. Make sure it doesn't suffer from distortion. You want anyone with speakers who finds you listing to listen to your audio segment.

Low quality is a turn off and may convince people to click away after only a few seconds.

Keep It Low-Key

Don't assault the listener with a fanfare of trumpets, a screaming voice, excessive lead-in music or other annoyances. Just greet them with a friendly voice that helps sell your product.

You can be positive without being overly aggressive.

Don't Read Your Listing

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You already have a great written listing, but that doesn't mean you should read it verbatim.

You might want to include a few particularly well-turned phrases, but you really aren't adding a great deal of value to your auction by simply repeating information that is already available.

You want to use audio to personalize your sales pitch, not to create a read-along.

Make It Optional

Not everyone wants to hear your voice. Some people despise audio. Some are already listening to a favorite MP3 or CD on their computer while browsing eBay and really don't want to have that experience interrupted.

Make your audio optional. Make it clear that someone can "Click Here for the Story Behind this Product," but don't push the audio on them involuntarily. You risk turning away prospective bidders if you do.

Adding audio can be a great way to improve the power of your listings, and it doesn't have to be a complicated process. It's an often-overlooked way of doing that "something extra" that can set your auction apart from others.

Want to learn more about the science of copywriting for the eBay audience? Here are some essential resources you will need.

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[Robert Plank's Sales Page Tactics](#) has been hailed as the bible for online marketing sales letters, what with the revolutionary ideas it presents.

[Ewen Chia and Dan Lok's Underground Sales Letters](#), on the other hand, present guerilla techniques on how to craft the most potent sales pages possible. Both the authors are super affiliates, the best in the industry, and a great part of the success lies on how well they reach their audience through the sales pages they churn out.

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SELLER BUSINESS TIPS

KEEP ON MOVING

The items appearing in the most popular retail stores this year won't, largely, be the exact same items offered last year.

Sure, there will be a certain percentage of stalwart standbys that make an appearance year after year, but for the most part retailers make a dedicated effort to keeping a fresh inventory.

That's a brick and mortar lesson we can apply to eBay successfully. Stores don't stock the same old thing indefinitely because consumer tastes, needs, fads and trends change with time.

What was hot a few months ago may seem almost laughable today. Last year's hot Christmas toy will probably be in this year's bargain bin.

That holds true for eBay, too. Tastes and demand change and the most successful sellers are the ones who make a commitment to noticing and tracking those changes. You need to sell things for which there is a strong current demand.

A corollary to this basic principle is that there is no reason to hold onto losing products any longer than necessary.

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What was once a great seller may be past its prime. Instead of hanging on to it forever in hopes that it will eventually regain its popularity (which, by the way, rarely happens), retailers understand that there comes a time to cut one's losses and to dump merchandise.

If you have products that just aren't selling for a profit, it might be time to consider moving it at a loss. Here's a quick test to see if it's time to dump some of your inventory.

Is there any sign of increased demand?

Does demand appear static or does it look like things might be on an upswing? If there does appear to be room for price growth in the very near future, you can hold onto that merchandise a little longer.

If you don't have a rational reason to believe things are going to change, you should be on the road to dumping it.

Have you done a good job selling?

Review this guide and its checklist to make sure you have done everything you should have done in order to sell the product. Sometimes the problem with a slow-moving item is the sales technique. In others, it is the item itself.

Make sure the shortcoming is with the merchandise and not with your marketing before dumping it.

Could you use sales proceeds to generate more money?

This is a critical question and it really gets right to the heart of why it can be a good idea to dump "losing" products at a

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loss. Let's say that last year you purchased 100 widgets for \$10 each in hopes of selling them for \$20 each on eBay.

You sold the first 50 at your target price, but now things have stalled. You cannot sell a single one at \$20. In fact, you are noticing other auctions that are failing at \$10. It looks like you'd have to drop price all the way to \$5 to move them.

That's a grizzly proposition, to be sure. However, it might make sense depending on your cash situation. If you are working with a good margin and significant reserves, this might not matter to you.

Most newer sellers, however, are always looking for cash flow and proceeds they can use to reinvest in their businesses.

What if you found a new product, McWidgets, that were available to you for \$5 each and could sell for \$10 easily?

You could dump your leftover widgets (50 widgets at \$5 per widget) for \$250. You could then reinvest that gain in McWidgets, purchasing 50 of them with which you could make \$500.

By dropping price on the widgets, you have created investible cash that can be flipped and used to post a profit on a different product.

