

Selling on eBay Article Pack #2

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5 eBay Selling Tips

eBay is the premier online marketplace. With access to the entire world in one website, you have the potential for unlimited sales of your goods. But, don't think that selling here is any easier than selling anywhere else. To make the most of your time on eBay, here are five tips to maximize your profit.

Just about everyone from housewives to retirees has tried their hand at selling one thing or another on eBay. Those who have made big profits include those who sell vehicles and even real estate. It gives new meaning to selling everything but the kitchen sink. So, how do they do it? What does it take to get started selling on eBay? Here are five tips to help you get your foot in the door of eBay profits.

1. **Do market research first.** Just about everything has been sold on eBay but everything you sell won't make you money. Take a look at auction results. Some products sell in cycles. What is popular today may not be popular at this time next year. If eBay is your business, you want to bring in more money than you are putting out.
2. **Set your prices carefully.** Again look at auction results. What is the most competitive price? Your laptop may be worth \$300 but if laptops from the same manufacturing year are selling at \$250, asking for \$280 won't make you competitive. Choose a price that is lower than the top selling price and charge more for secured shipping.
3. **Work on your descriptions.** Even though hundreds of thousands of people shop online every day, they are still skeptical about sketchy details. Leaving out pertinent facts about your product can be a turn off for buyers. If they think you are hiding something, they'll be reluctant to buy.
4. **Read all of eBay's policies.** The last thing you want is to run afoul of the law. eBay has policies in place to protect the seller AND the buyer. Non-compliance could get you sanctioned on the site. Ignorance is not an excuse. All you need to know can be found on eBay's website in an easy-to-read format for users.
5. **Decide on all aspects of selling before listing your products.** How many people have forgotten to be specific about their shipping and payment methods? Who wants to wait for the check in the mail? We all know how that scenario usually turns out. There are guidelines for disputing with non-paying auction winners but you don't want to have to use them. The same goes for shipping. If it costs you more for shipping than you anticipated, you won't make any money.

Are you contemplating selling items on eBay? Use these five tips to get started today. There is much more to creating a successful business on eBay, but these will definitely help you begin on the right foot.

Establishing a Niche Market on eBay

There are a number of ways to make money on the Internet. One of those ways is using the eBay marketplace to showcase your wares. But, just because you offer products doesn't mean the customers will be beating down your virtual door. Learn how to establish your market and bring the customers to you in order to reach your success potential with eBay.

In order to bring buyers your way you must first know who your potential buyer is. You'll need to narrow down your customer type as much as possible into what is known as a target market. You might be wondering how to do this. Keep reading to find out the answers.

What is a niche market?

Think of animals. In nature, each animal has its native habitat. Some nest on the ground, under the ground or in trees. Placing food in the right spot will attract the animals you want to see. The same goes for niche marketing online. You'll need to strategically place your food in order to attract those hungry for it.

A niche market can be a smaller part of a larger market. As such, it is more specialized and therefore, more targeted. If 500 people live in an area, half of them probably won't be interested in your products. That still leaves 250 people to target and make a sale. If your product sells for at least \$100 each...do the math...that's a lot of bread. So, how do you find your niche market?

Finding Your Niche Market

This will take a bit of time but once you find your market for your first product, the process will be simpler the next time around. People buy for a number of reasons. In this unstable economy, those reasons become even more important. Ask yourself what reason your product satisfies. Here are a few examples of things your product will want to do in order to keep your potential buyers attention and ultimately get them to buy from you.

- Does your product satisfy a need that must be met?
- Does it provide entertainment?
- Does it solve a problem efficiently?

If your product or for that matter, your service, does one or more of the things above, it will stand a chance amongst bidders on eBay. Now that you know you can compete, find out how many of those people who fall in your target niche are out there.

Look at similar products being sold right now on eBay. How are the auctions going? What are the winning bids? Are these people repeat buyers of other products in that same category? What time of year do the products sell the best?

All of this information can be used to see if a niche has been established on eBay. In that case, the number of bidders can help you estimate how large the niche is and if there is room for competition. If the particular niche has been exhausted, you might want to reconsider selling that specific product or possibly go about it in a different way.

Finding an untapped niche on eBay is rare, but it can be done. More than likely you can find a niche that has not been hit to its potential and establish yourself as a reputable supplier of a certain line of products. Researching a niche ahead of time saves wasted energy trying to sell

something that won't sell. On the flipside, if you take the time to do the research and find you've got a hot product on your hands, with some researching and testing you could very well find yourself making a nice chunk of change on eBay.

Your eBay Marketing Plan

So, you have decided that millions of people can't be wrong and an eBay business can make money. After you've done your product research there is another step to perform and it's marketing. It takes time to establish a following and a reputation for quality, but having a plan in the beginning can speed things up. Here are some tips to help you steer your marketing efforts in the right direction.

What is Marketing?

For those who don't know, marketing is how you get the word out about your products. Look at companies like Coca-Cola and Nike. These are reputable brands, but they had to be presented to the public in a variety of ways to get noticed.

Online marketing strategies for websites also work if your only presence in cyberspace is on eBay. Some use eBay as a sort of test market before going further and building websites to sell their products. eBay has a few fees they charge for their services, but these are nominal compared to the money you can make. Remember, it takes money to make money and if you're serious about creating a profitable business at some point or another you'll need to spend a little money.

Where to Begin

- Spread the News - Begin with word of mouth, or viral marketing. Tell your friends and family about your new business venture on eBay. Send them emails with links to your auctions so they can see just what it is you are up to.
- Email - Use your email in another way. Each time you send an email, you have the opportunity to "sign" them with a signature line. Use that signature line as a way to link to your auction listing or eBay store. Add a tagline like, "Come and see what's new on eBay!"
- Customer Feedback - Ask for feedback from your buyers. Increasing the amount of positive feedback elevates your standing on eBay. Most people leave feedback anyway but send an email message to follow up after you ship your products as a customer service gesture to gauge their satisfaction and remind them to add feedback.
- Business Cards - Use business cards. In each package you ship add a business card so your name stays fresh in their minds. For informational products like eBooks and special reports, add a business card resource box on the last page of the product.
- Reward Repeat Customers - Offer coupons and other promotional offers for repeat clients. We say repeat clients because anyone can take advantage of an offer the first time and never return. If offer a discount to a customer when they next bid and win or make a fixed price purchase, they will come back. A discount on shipping will get their attention.
- Freebies - Add freebies to the packages you ship. Here's an example. Let's say that you are selling a bicycle. Add a bicycle pump or stickers (for a kids bike) to be used by the buyer. Include your logo and web address where applicable.

Each of these ideas contributes to an overall marketing plan. If you have a separate website, the number of marketing strategies you can use increases even more. Don't narrow yourself into just one form of marketing. You need to develop a well thought out marketing plan and work your way through each step in order to reach ultimate success with your eBay store.

Shipping: Getting Your eBay Products to Your Customers

It took some time, but you have decided on your products and listed them for auction on eBay. Once the auction is over, someone will be the proud new owner of your product. Before you count your money, don't forget that to seal the deal, the product has to be shipped to its new owner.

Shipping is one consideration that needs to be decided before you even list an item on eBay. Some people forget the shipping part until the end of the auction. Or, they don't put a lot of thought into the shipping process and choose just any method. This is a recipe for disaster that we are going to shred right now.

If you buy something from someone on eBay or out of a catalog, you want it to arrive in one piece. There will be lots of weeping and wailing if it doesn't and you'll have to deal with it. Careful shipping procedures will ensure that your customers are smiling pretty when that box arrives.

Shipping Considerations

Before you choose a shipping method, there are a number of things to consider. First, how heavy is your product? Smaller products that weigh less than 25 pounds are usually shipped by UPS or USPS. The prices are reasonable and you can set up at-home pickup or check into a mailing service where you get a scale and print, pay for shipping supplies and schedule delivery online.

Secondly, are you selling multiple items? Shipping supplies can be costly. Purchasing in bulk saves money and expedites your shipping process when each item sells.

Third, how will you calculate your shipping costs? In your item listing you can use fixed price shipping or include a shipping rate calculator so bidders can calculate additional shipping before they bid on an item. For smaller items, you can offer free shipping if the item is light but will fetch a high price in the auction.

What method should you use?

There are several ways to ship a product. eBay suggests shipping methods to all its auction owners, but the final decision is up to you. Most sellers use either UPS, FedEx, USPS or other shipping companies like DHL. For irregular or bulky packages, FedEx ground would probably be cheaper.

Don't forget to figure in the cost of packing supplies. Those nifty little packing peanuts (no they are not edible, but they are cute) are not free and neither is the bubble wrap. If you aren't sure how to pack it up trust your product to the experts. It may take a little time to visit the shipping store but that is better than having a customer upset by a damaged or destroyed product that will have to be refunded.