Now, if you were working with deep pockets, you might have just bought the McWidgets without dropping price on the Widgets. However, that would still leave you with "lost" money invested in those Widgets. At some point, you would have to sell the product to capture any value from them.

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When retailers dump overstock cheap or blow out older products, they aren't just making more space on the shelves (although that may be a consideration, too).

They are also generating cash flow that can be used to meet operating expenses and/or to fund new (hopefully) profitable projects.

Flipping inventory, reinvesting and knowing when to get rid of losing product are great skills to develop if you want to make a healthy living selling on eBay.

In a nutshell: it's a matter of finding what sells and what doesn't. Naturally, you'd want to determine the hottest selling products immediately, as they will almost guarantee some profit.

But do not neglect the smaller markets where demand is high, but supply - thanks to the few players therein - is low.

These markets are called niches. Want to find a great niche you can capitalize on? [Jimmy D. Brown & Ryan Deiss' Niche Pay Raise](#), [Niche Factors](#), and [Products In The Rough Volumes I and II](#) are some of the best eBooks on the subject you can ever find.

MAKE IT EASY TO PAY

All of the great salesmanship in the world is meaningless if you can't get the money from the customer. That obvious, and critical, aspect of selling on eBay is often overlooked--and at great expense.

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Your customers need to have a convenient means of paying you for your auctions. Some may prefer to use PayPal, which is considered the eBay “standard.”

Others may want to use a money order, a cashier’s check, a personal check, or some other payment method.

Every person who prefers to use a payment method you don’t accept is lost to you as a customer. A refusal to take anything but PayPal might result in hundreds of lost sales opportunity in the end.

An unwillingness to take PayPal at all may absolutely sink your efforts at becoming a top eBay seller.

Try to find a way to accept as many methods of payment as possible. Make your auctions as convenient as possible to as many buyers as possible.

A note on personal checks: Many eBay sellers are wary of accepting personal checks, and with good reason.

One runs the risk of having checks returned for insufficient funds, and unscrupulous buyers may use stolen checks to make a purchase.

Some people remedy this situation by accepting checks, but holding merchandise until such time as the check has cleared the bank. This provides an additional layer of protection for the seller, but can inconvenience a buyer.

Many top eBay sellers have found that they can accept checks for smaller amounts with a relatively high degree of safety.

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If your auction is for a less expensive item, you may want to accept checks without forcing customers to wait for the check to clear.

You may occasionally run into payment problems, but you should be able to make up the difference in volume by accepting this popular and easy form of payment.

TAKE FEEDBACK SERIOUSLY

As we've noted, your credibility as a seller is a significant factor in generating sales.

There are a number of ways to demonstrate your integrity and reliability as a seller, but none is as important as eBay's own internal feedback system.

New sellers should take great pains to develop a record of problem-free transactions.

Although buyers are more likely to cast a discriminating eye on a seller's ratings, as a seller, positive feedback as a buyer can help to establish you as a fair-dealer within the eBay community.

If you are new to eBay, make a few purchases from others. This will give you a chance to accumulate some positive feedback rankings as a buyer, which will be displayed in association with your eBay identity.

It also provides you with some firsthand experience in evaluating and assessing auction techniques at the same time.

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Developing a stockpile of good buyer feedback, however, still won't be nearly as compelling to potential buyers as will quality seller feedback. The only way to generate quality feedback in that department is by selling products.

If you plan to specialize in higher ticket items, developing a sufficient record as a seller may be difficult. People will be reluctant to take a chance on a new seller, particularly if they are dealing in relatively expensive items.

As such, it may make sense to start your selling career by offering products that are less expensive in hopes of generating positive feedback.

There are enclaves within eBay that seem to exist primarily for the purpose of developing positive feedback. Penny recipe sales, conducted quid quo pro, for instance, have been used as a means of generating feedback.

The official Terms of Service prohibit conducting an auction for the sake of creating feedback. Your assessment of another vendor is the one commodity you can't sell on eBay.

The aforementioned schemes seem to circumvent the rule, but the risk of being discovered outweigh the possible benefits, especially when one considers how easy it is to develop honest feedback, instead.

Additionally, if potential customers do their homework and look through the transactions involved in your feedback ratings; they are unlikely to be impressed with a series of great comments regarding your involvement in a sketchy recipe exchange. In fact, that kind of activity may do more harm than good.

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You need positive feedback to create the kind of credibility that leads to sales. Here are some proven techniques to accomplish that important goal.

You can use the [Turbo Feedback Manager](#) or the [Turbo Form Generator](#) to make it convenient for your visitors and customers to leave their comments for your attention.