Shipping is a high priority not a last resort when selling on eBay. Let bidders know your shipping methods and costs in your listings along with shipping delivery dates. Leave nothing to chance with your valuable products.

What Will You Sell on eBay?

You may have heard that many have quit their jobs to sell full time on eBay. Maybe you have that ambition or just want to make some mad money to take a vacation every year. Whatever the reason for selling on eBay, you need to know what you can sell to make a profit.

People sell just about everything on eBay. You might have an attic full of Aunt Minnie's leftovers from the estate sale or baby items you didn't get rid of. If they are of good quality, you may find a market on eBay.

Where to Find Your Merchandise

You can start in your home. On the eBay website under "Seller Resources" there is a link called The eBay Idea House. It is actually a magnificent tool. When you click on it you are taken to a virtual house. Click on each room and see where you can look for ideas of what to sell. Some people go straight for the garage in their home but other items are just sitting in the bathroom or bedroom waiting to be noticed.

Outside of the home, the first place to find an eBay worthy item is a yard sale. Yard sales are not about selling junk, but items you don't have a need for anymore. You can find great deals at church and community yard sales. Come armed with cash and a vehicle big enough to take away larger items you might find for a bargain.

What to Look for in an Item

Most items that you can think of are able to be sold on eBay, but they may not be worthy of a sale. That means that your mother-in-law's beaded antique lamp might not fetch a good price on eBay. If it looks hideous to you it's probably hideous to your bidders. Save it for when The Antique Road Show comes to town instead.

The main aspect of an item for possible sale is whether you can get a higher price on eBay than you are paying for it right now. An example is gaming systems. They are hot sellers throughout the year. The best time to find them is when they first go on sale in stores. If you can afford to buy three or four at \$400 a piece, you can make at least twice that much for each one on eBay, especially if the system is in limited release in stores.

On the other hand, larger items like curio cabinets or wardrobes may not be cost effective for you. They will cost a lot to ship and the price customers are willing to pay may not make a decent profit. However, there is the option of setting up a local only sale, where the winning bidder must come pick the item up – so consider that if you've got furniture or larger items you'd like to get rid of.

Prohibited Items

We'd be remiss if this wasn't mentioned. Remember the rules? There are people who will test the limits but you don't want to be one of them. Know what you can't sell as well so you can stay clear of them.

- Pornographic items

- Used clothing
- Recalled items
- Credit cards
- Event tickets (that's scalping if you didn't know)
- Alcohol (the drinking kind)
- Weapons
- Food (even space rations)
- Human body parts

This is a limited list. Go to eBay and look under "Seller Resources" and then "Prohibited Items" for a more detailed list.

Selling on eBay can be both fun and profitable when you choose the right items to sell. Evaluate each item by the market and the work involved in selling and processing it before just throwing it up for sale.

How to Write an Effective Auction Description

Getting your items listed on eBay is only part of the process. In order for people to bid from you they need to be sure of what they are getting. That is where your item description comes in. Be upfront with your bidders but also engaging so they want to compete for your products.

Elements of a description

The important elements of an auction item description are the title and the body of the description. Both will work together to create a well-rounded picture of the item in the bidders head even before they take a look at the pictures. Bland descriptions won't entice them to click and see more.

Let's begin with the title. When crafting one, be precise and visual. What would catch your eye in a title? Use that same technique to write one for your items.

What if you were selling a dining room table? A title that said, "Red dining room table," doesn't really say much. We all know what a dining room table is so this is no help at all. It could be a table for a dollhouse for all you know.

Try it again. This time say, "Authentic 1955 Red Oak Farmhouse Table, gently stressed." Now, the bidder can see the table and even feel the texture due to the gentle stressing of the paint. You couldn't imagine that before. Someone will come in for a closer look at this table.

Now we move on to the description. A description is not about being flowery but detailing the features of your product using eye-catching words. The first thing to remember is to mention all aspects of the item that would be important to anyone buying one.

If you know your product inside and out, that won't be a problem for you. Let's use a printer for instance. What manufacturer and make is it? Does it make color or black copies? How many are produced in a minute? What else does it do?

All of these questions will help you come up with a great description. Look at this:

HP DeskJet F4235 All-In-One Printer, 6 months old

- Prints (20 ppm black, 15 ppm color)
- Scans (with removable lid for large items)
- Copies
- Professional quality photo prints (Vivera 60 color and black ink cartridges)
- USB printer cable included

You would bid on a printer with that description. It includes all the information you can use to make an informed decision about bidding on this product. You know that HP makes quality items and it can be used to copy photos from your digital camera and gives you professional quality prints.

The more information you can include in your auction item description, the more likely a potential bidder is to take a closer look and possibly put in a bid. Take time with your description. It is the way to attract customers.

Selling on eBay Motors

eBay is not just for selling items you can carry off. You can also sell items you can drive away. There is a site on eBay that is dedicated to selling vehicles. If you have a car, boat or recreational craft you are looking to sell at auction, here are some selling tips for eBay Motors.

There are some aspects of selling on eBay Motors that are similar to selling on the regular eBay site. For one, you still have the bidding or fixed price process. For some items like vehicles, you could get a higher price if you can start a bidding war for your car or boat.

Another aspect that is similar is the description. Especially with a high dollar item like a vehicle, bidders want to know exactly what they are getting. The price tag can be upwards of \$40,000 or more for an item and you don't want to make a payment like that on a lackluster description. Include every detail that you would want to know if you were buying the same vehicle.

Getting Started

- To make sure that you leave nothing out, print out the Sell your Vehicle Checklist. When selling a vehicle, you don't want to leave anything out. Once you complete the checklist you will have all of the information that you need to create a well-informed listing.
- Review the fees charged by eBay Motors. As a vehicle seller, you will pay the Successful Listing Fee and the Insertion Fee. The Insertion Fee is what you are charged for listing an item. That fee is charged for regular eBay listings but it is calculated differently for vehicles. The Successful Listing Fee is charged when you get a bid on your item. It varies depending on the size and type of vehicle being sold.
- Know the history of your vehicle if you are not the first owner. Have you seen those Carfax commercials where the car that was underwater after a hurricane is listed for sale as "newly upholstered"? Don't let that be you (as buyer or seller). Bidders will want to see a comprehensive vehicle history report.
- Know the laws for vehicle transfers. The person buying the vehicle could be in another state. For you as the seller, it's important to know about transferring titles, licensing, emissions policies and the like. Be sure of this in case bidders have questions.
- What are eBay Motor's selling policies? Become familiar with how you are supposed to handle listings before writing one. Operating within eBay's limits ensures that you don't get any black marks against you for not following the rules.
- How will you ship the vehicle? Shipping is always important but especially with something so large. There are companies you can work with to pick up and deliver your vehicle to its intended destination.

Have a car to sell? You can get a great price by auctioning it off on eBay Motors.

How Much Money Can You Make on eBay?

If you are looking for a way to make some extra cash eBay could be the answer. Others have been successful with eBay businesses and so can you. Realistically, how much money can you make on eBay? The answer depends on what you sell and how earnest you are about the process.

What to sell on eBay

eBay has a list of restricted items on their website under Seller Resources. Become familiar with this list before you decide what to sell. If your items are not on that list, they are fair game.

Now, how much money can you get for the items you are selling? That requires you to take a look at similar items for auction on the site. A market saturated with antique dolls doesn't need you to sell one more. Besides, you would pay more in fees than you might possibly get for the doll.

There is another consideration. eBay charges fees for listing and auctioning items. The fees are in line with the items you sell but you still have to pay them.

On the back end there are the shipping costs. You add them to your listing so bidders can see what it will cost. Some people lower their price and compensate with higher shipping fees or vice versa.

On eBay you can list your items for auction or sell at a fixed price. Some items that are popular right now will sell better at auction. Others may get a better price when sold outright instead of taking the time to set up an auction. Every item is not auction material.

Drive Up the Price

One feature of your listing that can increase the bidding price is photographs. People are visual especially when buying something that you can't touch. Upload photos from all angles: front, back, aerial and both sides. Include shots with as much detail as possible. The more they can see, the higher they will bid.

Your description can contribute to starting a bidding war for your product. Normally wars are not good things but in this case you want to have a highly successful auction. The key here is the language that you use. Tell your potential bidders things along these lines:

You'll never find another set of sheets as soft as these. Quality Egyptian cotton bedding at 400 thread count is soft as silk.

The wording makes each bidder want to possess the item for themselves. In an effort to get it, they will drive the price up as they try to outbid each other. This is a positive war with you as the winner no matter what.