Start small. Start by selling less expensive products. These are easier to sell and will allow you to build up feedback more quickly than you might while waiting for people to spend more sizeable amounts on your products.

You can do this as a profit-motivated exercise, trying to make a positive return out of your smaller sales.

Take a hit. We mentioned that you could run your smaller feedback-production auctions as profit-motivated exercise. However, one of the best ways of developing a history of square dealing is to offer a series of auctions for inexpensive items that you are willing to sell below cost or at eye-popping bargain rates.

Why is this a good plan? It guarantees several sales within a short period of time, increasing your chances of developing some quality feedback. It also gives you a crash course in managing every aspect of the auction process without putting a substantial at risk.

Be responsive. One of the best ways to develop good feedback is to be a responsive seller. That includes answering pre-sale queries to bidders, holding their hand through the sales and shipping process, and being quick to respond to any questions or concerns.

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The Internet moves quickly, and as such, many eBay buyers have an expectation of almost instant service.

Whether that perspective is reasonable or not, it does exist and your ability to handle it will often influence how people perceive you and what kind of feedback they provide.

Be polite. People like good customer service, but they love it when it comes with a smile. That brick and mortar lesson translates to eBay, although the smile may not be of the face-to-face variety.

Be very careful in wording your correspondence. Be kind and considerate and do your best not to ever appear rude or abrupt.

Remember that email and other net-based communication forms are often the source of confusion because we act quickly and without consideration of how our words might be interpreted.

Never make a remark that could be construed as negative.

Be honest. When you get right down to it, feedback is about assessing whether someone lived up to his or her end of the deal. Did they send the right product? Did they send it when they said they would? Did it measure up to its description?

It may be tempting to engage in a little bit of embellishment when writing your listings or other supporting material, but in the end your integrity will be assessed by the way your representations and reality measured up to one another.

Honesty is definitely the very best policy when it comes to developing quality feedback ratings.

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Be fast. People aren't required to leave feedback for you. Many won't. In order to get as much as you can, be sure to provide it in a timely fashion. People are more likely to give you a passing grade if you've already expressed your satisfaction with their handling of their end of the bargain.

Some eBay sellers won't give feedback to a buyer until they have received some themselves. They see this kind of "feedback hostage-taking" as a means of self-defense.

Buyers want quality feedback too, after all and holding back feedback is seen as a deterrent against negative assessments.

A buyer has carte blanche to give you poor marks if you have already given them a thumbs up. On the other hand, a buyer might be reluctant to slam a seller if the buyer knows they might end up with the same red mark on their virtual report card.

The feedback hostage game has some appeal, but in reality, you shouldn't run into problems if you are running your business the right way.

Good sellers argue that providing fast feedback for good customers helps them develop quality feedback of their own. They don't worry too much about using feedback as a weapon, instead focusing on running a quality eBay business.

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CHECKLISTS

In order to make it easier for you to integrate the various helpful hints we've covered, this ebook comes with a series of checklists.

Work your way through these checklists during each phase of the eBay selling process in coordination with eBay's own materials and guidance to be certain you are maximizing your opportunities for selling success.

PRE-AUCTION ACTIVITY

Have you...

- Created your account and User ID?
- Completed all necessary identity verification and presented all necessary documentation to become an eBay seller?
- Read the eBay and PayPal TOS?
- Made sure you have prepared yourself to start a new business as an eBay seller?

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- Completed your “About Me” page and optimized it for maximum effectiveness?
- Completed any part(s) of your FAQ page that might provide you with an additional marketing opportunity and prospective bidders with solid information?
- Scouted the competition thoroughly to see how they are approaching the sale of similar products?

BUILDING THE PERFECT AUCTION

Have you...

- Chosen the best possible category for your auction based on accuracy and visibility?
- “Regionalized” your auction?
- Written an arresting and irresistible listing using the writing guidelines in this ebook?
- Included “compare and contrast” language within your listing?
- Formulated a perfect headline using key words and avoiding common pitfalls?

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- Included quality photographs that illustrate the nature of your product?
- **Added an audio component to your listing?**
- Chosen the best possible length for your auction?
- **Chosen the best possible end time for your auction?**

BUSINESS MAINTENACE

Are you...

- **Constantly learning more about being a top-notch seller from eBay and a variety of other sources?**
- Consistently tracking and evaluating your performance, looking for ways to improve?
- **Moving quickly, turning over old inventory when appropriate?**
- Providing buyers with the best possible range of payment methods?
- **Constantly and vigilantly protecting your feedback and making efforts to garner ratings that are more positive?**

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Thank You For Reading

The **eBay** eBook

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