Use all of the resources available to sellers on eBay to maximize the amount of money you can make. The sky is the limit as long as you are committed.

eBay Selling Tools

eBay wants you to succeed when you are with them. For sellers, they provide a number of tools available for free and for a monthly fee. Each of these tools allows you to manage your items and your auctions. Keep reading and find out what tools are available.

Free Selling Tools

Let's start with the free tools. There's nothing wrong with free and eBay knows it. So, make the most of what is available to you before signing up for more advanced tools.

1. **Turbo Lister** – This is a free eBay selling tool that you can download to your PC. Before you log on to your eBay account and create listings, use Turbo Lister. It allows you to design your listings on your desktop and finalize them before you upload them on eBay. You can design more than one listing at a time and upload them in bulk. It takes some of the work out of getting your auctions up and running quickly.
2. **File Exchange** – This tool is available for free to qualified sellers. If you have been on eBay for a while and are doing high volume business with a ton of positive feedback points, you can access it. The tool is online and accessible through My eBay. It allows the user to create and upload listings in bulk. In addition, the seller can also download selling reports and manager listings to relist items when needed.

Monthly Fee Tools

Each of the following tools is accessible for a monthly fee. To give you a chance to check them out, each also has a 30-day free trial.

1. **Selling Manager** – Listings are followed through from the beginning to the end with this tool. Not only can you look at new and active listings, but you can manage items after they are sold. For easy customer communication with your buyers, Selling Manager features email templates you can send to follow up with them. The online program (accessed from My eBay) can be used to print invoices and package labels. The cost is \$4.99 per month after a 30-day free trial.
2. **Selling Manager Pro** – It's a step up from Selling Manager for medium and high volume sellers. You can do everything that you are able to do with Selling Manager plus schedule listings, print labels in bulk, access profit and loss reports and manage feedback and emails. The cost is \$15.99 per month after a 30-day free trial.
3. **Blackthorne Basic** – With this tool your listings can be managed offline on your PC and information uploaded to eBay as you need it. Also, it assists with communication with buyers. The price is \$9.99 per month after a 30-day free trial.
4. **Blackthorne Pro** – For high volume sellers, Blackthorne Pro allows you to manage your inventory, active listings, relist items, upload listings in bulk, print labels and involves in bulk and receives monthly statements to track how business is going. The price for this all-in-one application is \$24.99 per month after a 30-day free trial.

Before beginning to sell on eBay, check out the tools available to sellers. Using them can increase your profits and eliminate many “beginner” errors.

Setting Up an eBay Store

Many people come to eBay to sell items and make some money. Some see it as more than a hobby and turn their eBay selling into a business and open up an eBay store. An eBay store allows you to sell a variety of items from one central location and is easier to do than setting up a store from scratch on your website.

What is an eBay Store Like?

Think of it as a virtual store where you can browse aisle to aisle with your mouse. To tell if a seller has an eBay store, look for a picture of a red door next to their names. You can still sell at auction but the store allows you to sell other items that are not listed in the auctions. Buyers can find fixed price items and learn about you.

Why Run an eBay Store?

Just like with any additional business avenues you pursue, they are new ways to increase your business. And, at eBay opening a store in addition to participating in auctions will increase your online presence and your customer sales.

A big reason to open an eBay store is the support that you receive from eBay in order to do it. They really want to see your business thrive so they do all that they can to help. eBay offers a number of tools for everyone wanting to open an eBay store.

eBay Store Support

There are three subscription levels for eBay stores: Basic, Premium and Anchor. Each comes with a different monthly price tag: \$15.95, \$49.95 and \$299.95 respectively. Start with the basic and increase your subscription as your sales and traffic grow.

The amount of support differs per level but each eBay store owner has access to a variety of tools designed to set up the store and manage it. eBay provides customer support for you to your customers shopping in your virtual store. No matter how many products you have to sell, unlimited product pages are available for you to properly showcase your merchandise.

How can people find you? eBay gives your store its own unique address that you can use in your email correspondence and on business cards to promote your business. Along the same lines, you can name your store and highlight that header on your store page bigger than the eBay logo to help with branding.

eBay seller tools are available right on the website to help you. Once you sign up for an eBay store, each subscription comes with its own variety of seller tools as a part of the package. The seller tools allow you to design and manage your listings offline before uploading them.

Once you choose what subscription level to start with, just hit the button and begin creating your new store. Before long your virtual aisles will be filled with shoppers.